

Brazil

AP photos



Lula's Popular Front Turns Screws on Workers

The following article was written by our comrades of the Grupo Esparquista de México, section of the International Communist League.

Once one of Latin America's most famous labor leaders, the former metal worker Luiz Inácio "Lula" da Silva is now president of Brazil and has for the last year been thoroughly fulfilling all the promises he made... to the Brazilian capitalists and their imperialist overlords. Lula's government has used its immense authority over the workers movement to impose many of the demands made by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) on the impoverished Brazilian population, something his forerunners couldn't achieve.

Lula's Partido dos Trabalhadores (PT—Workers Party) was born out of dramatic workers struggles against the mili-

No to Class Collaboration! For a Leninist-Trotskyist Party!

Top: Tens of thousands of Brazilian workers demonstrate in June 2003 against Lula government's threatened pension cuts, enacted in December. Inset: Lula greets imperialist overseer George Bush.

tary dictatorship in the late 1970s and founded in February 1980. When Lula was elected president in 2002, many workers in Brazil believed one of their own had finally risen to power and would represent their interests. But their aspirations have been dashed. The coalition that brought Lula to power is an example of what the Stalinists call a "popular front,"

but what we Marxists know to be a class-collaborationist coalition in which one or more workers parties joins bourgeois forces to rule on behalf of the capitalists.

In this case, the main mass workers party, the PT, along with the two sizable Communist Parties, the old Stalinists of the PCB and the formerly pro-Albania PCdoB, made an alliance with the Lib-

eral Party of José Alencar, owner of Brazil's largest textile conglomerate, Coteminas. Alencar's Liberal Party is not just some bourgeois formation; it is the political front for a "born-again" outfit, the Universal Church of the Kingdom of God, which, predictably, is opposed to abortion and gay rights.

Lula explained his alliance with Alencar, stating: "It will make it possible to symbolize for the first time the union of labor with the representative of capital, in a perspective of making in this country a new social contract, a new relationship in Brazilian society" (*O Estado de São Paulo*, 22 June 2002). In reality, this is not the "first time" the PT has sought such a nationalist, class-collaborationist union

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U.S. Government Declares All Airline Passengers "Terror Risks" Big Brother in the Skies

The Bush administration thinks it has found a way to realize its Orwellian dream of a giant database that can track every detail about your private life, from your medical records and finan-

cial status to what books you read. An attempt last year to launch such a "data mining" program, initially dubbed Total Information Awareness, was scuttled amid a huge public outcry. Now, it is being reintroduced in the guise of protecting airline travelers against terrorist attack. This government scheme represents a wholesale assault on the very concept of personal privacy.

Under the sinister new program, called CAPPS II (Computer Assisted Passenger Pre-Screening System), the

Department of Homeland Security and the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) will investigate airline passengers by tapping into commercial databases containing a wide range of personal information. It will then compare this data with secret intelligence lists on suspected "terrorists" and outstanding criminal arrest warrants. To get a sense of how many people will be swept up in this all-sided dragnet, consider that domestic airlines carried 612 million passengers last year!

CAPPS II computers will "tease out relationships" from this mass of personal data based on the concept, as reported by *Air Safety Week* (29 September 2003), that "deviations from normal behavior point to terrorists"! Passengers will be divided into three color-coded categories: green for those who are approved, yellow for those facing "additional scrutiny" and red meaning the cops are going to drag you off. TSA chief James Loy estimates that 3 to 4

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Depraved Arkansas Execution

The 2004 killing season on America's death row opened this year with a particularly gruesome twist in the already cruel and barbaric practice of legalized state murder. On January 6, Charles Singleton was killed by the state of Arkansas, by lethal injection, as is now standard practice. However, since Singleton was mentally disturbed and the U.S. Supreme Court has barred executing the mentally ill, the state first forcibly drugged him with powerful antipsychotic medications to make him supposedly sane enough to be killed. But the 44-year-old man,

who had been in prison since he was 19 years old, went to his death still hearing voices. The governor refused to commute his sentence despite massive controversy over the case, including petitions from the European Union and Amnesty International, among others.

Last October the U.S. Supreme Court opened the way for the state murder machine's deranged and sadistic new drugging policy by letting stand an earlier ruling by a federal appeals court in St. Louis that prison officials can forcibly medicate mentally ill prisoners

explicitly in order to kill them. Federal appeals Judge Roger Wollman's chilling rationale stated that courts need not consider the ultimate result of drugging prisoners, since the medications were generally beneficial—except for one little thing: “Eligibility for execution is the only unwanted consequence of the medication” (*New York Times*, 11 February 2003). Since the American Medical Association's ethical guidelines forbid doctors from medicating people in order to execute them, this opens the way for untrained prison guards to massively dope up their helpless prisoners.

Meanwhile, in another grisly execution, on January 14 a condemned man in Ohio put up a desperate fight, screaming “please God, help me,” as six guards manhandled him onto a gurney and strapped him down for his lethal injection—all in view of his mother, who had to be taken out in a wheelchair after her struggling son, Lewis Williams Jr., was finally declared dead. Williams had been on death row for two decades and always insisted he was innocent. The U.S. Supreme Court turned down his final appeal, which argued that lethal injection was in fact cruel and unusual punishment and therefore unconstitutional. The day before Williams was killed, another prisoner, Tyrone P. Darks, was executed in Oklahoma on January 13. He too had appealed to the Supreme Court against the state's use of lethal drugs, and was also rejected.

Growing evidence that killing by lethal injection is not the “humane” death prison officials claim, along with evidence, including from DNA testing, that has proven the innocence of over a hundred death row prisoners, has left even some capitalist politicians queasy and shaken. The lethal three-drug “Texas Cocktail” administered to prisoners by most of the 38 states with the death penalty includes a drug which the American Veterinary Medical Association condemns for use on animals because of its ability to mask hideous suffering while completely paralyzing its victim. In fact, in 2001 the state of Tennessee declared it a crime for vets to use the chemical pancuronium bromide, or Pavulon, to euthanize pets. “They're saying I'm less than an animal,” said a Tennessee death row prisoner, Abu-Ali Abdur'Rahman, who has challenged the state's use of the paralyzing agent in its deadly drug mixture.

Human beings are put to death by a three-chemical sequence: first, an ultra-short-acting sodium thiopental shot, effective for only minutes and used to induce anesthesia. Next comes the Pavulon, a paralyzing agent which relaxes muscles so the strapped-down prisoner appears eerily serene and unmoving. Third comes the lethal potassium chloride, which stops the heart and causes intense pain if the victim is still con-

scious. “It would basically deliver the maximum amount of pain the veins can deliver, which is a lot,” testified an anesthesiologist and Columbia professor on behalf of Abdur'Rahman's appeal. A woman who underwent eye surgery in which Pavulon was used to paralyze the eye testified that her anesthesia was ineffective, so she was awake and in hideous agony for hours of surgery, but completely unable to move or signal her doctors. It was “worse than death,” she said.

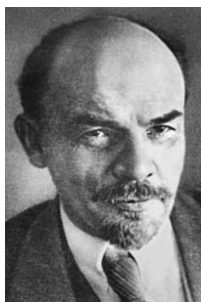
When Democrat Bill Clinton first ran for president, he took time off his campaign to oversee, as then-governor of Arkansas, the execution of Rickey Ray Rector, a brain-damaged black man. The barbaric excesses of racist America achieve their most concentrated form in the prison system, swollen to mammoth



TROTSKY

For the Communism of Lenin, Luxemburg and Liebknecht!

We honor this month V.I. Lenin, leader of the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution, who died in January 1924, and Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg, leaders of the revolutionary wing of the German Social Democracy and founders of the Spartakusbund and its successor, the German Communist Party. Liebknecht and Luxemburg were murdered, amidst a revolutionary upheaval in Germany, on 19 January 1919 by military reac-



LENIN

tionaries working with the Social Democratic government. The following appeal, “To the Workers and Soldiers of the Allied Countries,” was issued by Liebknecht upon his release from prison in October 1918, shortly before the end of World War I, after serving over two years for agitation against the war.

Friends, Comrades, Brothers! From under the blows of the world war, amidst the ruin which has been created by Tzarist Imperialist society—the Russian Proletariat erected its State—the Socialist Republic of Workers, Peasants and Soldiers. This was created in spite of an attitude of misconception, hatred and calumny. This republic represents the greatest basis for that universal socialist order, the creation of which is at the present time the historic task of the International Proletariat. The Russian revolution was to an unprecedented degree the cause of the proletariat of the whole world becoming more revolutionary. Bulgaria and Austria-Hungary are already in the throes of revolution; revolution is awakening in Germany. But there are obstacles in the way of the victory of the German proletariat. The mass of the German people are with us, the power of the accursed enemies of the working class has collapsed; but they are nevertheless making all attempts to deceive the people, with a view of protracting the hour of the liberation of the German people. The robbery and violence of German Imperialism in Russia, as well as the violent Brest-Litovsk peace and the Bucharest peace have consolidated and strengthened the Imperialists of the Allied countries;—and this is the reason why the German Government are endeavouring to utilise the Allied attack upon Socialist Russia for the purpose of retaining power. You have no doubt heard how Wilhelm II, who, now that Tzarism has perished, is the representative of the basest form of reaction,—a few days ago made use of intervention in the affairs of proletarian Russia by the Allied Empires for the purpose of raising a new war agitation amongst the working masses. We must not permit our ignoble enemies to make use of any democratic means and institutions for their purpose; the proletariat of the Allied countries must allow no such thing to occur. We know that you have already raised your voice to protest against the machinations of your governments, but the danger is growing ever greater and greater. A united front of world Imperialism against the proletariat is being realised, in the first instance, in the struggle against the Russian Soviet Republic. This is what I warn you against. The proletariat of the world must not allow the flame of the Socialist Revolution to be extinguished, or all its hopes and all its powers will perish. The failure of the Russian Socialist Republic will be the defeat of the proletariat of the whole world. Friends, comrades, brothers arise against your rulers! Long live the Russian workers, soldiers and peasants! Long live the Revolution of the French, English and American proletariat! Long live the liberation of the workers of all countries from the infernal chasm of war, exploitation and slavery!

—Karl Liebknecht, “The Last Message of Karl Liebknecht,”
The Communist International, Vol. 1, No. 4 (August 1919)



WV Photo

Spartacist-initiated Revolutionary Contingent at May 2001 rally for Mumia Abu-Jamal in San Francisco.

size, and in the legal lynching of prisoners, a legacy of the Old South slave system. Of the over 3,000 prisoners on death row, almost half are black. Witness the case of former Black Panther, MOVE supporter and Philadelphia journalist Mumia Abu-Jamal, still fighting for his freedom despite mountains of evidence—including a sworn confession from the actual killer—proving his innocence. As Jamal's continued presence on death row so starkly demonstrates, one cannot expect justice from America's capitalist courts. And as these depraved and sadistic executions show, there is no “fair,” “sane” or “humane” way to slaughter prisoners, many of whom have spent their entire adult lives penned into tiny cages at the total mercy of the prison system. We are in principle opposed to the racist death penalty for the guilty as well as the innocent. We stand for the abolition of the entire prison system—the creation of a deranged capitalist system which requires it to maintain exploitation and racial oppression. ■

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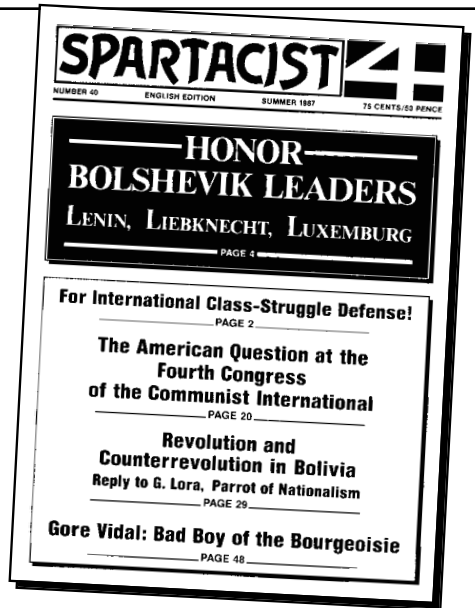
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Racism and Capitalist Counterrevolution

Moscow Foreign Student Dorm Fire Kills 43

On 24 November 2003, at just past 2:00 in the morning, Moscow's frozen night lit up into a portal of hell. Fire swept through Dormitory No. 6 of the Peoples' Friendship University of Russia (PFUR). The foreign student residents of the five-story building awoke to smoke, flames and the screams of neighbors running for their lives. They were trapped. Two of the three stairwells were locked, many of the windows were barred, and the only exit descended right into the source of the fire on the second floor. Cries for help in the languages of 39 countries rang out through broken windows. Soon the students themselves jumped, many aflame and falling to their deaths. Fire trucks and emergency services took up to an *hour* to arrive. A Cameroonian student from an adjacent dorm described the horror: "There were people jumping from windows who fell right at my feet. It was awful. We helped carry the injured to other buildings, but the ambulances took too long to take them away. There was a Vietnamese girl who died in front of my eyes."

Forty-three have perished so far, possibly the highest death toll in a Moscow fire in over a quarter century. Over 200 other students were injured—almost all hospitalized—and more could die. Officials quickly pinned the cause of the fire on the students themselves, claiming either misuse of electrical fixtures or arson by dormitory residents. But they were forced to back off after shock, grief and outrage poured in from the students' homelands around the world. Twelve of those who died were from the Peoples Republic of China. The Chinese ambassador Liu Guchang rushed to the site of the fire; three days later a special delegation from Beijing arrived. Meanwhile, ambassadors from a number of African countries (Gabon, Angola, Guinea-Bissau, Burundi, Congo, Chad and Algeria) have formed an investigation commission with Russian authorities to determine the cause of the fire and to monitor the care and compensation of the victims.

In a grotesque insult to the grieving student body, just hours after the fire, classes were ordered to resume! "They put out the fire at 4 or 5 a.m. and students went to school at 9 a.m.... I feel that they do this because most of the vic-

tims are foreigners," said Sydney Ocran, a Liberian student.

The real cause has not been proven, but what has been established is that the PFUR dormitories are horrendous fire traps. In March 2003 the university was cited for 36 violations, including absence of extinguishers, public address system, fire alarms or even an evacuation plan. Dormitory No. 6 was used to pack in newly-arrived students for quarantine;



African students lay flowers in front of burnt shell of Moscow dormitory.

they spoke little if any Russian. Yet there was not even an established plan to alert students in case of emergencies! The acting university rector and another administrator have been charged with criminal negligence, and a local fire inspector with lesser charges—essentially for creating a catastrophe waiting to happen. True enough, but many students say that it was not a matter of the odds, but of *arson*; according to an Amnesty International report, most students described the fire as "a racially-motivated act of arson." A Somali student reported, "Skinheads often gather near the dorm" and write racist graffiti. "I have wiped such insults from my door three times" (quoted in *Bigotry Monitor*, 5 December 2003). Aicha Toure, a medical student from Mali, pointed out that "Skinheads have long been threatening us. Last week [three days before the blaze] there was a bomb threat and students were evacuated from one building. But no bomb was found. This [the fire on 24 November] was no accident either." Moïse Lopes of Angola, who studies at a Moscow technical university, said, "How can I stay here if they're setting us on fire. I don't think it was caused by electrical appliances." In 1995, seven students were killed by arson in a building adjacent to Dormitory No. 6.

The students' suspicions stem from the brutal reality of being under constant siege. In 1960, the campus opened as Patrice Lumumba People's Friendship University, the USSR's academy for cadres of Moscow's Third World allies to come as honored guests for training. Soviet authorities had named the university after the Congolese leader who was a

victim of racist murder by the CIA and Belgian imperialists in 1961. However, when the Soviet degenerated workers state was destroyed in 1991-92 by the capitalist counterrevolution led by Boris Yeltsin and U.S. president George Bush Sr., these foreign students became targets of racist terror in capitalist Russia.

On 11 August 1992, Moscow police marked the first anniversary of Yeltsin's coming to power by shooting dead a

stadium, it means you want to die" said Diboï Kath, PFUR student from Cameroon, who has been abused, beaten and even shot by racist thugs. But there are no hard police report statistics because, as an Ethiopian refugee explained, "The police are just as bad. In fact, I run faster from them than I do from the skinheads." When a Cameroonian prince, studying in the southern city of Voronezh, tried to report a skinhead attack,

"The police sergeant told me to put my hands up, but I said, 'Why? I'm the innocent one here. I'm the victim, and a guest in your country, so I'm asking for your help.' Then one of the other cops just started punching me in the stomach. Really hard, as if I was a boxing bag.... Then I was arrested for wasting police time."

Students were subjected to racism even by the emergency crews on the night of the November 24 blaze. The ambulances took away injured Russians first, leaving half-naked foreign victims to suffer frost-bite. They later took the foreign students only after trying to extort money from them.

The siege of the PFUR international students has not let up since. Just five days after the fire, 25 skinheads arrived in waves on buses, and launched a, by now routine, well-coordinated attack, hospitalizing six students. Colombian student Hernan Muñoz jumped in to save his roommates. He knew the stakes; two years ago skinheads had cut off his finger. In the following month, students were forced to evacuate dorms and classrooms at least nine times because of bomb threats. On December 16, a second fire, of unknown origin, broke out in Dormitory No. 9. The next day, an arsonist started a fire in Dormitory No. 7.

Dormitory student councils have now organized voluntary round-the-clock patrols. "Nobody will defend us but ourselves," said Chinese female student Lee Sin, who lives in Dormitory No. 11. "So I take my watch shift, even though I have been assigned from 1:00 a.m. to 7:00 a.m."

The Moscow dormitory fire has lit up the ghastly face of capitalist Russia. This is what we warned capitalist counterrevolution would bring, and that is why we fought to the end against it. As we wrote:

"Uniquely, the ICL intervened in the Soviet Union beginning in the late 1980s seeking to mobilize the working class against the powerful forces, backed by world (centrally American) imperialism, driving toward capitalist restoration. This was part of our struggle for new October Revolutions around the world."

—"Why We Fought to Defend the Soviet Union," WV Nos. 809 and 810, 12 September and 26 September 2003

Students report that survivors are in desperate need of aid, lacking everything from clothes to soap and toothpaste. Donations can be wired to the following account of the Association of African Students of the Peoples' Friendship University of Russia:

International Humanitarian Initiative Fund, Account 40703840700000011024

Beneficiary bank: Badr-Forte Bank, 31/1 Obraztsova St., Moscow, 127018, Russia SWIFT CODE: ICBA RU MM

Intermediate bank: Raiffeisen Zentral-Bank, A-1030 Vienna, Am Stadtpark 9, Austria SWIFT CODE: RZBA AT WW, Correspondent account 70-55.047.021■

Twelve Years After Counterrevolution in the USSR

Why We Fought to Defend the Soviet Union

Two-part article from
WV Nos. 809 and 810
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PDC Holiday Appeal

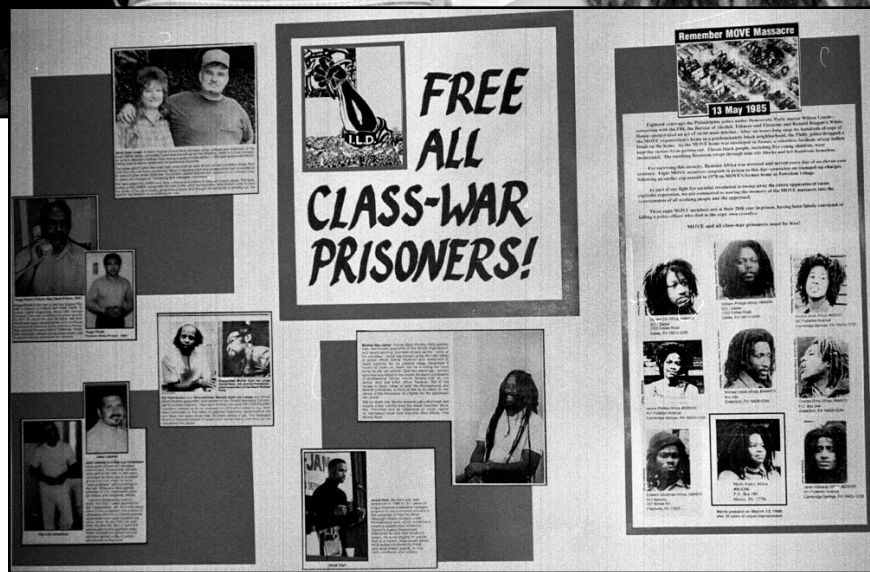
Thousands of Dollars Raised for Class-War Prisoners

In December, the Partisan Defense Committee, a class-struggle, non-sectarian legal and social defense organization associated with the Spartacist League, held its eighteenth annual Holiday Appeal fund drive for class-war prisoners. The PDC sends monthly stipends to 16 prisoners, including Jerry Dale Lowe, a West Virginia miner imprisoned for defending his picket line, and death-row political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal.

Lively benefits held in Chicago, San Francisco and New York raised almost \$11,000, bringing together trade unionists, youth and other activists. In carrying out this yearly effort to raise money for the stipends sent to class-war prisoners and for extra funds for them and their families during the holiday season, the PDC is inspired by the traditions of the International Labor Defense (ILD). The ILD was born out of discussions in Moscow in 1925, fusing the revolutionary internationalism of the Bolshevik Revolution with the principle of the syndicalist Industrial Workers of the World that "an injury to one is an injury to all!"

As we noted in a *Workers Vanguard* article shortly before the Holiday Appeals, the benefits took on particular significance because of the September 11 attack on the World Trade Center. This criminal attack has provided the pretext for the administration, with the Democrats in near-unanimous agreement, to embark on a qualitative diminution of democratic rights in this country, combined with intensified imperialist war internationally. As we wrote, "The government's secret police have vastly expanded authority to tap your phone, search your home, scour your financial records, interrogate your librarian and place you under arrest without probable cause that a crime has been committed" (WV No. 814, 21 November 2003).

A prime example of how the government seeks to expand its power is seen in the case of Jose Padilla, an American citizen peremptorily declared an "enemy combatant" and denied access to an attorney without charges being filed and confined within a military brig. Last summer, the PDC and Spartacist League submitted an *amicus curiae* (friend of the court) brief on behalf of Padilla, warning that through his detention the Bush administration is asserting nothing less than the right to disappear citizens. This case was highlighted in an 11 December 2003 letter from union official Earl Silbar accompanying a donation to the Partisan Defense Committee from AFSCME



WV Photos

Top: New York City Holiday Appeal benefit, 13 December 2003. Inset: Poster display features class-war prisoners receiving monthly stipends from PDC.

Local 3506 in Chicago: "This attack on Jose Padilla represents an attack on every one of us. If they can make unsubstantiated charges, imprison him, and deprive him of his rights, they can do the same to any of us."

A U.S. Court of Appeals decision on December 18 ruled that Bush and Ashcroft could not indefinitely detain Padilla as an "enemy combatant." As we welcome every setback to Washington's police-state designs, we also recognize that such rulings are partial and reversible. In the case of Padilla, the outcome is still uncertain as the government has issued an appeal; Padilla remains locked in a military brig.

Most of the class-war prisoners honored at the Holiday Appeal benefits have been incarcerated for at least a quarter century. The vicious campaigns against these courageous individuals have been waged under both Democratic and Republican administrations, underscoring the point that the capitalist class is united against fighters on the side of the oppressed. A critical case in point is Mumia Abu-Jamal, a former Black Panther and MOVE supporter who has been on death row for over 22 years, framed up for killing a cop. Over two years ago, Jamal's attorneys filed a confession in court by Arnold Beverly, stating that he, not Jamal, killed Officer Daniel Faulkner. In December 2001, a federal court in Pennsylvania overturned the death sentence while at the same time affirming the frame-up conviction. Both the prosecution (seeking to reinstate the sentence of death) and Mumia (seeking to overturn

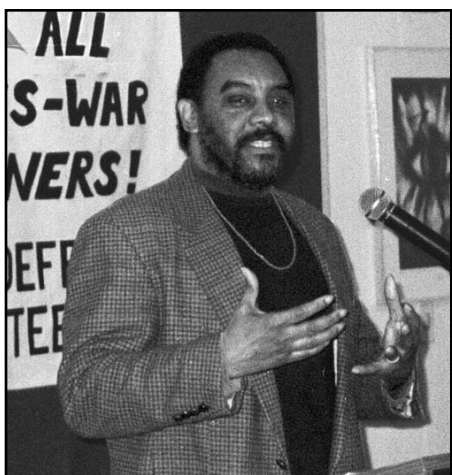
the conviction) appealed. Those appeals were placed on hold pending a ruling on Jamal's appeal before the Pennsylvania Supreme Court, which finally ruled in October to again bar Beverly's testimony from being introduced into evidence and uphold Jamal's conviction. Since then, Jamal has filed a *habeas corpus* petition in the Pennsylvania courts seeking to overturn his conviction and death sentence. Workers, minorities and all opponents of racist capitalist repression must demand: **Free Mumia now!**

Reflecting the non-sectarian character of the PDC's work, numerous individuals of various political viewpoints attended the Holiday Appeals. Our Boston comrades brought with them to the New York benefit Tony Van Der Meer, the UMass-Boston professor outrageously arrested on that campus last year at the height of the U.S. invasion of Iraq. Professor Van Der Meer was tackled, thrown to the

ground and handcuffed for the "crime" of coming to the defense of a student being harassed by National Guard military recruiters while handing out flyers for a commemoration honoring Martin Luther King Jr. In a speech to the benefit, Professor Van Der Meer described his continuing legal battle against bogus charges stemming from that police attack and remarked that he appreciated the support given him by the PDC and Spartacist League.

In building for the Holiday Appeal, our insistence that the working class must break with the capitalist Democratic Party in order to advance its own interests and those of the oppressed elicited much discussion and debate. In Chicago, for example, our comrades had repeated arguments about this question at various union halls we approached for support; one local union president who supports much of the work of the PDC still vehemently argued, "We've got to do everything we can to get rid of Bush"—i.e., vote for the Democrats. The speech given for the Spartacist League at the Chicago Holiday Appeal (reprinted in its majority below) combated such illusions in the Democrats and provoked wide-ranging political debate, which ended with one union organizer purchasing from us a copy of Lenin's 1916 work, *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*, to read more of the classic writings shaping our views today.

Speakers and letters submitted to the Holiday Appeal at all three benefits reflected the work of other organizations as well. David Wilson of the Committee to Release Farouk Abdel-Muhti spoke at the benefit in New York. He followed the



WV Photo

Tony Van Der Meer, antiwar UMass professor facing frame-up charges, addresses NYC PDC benefit.

Labor Black League for Social Defense

Workers Vanguard Discussion Group

China

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For Workers Political Revolution to Oust Stalinist Bureaucrats!
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speeches with a video depicting the government's campaign against Abdel-Muhti, a Palestinian-born activist who has been detained for over 20 months and threatened with deportation for his political activism. In the Bay Area, a statement by the Bay Area Campaign to Free Mordechai Vanunu was read into the Holiday Appeal. Vanunu is an Israeli of great courage and conviction who was arrested in 1986 for publicly revealing Israel's massive nuclear arsenal. For his service to humanity, Vanunu was convicted of treason and espionage and sentenced to eighteen years in a prison hellhole. He has been given an official release date of April 22; as that date approaches, Israeli officials are working to try to ensure that Vanunu remains silenced. In New York, artwork movingly provided a face to one of the class-war prisoners; Phil Africa sent a beautiful oil painting he did in his prison cell, which was auctioned and purchased by a PDC supporter.

At the end of the New York Holiday Appeal, the emcee read the following portion of a 15 July 2003 letter from one of the Miami Five, who have been imprisoned by American authorities for their defense of the Cuban Revolution. The letter was addressed to Joanne Landy, a right-wing social democrat and lifelong opponent of the Cuban Revolution:

"I've always had the best of respect for the honest Americans who, overcoming the immense power of the most sophisticated machinery of deception ever designed, have been able to look beyond all of that to have a view of world events that pays homage to this country [Cuba]. It takes a lot of intelligence, curiosity, courage and, above all, a lot of sensitivity.

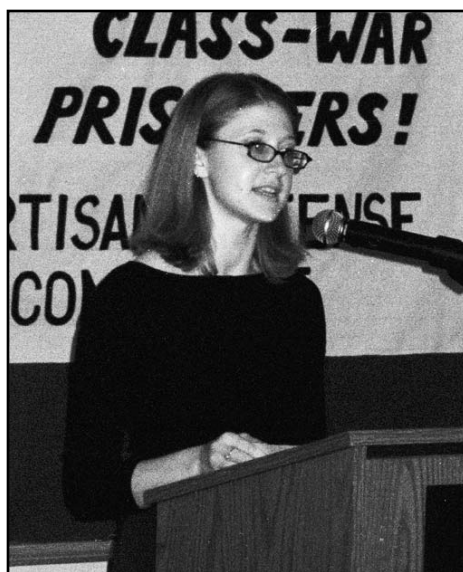
"I want to appeal to that sensitivity and, with all my respect, invite you to think of this: One thing was to be a Roman citizen, with all privileges accorded to full citizenship, discussing democracy and liberty on the senate or on the streets of Rome; and another thing, completely different, was to be fighting for that democracy and that liberty, in the field, against all odds, under the siege of Pompeii legions, defending your very life together with Spartacus."

* * *

Spokesmen for the Spartacist League, Spartacus Youth Clubs, the Labor Black



Left: Auction of painting by Philadelphia MOVE massacre survivor, Phil Africa, donated to NYC benefit. Right: New York Spartacus Youth Club speaker, Angie Swanson.



WV Photos

Leagues and the PDC addressed all three Holiday Appeal benefits. We print below excerpts of the Chicago SL speech.

Seizing on the criminal attack on the World Trade Center, this government has launched an all-out assault on our most basic civil and democratic rights. Theirs is not a war *on* terror. Rather, from Baghdad to Benton Harbor, the bourgeoisie is carrying out a war *of* terror. As frightening and reactionary as the Bush administration is, they are not imposing this agenda on their own. The funding for the war and the passing of the Patriot Act were carried out by both parties of capitalism. The maintenance of a racist system that relegates thousands to homeless misery, layoffs and prison hellholes is not a Republican plot. The Democrats, black and white, are just as committed to maintaining this rotting capitalist system as George W. In fact, most of the immigrants held by the government are detained not under the Patriot Act but under Clinton's 1996 Immigration Act. Most notable of those detained is Jose Padilla. His case is a frontal assault on the very concepts of due process and citizenship itself. It is the Dred Scott case of today—citizens have

no rights that the government is bound to respect. Let me say one word in light of the upcoming presidential elections—beware! Those snake-oil salesmen of the Democratic Party will be all over us pushing the same stinking garbage in a pretty, new pail.

The ravages of this decaying class society daily claiming new victims is a pretty horrific sight, and I can see how one may be prone to feel a bit helpless and hopeless. But we in the Spartacist League do not see it as hopeless nor do we feel helpless, not by any stretch. You see, there is something that can bring this capitalist economy to a halt which would throw a big monkey wrench into their plans: class struggle. The one force with the social power to break the power of the capitalist rulers is the working class. Doing that requires leadership. What is desperately needed, is a multiracial revolutionary workers party committed to educating and mobilizing working people in their own interests. As communist revolutionaries, we understand that no reform, no right is secure or lasting under capitalism and that this system must be rooted out through a socialist revolution. It is not enough to protest;

those who labor must rule. There is a massive reservoir of potential power right under our noses, but it must be made class-conscious and mobilized. Our sections internationally are fighting for the same revolutionary program, to build workers parties in their respective countries.

Now, there are two major obstacles in the road towards building that party in America. One is the illusion that the Democrats can be pressured to act in our interest. And in this they get invaluable help from their agents in the labor movement—the trade-union bureaucracy. Labor lieutenants of capital, we call them. Take one look right here at our brothers and sisters in ATU 241, railroaded into arbitration and saddled with a rotten contract by their own officials. This is a transit union that has the power to bring the third largest city in the U.S. to a grinding halt or at least turn downtown into a parking lot, yet the union bureaucracy did *nothing* to mobilize that power. Why? Because that power scares the hell out of them just as it scares the bosses. The stacked deck of arbitration, going to the bosses' courts, "getting out the vote"—these are all losing strategies. What's needed is independent action. Workers must use their labor power as did the L.A. longshoremen who effectively shut the port down for eight hours in solidarity with the grocery workers strike. Social power does not come from pushing a doorbell or manning a telephone bank for the "labor's candidate" (the only time the bureaucracy mobilizes the membership)—the *power to strike* is the workers' ace card.

The second obstacle is the poisonous division along race and ethnic lines in the working class, in particular anti-black racism, which only serves the bourgeoisie by keeping us divided. The black question is the Achilles heel of U.S. capitalism, and linking the fight for black freedom and the fight against the grinding exploitation of labor and against capitalism—that combination of black and red—is potential social dynamite.

Now, some call fighting for workers
continued on page 6

Letters to the Partisan Defense Committee

We print below excerpts of a letter to the Partisan Defense Committee by Wadiya Jamal, wife of Mumia Abu-Jamal.

November 21, 2003

To All Of Whom It May Concern,

I am writing this letter to express my deepest appreciation to the Partisan Defense Committee and all of its affiliates, who have fearlessly risen to the challenge of fighting for the oppressed. The PDC in its efforts, has placed itself on the front line, and continues to provide support, on many levels, to my husband Mumia and myself. We are tremendously grateful for all you have done, all you have given, and all that you are.... Together we will continue the struggle and defeat the unjust. **Long live the PDC.**

On a Move,
Wadiya A. Jamal

* * *

We print below excerpts of a letter to the PDC by Janet Africa, who has spent over 25 years in prison, falsely convicted of killing a police officer who died in the cops' own crossfire during the brutal 8 August 1978 police siege on the MOVE home in Philadelphia.

I would like to take this time to thank you all at PDC, all the supporters and contributors who make it possible for us to receive the donation that we've been receiving for years. With the way

society is today, being able to live, take care of yourself and support a family is hard and costly, so for those who give to the holiday fund raiser, we appreciate it.... We use the funds to buy typewriter ribbons, stationery and postage to send people revolutionary information from all around the world. I write people in Sorearen, Navarro Spain, Munster Germany, Africa, Croatia, France, England. Debbie and Janine who are here with me at Cambridge Springs prison write those and other countries also.... Watching the dishonesty of this government, deliberately misusing their position to start wars and take the young men, women, the sons, daughters, brothers, sisters, recruit mothers, fathers, friends of ours, to fight a war that could have been avoided, sending our loved ones back home in body bags saying they gave their lives for their country, when in fact their lives were taken for the politics of this country, not for peace as this country is trying to lead people to believe. It's time for these politics, those running the government to be stopped. Freedom can only be realized when people realize that this system feeds people's weakness and takes their strength. People are seeing more and more the lies and corruption of this system and they resent it, people are starting to revolt, demonstrate and speak out against this system and before long this system will tumble. Revolution is the only hope we have of setting ourselves free and everybody

who believes in freedom needs to fight too. Thank you for helping us pass the *words* that will turn into the formation of this revolution.

I'm going to close for now, all of you stay strong and keep working for this revolution, and know that I am committed for life to do the same.

Ona Move
Janet Africa
LONG LIVE JOHN
AFRICA'S REVOLUTION!

* * *

We print below excerpts of a letter to the PDC by Jamal Hart, who was sentenced in 1998 to 15 1/2 years on bogus firearms possession charges. Hart was targeted for his prominent activism to free his father, Mumia Abu-Jamal.

November 6, 2003

Many freedom fighters are still *residing within the belly of the beast* and still continue to *resist and avoid destruction* mentally and physically, dig me.

These freedom fighters, political prisoners, prisoners of war, and unjustly convicted like this author and his father, Mumia Abu-Jamal, Assata Shakur, Delbert Orr Africa, Michael Davis Africa, Debbie Sims Africa, William Phillips Africa, Janet Holloway Africa, Janine Phillips Africa, Charles Sims Africa, Edward Goodman Africa, Hugo Pinell, Ed Poindexter, Jaan K. Laaman, W.M.E. we Langa, Raymond Luc

Levasseur, Jerry Dale Lowe, Sundiata Acoli, Leonard Peltier, Herman Bell, and many more that continue to *avoid destruction* and *resist* and support those that are still keeping this struggle alive in these days in time.... So let's really take a close look at a great man's words that founded and established a true outlook on our future as well as our past as stated, "The victory of the class-war prisoners is possible only *when they are inseparably united with the living labor movement and when that movement claims them for its own*, takes up their battle cry and carries on their work" (James P. Cannon, 'The Cause that Passes Through a Prison,' Labor Defender, September 1926, reprinted in Notebook of an Agitator).

Lastly, PDC and all supporters I humbly thank you all for your needed support that has assisted me through numerous adversities and trials and tribulations that one contends within these prisons. I would like to also state that these *good ole boys networks* of prison officials are getting a clear wake-up call that we are not *alone*. The most powerful impact is how we must continue to come together as a whole and support each other to the fullest of the working class, the poor, and black and minorities capacity. We will prevail, **FREE ALL POLITICAL PRISONERS, PRISONERS OF WAR, FREEDOM FIGHTERS, AND THE UNJUSTLY CONVICTED NOW!!!!**

By: Jamal Hart

Big Brother...

(continued from page 1)

percent of passengers would fall into the “yellow” category.

Major U.S. airlines are proclaiming their refusal to supply data for CAPPS II testing while they wait for the government to order them to comply. But data on millions of air travelers has already been secretly turned over to the government as part of testing CAPPS II. In September 2002, JetBlue Airways handed over data on several million passengers to a Department of Defense contractor, but in the face of a lawsuit by outraged passengers, they promised never to turn over information again without a court order and issued a public apology. Last year, revelations that Delta was participating in CAPPS II testing triggered a consumer boycott. A Northwest spokesman told the *New York Times* (23 September 2003): “We do not provide that type of information to anyone.” Yet last week, in response to a Freedom of Information Act request by the Electronic Privacy Information Center, it was revealed that Northwest had turned over to the government three months of passenger data involving more than 10 million passengers in 2001!

If U.S. citizens are regarded as “terror risks,” visitors from other countries come in for much worse. In addition to the harassment, intimidation and humiliation routinely meted out to them, the government this month launched the US-VISIT (United States Visitor and Immigrant Status Indicator Technology) program. US-VISIT records the fingerprints and digital photos of all visitors to the U.S. except those from 27 countries—mainly West European—granted an exception. In response to this blatantly racist plan, Brazil retaliated by fingerprinting every U.S. citizen entering the country and even briefly detained an American Airlines pilot who protested the measure by making an “obscene gesture.”

Some international flights arriving in the U.S. have been “escorted” by F-16 fighter jets, whose only purpose can be to shoot down civilian airliners! Other flights have been summarily cancelled based on nebulous “security” tips, including six Air France flights on Christmas Eve. Over the opposition of international pilots’ unions and foreign governments, the U.S. insisted that undercover armed marshals be stationed aboard “suspect” flights.

US-VISIT compares foreign visitors’ personal data to watch lists of suspected “terrorists” and alleged criminals and creates a comprehensive database that will be kept for 100 years. On January 12, the Department of Homeland Security issued



Foreign visitors at San Francisco International Airport line up for mandatory fingerprinting under Orwellian “anti-terror” regulations. AP

a very unconvincing denial of reports that the US-VISIT data would be merged with the CAPPS II database. As travel-privacy advocate and writer Edward Hasbrouck noted recently, merging CAPPS II with US-VISIT would lead to “lifetime dossiers of Americans’ movements both in and out of the country” (*Wired* magazine Web site, 13 January).

Already today, anybody and everybody is a suspect in the government’s unrestrained crusade against “terrorists” in the skies. During the protests against the U.S. invasion of Iraq, the government used a “no-fly” list to prevent activists from attending demonstrations against the war. The Feds’ list of suspects spells Arab names phonetically, leading to the harassment of anyone whose name sounds like anyone else’s. One recent “terror” suspect on a passenger list turned out to be a five-year-old child! In the fall of 2002, Maher Arar, a Syrian-born Canadian citizen, was arrested at JFK as he waited for a connecting flight home. Falsely profiled by the INS as a terrorist, he was deported to Syria where he was beaten and tortured.

Workers in the transportation industry have enormous social power in their ability to shut down the airports, ports and transit systems. That power should be mobilized against the government’s panoply of “anti-terror” laws, which are ultimately aimed at repressing class and social struggle. However, the current union tops stand as an obstacle to such labor struggle, more often than not going out of their way to comply with “security” campaigns. A 2 January article in the *Philadelphia Inquirer* quotes the director of air safety and health for the

Association of Flight Attendants, Chris Witkowski: “We’d like all reports of unusual events to be going directly to the government for analysis.” The support for the “war on terror” by such labor bureaucrats underscores the necessity of fighting to forge a class-struggle leadership in the unions.

Defend Democratic Rights!

The Bush administration’s CAPPS II program is yet another confirmation that the “war on terror” is aimed at gutting the civil liberties of the population as a whole. Using the September 11 attacks as a pretext, the government rounded up some 1,200 immigrants from predominantly Islamic countries and, with bipartisan support, enacted the Patriot Act and a host of executive orders under which the government’s secret police have vastly expanded authority to tap phones, interrogate librarians and arrest people without probable cause that a crime has been committed. Bush has pre-empted the Democrats who protested that the Republicans’ 2004 budget for the domestic “war on terror” was insufficient. He is now seeking to increase spending on “domestic security” by 9 percent to nearly \$45 million for the 2005 budget.

While Attorney General Ashcroft’s proposed Patriot II act has faced public outcry, provisions of this proposed evisceration of constitutional rights have been quietly enacted. As the hoopla over the U.S. capture of Saddam Hussein filled the news on December 13, Bush signed the Intelligence Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2004 into law, which gives the FBI unprecedented power to get financial

records on anybody they want without a court order and broadens the definition of “financial institution” to include insurance companies, travel agencies, the U.S. Postal Service and even jewelry stores and car dealerships. This piece of repressive legislation passed overwhelmingly in both houses of Congress, illustrating the Democrats’ allegiance to the “war on terror.”

Recent court decisions have not gone entirely in the government’s favor. Last month, a federal appeals court ruled that the government could not legally detain U.S. citizen Jose Padilla as an “enemy combatant” without a trial or access to his lawyer. This month, the Supreme Court agreed over the objections of the U.S. government to hear the case of Yaser Esam Hamdi, a U.S. citizen detained in Afghanistan and declared an “enemy combatant” who is being held in a military brig in Charleston, S.C.

Last November, the Supreme Court also agreed to hear the case of detainees being held at the U.S. naval base in Guantánamo Bay, Cuba. The Bush administration cynically argues that American courts have no jurisdiction to hear petitions challenging the legality of these detentions because the base is outside U.S. sovereignty, and it is denying the detainees “prisoner of war” status in defiance of the Geneva Convention. The Supreme Court has agreed to decide on the jurisdictional issue as to whether these prisoners can go to U.S. courts for *habeas corpus* review to challenge the lawfulness of their imprisonment, but will not review whether the administration must comply with the Geneva Convention. At the same time, the Supreme Court let stand a lower court ruling upholding the government’s secret arrest and detention of hundreds of mainly Muslim immigrants in the weeks following the September 11 attacks, and it further eroded Fourth Amendment and privacy rights by upholding “informational” police roadblocks on the nation’s streets.

The Fourth Amendment of the Bill of Rights, which was written in the aftermath of the American War of Independence, prohibits “unreasonable searches and seizures.” One of the ideals of that bourgeois revolution was that the state and its police powers should not be raised above or be unaccountable to the citizenry. This is a cruel joke today, as our so-called “inalienable” rights are being systematically eroded under the pretext of the bipartisan “war on terror.” It is only we communists who have a program to fight to defend the democratic gains of the first American Revolution, as well as the second (the Civil War and the smashing of slavery), as we fight for a third American revolution to obliterate bourgeois state terror forever. ■

PDC Appeal...

(continued from page 5)

government utopian. But, frankly, to call on the Democrats, the party that led this country into World Wars I and II and Vietnam, the party that unleashed nuclear weapons on Japan, that fought tooth and nail to uphold segregation and preserve the Jim Crow South, to call on them to fight for black rights, justice and equality—now *that’s* fantasy. The capitalist state, be it administered by the Democrats or the Republicans, is not some neutral body. It is composed of an arsenal of tools, armed bodies of men such as the cops, the prisons, the army, the courts that exist solely to maintain the capitalists’ class rule and keep the majority of the population in line.

Besides, we know it can be done because it *has* been done! In 1917, under the leadership of the Bolshevik Party, the Russian working class seized state power in its own name, for the first time ushering in a workers state, a collectivized planned economy. We defended the socialized property forms in the USSR until the bitter end. We called not for a

return to capitalism, but for a proletarian political revolution to oust the Stalinist bureaucracy and to return to workers democracy. Today’s “Russian question” is China. We Marxists have a yardstick with which to measure the level of progress in any given society—the status of women. The Chinese Revolution is a graphic example of this, where women went from the hideous tradition of foot-binding to becoming full members in social production.

Let me conclude with a story. In January 1917, Vladimir Lenin (leader of the Russian Revolution along with Leon Trotsky) was speaking in Switzerland where he said, “We in the older generation may not live to see the revolution.” Within weeks the Russian workers and peasants had toppled the tsar—and by the end of the year, the Bolsheviks held state power. Now, I am not suggesting that we will be ringing in the New Year with an American working-class government occupying the White House or seizing the means of production (as gratifying as that may be). What I am saying is that world events can change our daily lives quickly and dramatically, and with that comes a qualitative leap in consciousness of the masses.

We live in a very stable, yet unstable society. Even here in the heart of the “world’s only superpower,” within weeks the political landscape can change dramatically where all bets are off and the population is no longer willing to be ruled as before. History has shown that the question is not *if* class struggle will erupt, but *when*. And it’s our job to be ready, to have that party

in place that’s capable of leading the working class in the revolutionary transformation of society, overthrowing capitalism, and establishing a planned, collectivized economy that can lay the basis for a socialist egalitarian society. There are few guarantees in life, but I do know that if you don’t fight, you don’t win. It is in this fight that we ask you to join us. ■

Spartacist League/Spartacus Youth Club Forums

L.A. Labor Struggle: Which Way Forward?

**Unchain Labor’s Power! Break With the Democrats!
For a Revolutionary Workers Party that Fights for All the Oppressed!**

Victory to the UFCW Strike!

Thursday, Jan. 29, 7 p.m.
UCLA, Math Sciences Bldg.
Room 5225 (near Parking Lot 9)
(exit Wilshire-East fr. 405 Frwy.
take Westwood Bl. north)

Saturday, Jan. 31, 3 p.m.
Immanuel Presbyterian Church
3300 Wilshire Blvd. (at Berendo)
(2 blocks west of Wilshire/Vermont
Red Line station)

LOS ANGELES

For more information: (213) 380-8239
E-mail: slsycla@cs.com

Young Spartacus

ISO Backs Capitalist Greens in S.F. Elections *ISO Reaches Its Nader*

The ISO has once again called for a vote to a *capitalist politician*, this time endorsing Matt Gonzalez of the Green Party for San Francisco mayor in a campaign he narrowly lost last month. The fact that the ISO instructed workers to place confidence in a representative of the bosses exposes their pretension of being any sort of socialists.

The essence of capitalist society is found in the merciless exploitation of the working class. Whoever upholds the interests of the capitalists stands *counterposed* to the interests of the proletariat. Notwithstanding the ISO's statement that "We do not support candidates of capitalist parties like the Democrats or the Republicans," printed in every issue under a headline reading "Where We Stand," the Green Party by its own admission defends the rule of capital.

Marxists seek to further the struggle of the working class to end the rule of the bourgeoisie; first and foremost, workers must organize independently of the capitalists and their state. A vote for even the most left-wing bourgeois candidate—which Gonzalez most certainly is not—is a vote of confidence in the reformability of capitalism. Advocating a vote for a capitalist politician can only be an attempt to deflect workers and revolutionary-minded youth from seeing the need to fight to overthrow capitalism and to pull them into the fold of bourgeois electoralism.

The ISO admits that as head of the city council, the second most powerful post in San Francisco, "Gonzalez has at times contradicted his own principles" (principles, of course, that the ISO has invented for him). Cast aside as "mistakes" amid their enthusiasm in *Socialist Worker* is the true face of this capitalist politician:

"During the mass direct action protests last spring after Bush invaded Iraq, Gonzalez chided demonstrators to 'go protest in a city that hasn't already passed an antiwar resolution'—and supported the police arresting thousands of demonstrators blocking city streets and corporate headquarters."

—*Socialist Worker*,
14 November 2003

As with the rest of the capitalist politicians who spoke from the platform at antiwar rallies (including one in San Francisco last spring where he told the crowd that the city is "having a budget crisis right now, so do me a favor and don't turn over any police cars" [*Los Angeles Times*, 1 April 2003]), Gonzalez's purpose was to confine protest within limits acceptable to the ruling class. As soon as the war started and some protests took a more militant turn, he cheered on state repression of the demonstrators. The ISO also admits:

"As president of the Board of Supervisors (San Francisco's city council), Gonzalez opposed amending the city charter to dedicate more money to public schools. He also touts his 'fiscal responsibility'—and supported an \$80,000 hike in the supervisors' salaries, while city workers took a 7 percent wage cut and other concessions to balance the budget."

—*Socialist Worker*,
5 December 2003

The ISO is so craven and cynical as to state that Gonzalez "sees his third-party campaign as part of building a mass movement that can challenge the growing gap between rich and poor." Clearly,

this attribution to Gonzalez is a concoction on the ISO's part, unless by "poor" you mean Gonzalez and his fellow supervisors.

Gonzalez is forthright about what he stands for. In an interview on 16 September 2003, Hank Donat of MisterSF.com asked Gonzalez if he was a socialist "as one weekly paper has called him." Gonzalez replied: "Democrats want everyone to believe that Greens are to the left of them because the Greens can always be marginalized.... When you get into economic decision-making, in a lot of ways the Greens are more conservative and pragmatic," adding, "Do you think [conservative San Francisco supervisor] Tony Hall would nominate a socialist to the board [of supervisors] presidency?"

his joining the presidential race "could work to the Democrats' advantage: By hammering away at populist themes... he would force the leading Democratic contenders to move left. That, he says, would expand the party's base" (10 January). No wonder "Nader speaks on platforms with Kucinich" (*Socialist Worker*, 10 October 2003), as the ISO confesses. Their intentions toward the Democrats are one and the same.

Seriously now, when have three capitalist ruling parties been better than two? Mexico has three, and most bourgeois democratic countries have even more; does this mean they are closer to socialism? What is really going on is the ISO's domino theory of pressure politics—even when there was a candidate workers

Party presidential candidate Ralph Nader is said to be watching the San Francisco results closely" (*Socialist Worker*, 14 November 2003). But the ISO was thrown in a tizzy when Ralph Nader wrote to the party's steering committee that he was withdrawing as a presidential candidate this year. The ISO now is in the very compromising position of trying to pressure Nader to run for the Greens so that he can be pressured to pressure the Democrats to reform the capitalist system. And they say this strategy is not utopian but a socialist workers revolution is?!

But it is utopian to think that the capitalist rulers could be pressured to make this society anything other than a class-divided, war-ridden, racist hellhole. The Democrats are what they are because

Where the ISO stands on page 10

WHERE WE STAND

WORKERS' POWER

Although workers create society's wealth, they have no control over its production and distribution. A socialist society can only be built when workers collectively seize control of the means of production. Workers must organize themselves independently of the union officials.

REVOLUTION NOT REFORM

Reforms within the capitalist system cannot put an end to oppression and exploitation. Capitalism must be overthrown.

They grew up under capitalism and are designed to protect the ruling class against workers. We do not support candidates of capitalist parties like the Democrats or the Republicans. The working class needs an entirely different approach.

Socialist Worker

...and where they stand everywhere else

Challenging the Parties of Corporate America

Nader 2000

by JOEL GEIER

International Socialist Review

August-September 2000

Socialist Worker

December 5, 2003

Green Party's Matt Gonzalez: A left alternative in S.F. election

Why Peter Camejo deserves your vote in California

Socialist Worker

October 3, 2003

It is clear that what motivates the ISO in this opportunist maneuver is not the politics of an individual politician, but simply that the Greens are a currently popular and liberal third party and thus supposedly a "real alternative to the two-party duopoly that runs Washington" (*Socialist Worker*, 5 December 2003). In truth, the Greens are nothing more than an attempted saving grace for the Democrats. After all, what else other than party affiliation could fundamentally differentiate the Democratic Party candidate the ISO argues against voting for, Dennis Kucinich, from the Greens? Their man, Gonzalez, must not have seen much of a difference when he decided to *endorse* Kucinich for the U.S. presidency. Nor did the *San Francisco Chronicle*, which published an article headlined in part, "Greens aren't so different from the pols they seek to replace" (7 December 2003).

The ISO states that "the purpose of Kucinich's run is to appeal to progressive voters—like the almost 3 million who voted for Ralph Nader as a third-party alternative in 2000—and pull them into the Democratic Party" (*Socialist Worker*, 10 October 2003). They quote Kucinich saying: "The Democratic Party created third parties by running to the middle. What I'm trying to do is to go back to the big tent so that everyone who felt alienated could come back through my candidacy." Well, that sounds like a theme of Nader's. The *New York Times* reports on Nader's explanation of how

could critically support, as with Socialist Workers Party's Joel Britton in the California gubernatorial recall election, the ISO went for the capitalist Greens.

While we are still eight months away from the presidential elections, the last *eight issues of their paper* (starting from November 2003) have had at least one major article on them. The ISO's obsession is political. In fact, the main reason for the ISO backing Gonzalez was that "The election could have an influence on the 2004 presidential race, as 2000 Green

they, like the Greens, defend the interests of the capitalist class. Their state, whoever is administering it, is there to defend the capitalists' property "rights." It cannot be modified, it must be smashed by socialist revolution to create a workers government. To vote for a bourgeois politician as a part of "building the movement" is an *obstacle* to mobilizing workers in class struggle against the capitalist rulers. The party the working class needs is not a "third" party of the class enemy but a revolutionary workers party. ■

Spartacus Youth Club Class Series

CHICAGO

Alternate Thursdays, 7 p.m.

January 29: **The Cuban Revolution and the Revolutionary Tendency**

University of Chicago

Cobb Hall 5811 S. Ellis Ave.

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

NEW YORK CITY

Alternate Tuesdays, 7 p.m.

January 27: **Marxist Understanding of the State, Bourgeois Elections and the Need for a Workers Party**

Columbia University

Meet in Hamilton Hall Lobby

Information and readings: (212) 267-1025 or e-mail: nysl@compuserve.com

LOS ANGELES

Alternate Saturdays, 2 p.m.

January 24: **The Revolution Betrayed**

3806 Beverly Blvd., Room 215

(Vermont/Beverly Red Line station)

Information and readings: (213) 380-8239 or e-mail: slsycla@cs.com

VANCOUVER

Thursday, 6 p.m.

January 29: **Labor Showdown in Quebec—Anglo Chauvinism Is Poison to Class Struggle! Independence for Quebec!**

Forum Chambers, Maggie Benston

Centre, Simon Fraser University

Information and readings: (604) 687-0353 or e-mail: tlilt@look.ca

Brazil...

(continued from page 1)

between labor and capital; since at least the 1989 presidential elections, this has been its program and perspective.

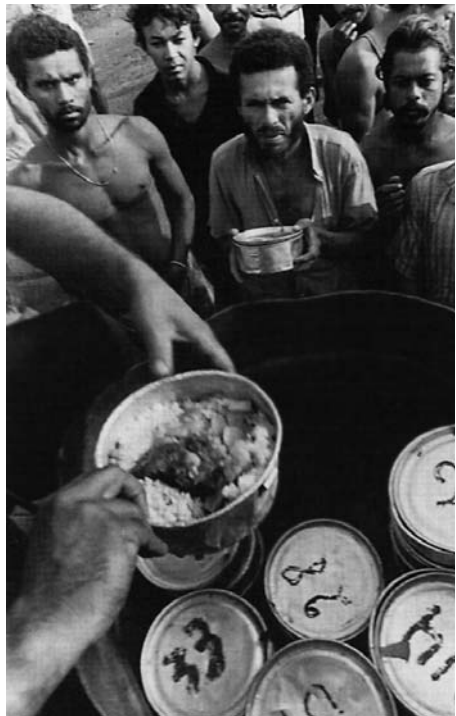
The popular front ties the proletariat to its class enemy, subordinating the workers' interests to capitalist rule. The whole history of Leninism and Trotskyism has been a struggle against class collaboration and for the political independence of the working class. That is how the Bolshevik Party was able to lead the workers of Russia to power in October 1917. Following the February Revolution which overthrew the tsarist monarchy, the Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries entered into a coalition government with bourgeois forces. Lenin's Bolsheviks denounced this as a betrayal of the proletariat, refused to give any support to the government and demanded "Down with the ten capitalist ministers!" It was a measure of the bureaucratic degeneration of the Soviet workers state that, against the whole experience of the Bolshevik Revolution, the Stalinized Communist International enshrined the "People's Front" at its Seventh Congress in 1935. Renouncing the revolutionary internationalism that animated the Russian Revolution, the policy of the popular front was part of the Kremlin's futile strategy of appeasing world imperialism by derailing workers revolution around the world.

Class-collaborationist maneuvers like the popular front are a guarantee to the bourgeoisie that the capitalist economy and private property will be protected. The experience of Chile in the early 1970s illustrates this. In 1970, Salvador Allende came to power at the head of the Unidad Popular, a popular front of the Socialist Party and the Communist Party in coalition with small bourgeois formations. Committed to upholding the bourgeois state, the Unidad Popular government preached that the workers should trust the "constitutional officers" in the high ranks of the armed forces. As we wrote at the time of Allende's coming to power:

"It is the most elementary duty for revolutionary Marxists to irreconcilably oppose the Popular Front in the election and to place absolutely no confidence in it in power. Any 'critical support' to the Allende coalition is class treason, paving the way for a bloody defeat for the Chilean working people when domestic reaction, abetted by international imperialism, is ready."

—"Chilean Popular Front,"
Spartacist No. 19,
November-December 1970

Tragically, our warnings were proven correct. In 1973, General Augusto Pinochet led a bloody coup that crushed the left and trade unions in Chile, and resulted in thousands tortured, disappeared and murdered. This is an example of why Leon Trotsky, co-leader with Lenin of the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution,



Ripper/Imagens de Terre

Brazilians held in debt bondage await rations. Some 25,000 are enslaved in Brazil.

said that the popular front is not a tactic, but the greatest crime.

The key difference between Brazil today and Chile in the early '70s is that Chile was in a pre-revolutionary situation which the popular front served to defuse. In contrast, Lula came to power with the blessing of the Brazilian bourgeoisie because the capitalists figured he had the authority to convince workers to accept austerity measures. Moreover, less than a year after the sustained protests in Argentina against the IMF's bleeding of that country's economy, sections of the Brazilian bourgeoisie wanted a president with the credentials to control or prevent any potential struggle. The PT is a bourgeois workers party, a party with a working-class base but a leadership with a pro-capitalist program. This contradiction between the base and the top of such a party is suppressed when it takes office and administers the capitalist state. Indeed, to both the imperialists and the Brazilian bourgeoisie, Lula is a credible servant.

The International Communist League opposes popular fronts and all other forms of class collaboration as a matter of *principle*, as a key component of our fight for the *political independence of the working class and against its subordination to the bourgeoisie*.

Lula Regime Attacks Workers, Peasants, the Poor

In its first year in office, the Lula government has produced a budget surplus even higher than the one demanded by the IMF. This was achieved by slashing



Eduardo/BG Press

Leaders of Landless Peasants Movement under arrest after hundreds occupied ranch owned by then-president Cardoso, March 2002.

social expenditure and increasing layoffs, accompanied by state repression. The government, for example, spent 48 billion *reals* (roughly \$17 billion) to pay debt interest to the IMF in a three-month period last year, while less than a third of this amount has been invested in infrastructure. Since Lula took office, unemployment has risen by some 600,000. According to the *New York Times* (4 January), the purchasing power of the population has diminished by 20 percent, while expenditures on social programs have been reduced by 8 percent in comparison with the final year of the previous government.

The government's attack on the pension system sparked outrage. Hailed by the IMF, this measure, enacted on December 11, will drastically reduce state workers' pensions. The minimum retirement age will be raised to 60 for men and to 55 for women. The official retirement age for men now surpasses the average life expectancy of 59. In response to the proposed pension cuts, the Central Única dos Trabalhadores (CUT—Sole Center for the Workers)—the gigantic union federation associated with the PT—launched an 800,000-strong public workers strike in July that lasted over a month. When the pension reform bill was presented to the Brazilian Senate and National Congress, four parliamentarians from the "left wing" of the PT dared to vote against it. In revenge, Lula's PT leadership expelled them from the party in December.



AFP

Civil servants on strike denounce Lula as a traitor.

Another instance in which the Lula administration has demonstrated its loyalty to capitalism has been the land question. Lula's former allies in the Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra (MST—Landless Peasants Movement) demanded land for 120,000 peasants. Lula dashed their hopes by whittling his promise down to a mere 7,000 parcels. The failure to distribute even that triggered a wave of land occupations by the peasants. Lula countered by allowing the big *latifundiários* (plantation owners) to arm bands of paramili-

tary murderers to defend their property. The Pastoral Land Commission documented that 71 agricultural workers were murdered between January and November 2003. Meanwhile, peasant leaders languish in jails; José Rainha, a leader of the MST, was convicted for land seizure in 2000 and imprisoned for over three months beginning in July 2003—i.e., under Lula's regime.

This December, the Lula government signed into law a bill that raises the minimum age for gun ownership to 25 years and requires a psychological test before purchasing a gun. The law explicitly forbids citizens from carrying their guns anywhere outside the home. This ensures that only the cops, security guards and paramilitary death squads will be armed in the streets, giving them an even freer hand to carry out their reign of terror against landless peasants in the countryside and the poor, especially black people, in the *favelas*, the shantytowns that permeate the urban landscape. According to Amnesty International, over 700 people, overwhelmingly black, were killed by the cops in the state of São Paulo between January and October 2002. The new law also sets a 2005 nationwide referendum to try to ban guns altogether. *No to gun control!*

The Potential of the Brazilian Proletariat

Brazil is a huge country of 175 million people with the eleventh-largest economy in the world; its industrial infra-

structure makes it the economic heart of Latin America. Brazil is a country of extremes, not least in its distribution of income. While big foreign firms like the German auto giant Volkswagen make millions in profit from their Brazilian plants, the impoverished population starves in the poor and overcrowded *favelas*. The "war on drugs" has turned these *favelas* into shooting galleries where police gun down street children and the poor. According to the most conservative estimates, there are hundreds of thousands of *meninos de rua* (street kids) in Brazil today, fighting for survival.

In the countryside, barely 1 percent of the population owns 46 percent of the arable land; some 4.8 million rural families have no land. Despite the myth of racial democracy, Brazil is a hideously racist country where roughly half the population is black or mulatto (the government is notorious for undercounting the number of blacks) and treated like second-class citizens. Abortion is illegal except in cases of rape.

In the last decade, conditions for the working masses in Brazil have gotten worse. This is a direct result of the capitalist counterrevolution in the Soviet Union in 1991-92 which emboldened the American imperialists and their rivals to squeeze the semicolonial world even harder for profits. From Latin America to Asia and Africa, the number of people living on less than \$2 per day has swelled as their governments fork over billions of dollars in debt payments to the IMF and World Bank. In countries such as Argentina, the industrial working class itself has been decimated and pauperized by layoffs and factory closings. One manifestation of the worsening conditions for the working class and poor in Brazil is the increasing prevalence of debt slavery. Numerous organizations document the use of slave labor in the production of Brazilian charcoal as well as on ranches, in mines and logging operations.

Throughout the 20th century, the enormous investment of foreign and state capital into Brazil's economy produced a modern industrial infrastructure which, however, coexists with the most backward forms of subjugation in the countryside and with a brutal and unstable political system. Therefore, although the national capitalist class holds state power, it is forced to live on the credits and investments of its imperialist masters.

At the same time, if the imperialists seriously felt that their financial interests in Brazil were being jeopardized either by an insurgent proletariat or by nationalist or populist elements, they would not hesitate to intervene. For example, shaken by the 1959 Cuban Revolution and the failure of the 1961 Bay of Pigs invasion, the John F. Kennedy administration feared the spread of "Castro-communism" throughout Latin America, particularly in desperately poor regions such as the northeast of Brazil. Kennedy launched the "Alliance for Progress" with promises of "nation-building" and aid for the needy. Part of the U.S. "aid" package was training the Brazilian police and special forces in the bloody arts of "subversive tracking" (i.e., assassination) and "crowd control" (i.e., police riot). Kennedy's intervention in Brazil culminated in the 1964 military coup d'état against the bourgeois-nationalist Goulart government. This ushered in two decades of totalitarian dictatorships under the military and their death squads.

Today, the Brazilian bourgeoisie, sitting on top of one of the most important economies in the continent, aspires to overcome its subordinate status and become an independent imperialist power. (In fact, Brazilian capitalism is one of the few "Third World" economies that can support its own airplane industry, EMBRAER, and even an independent space program.)

The Lula administration flaunts a number of timidly nationalist positions regarding foreign policy, particularly its opposition to the tariffs imposed by the U.S. government on imports of Brazilian

steel, and recently walked out of the Cancún summit of the World Trade Organization in protest of the FTAA's agrarian policies. Fundamentally incapable of opposing the imperialist system, Lula's government offers symbolic gestures of "independence"—which are sufficient to infuriate the arrogant Bush administration—such as Lula's visit to Libya and Syria, where he called to "end the occupation" of Iraq, or the decision to photograph and fingerprint all Americans entering Brazil, in retaliation for the treatment given by U.S. authorities to Brazilians and others. Additionally, Lula recently signed a commercial accord with China covering agribusiness, technology, construction and natural resources, and jointly launched an earth-monitoring satellite last October.

Notwithstanding the pretensions of Brazilian capitalists and the nationalist ideology they push, the historic reality of our era is that the imperialist countries of North America, West Europe and Japan are not willing to let any other country become a major imperialist power. Indeed, the door to the imperialists' elite club was slammed shut by the turn of the 20th century and never reopened. South Korea and Argentina provide dramatic examples: yesterday's perpetually "emerging powers" have been devastated by brutal economic crises generated by the demands of the imperialists.

The solution to the economic backwardness suffered by the Brazilian people cannot be found in the "national" development of capitalism. The only solution is the Trotskyist program of *per-*



12,000 auto workers protest threatened job cuts at Volkswagen auto plant near São Paulo, August 2003.

rying out this perspective: the industrial working class. Currently, only 9 percent of the Brazilian gross domestic product comes from agricultural production, while over 29 percent comes from industry, above all metallurgy and auto manufacturing. The Brazilian proletariat, with its enormous black component, has behind it a heroic history of struggle, and is organized in strong union federations. With its hands on the levers of the economy and the power to shut down production, the Brazilian proletariat is the social force that can lead the struggle on behalf of all the oppressed, from the urban poor



Slums overlooking Rio de Janeiro high-rises highlight the massive disparity between rich and poor in Brazil, one of the world's most unequal nations.

manent revolution. Only a socialist revolution, with the proletariat at its head, can begin to liberate the working class, the peasantry and all the oppressed. The fight for proletarian power in Brazil must be linked to a revolutionary internationalist perspective of workers revolution throughout the region and in North America.

In "Imperialist War and the Proletarian World Revolution" (1940), Trotsky wrote: "South and Central America will be able to tear themselves out of backwardness and enslavement only by uniting all their states in one powerful federation. But it is not the belated South American bourgeoisie, a thoroughly venal agency of foreign imperialism, who will be called upon to solve this task, but the young South American proletariat, the chosen leader of the oppressed masses. The slogan in the struggle against violence and intrigues of world imperialism and against the bloody work of native comprador cliques is therefore: the *Soviet United States of South and Central America.*"

He continued: "Only under its own revolutionary direction is the proletariat of the colonies and the semicolonies capable of achieving invincible collaboration with the proletariat of the metropolitan centers, and with the world working class as a whole. Only this collaboration can lead the oppressed peoples to complete and final emancipation, through the overthrow of imperialism the world over."

In Brazil today there exists a social force of flesh and blood capable of car-

grant proletariat, to the black proletariat of South Africa, a workers revolution in Brazil could be a catalyst for class struggle throughout the world. In turn, given the level of international interpenetration of the modern economy, a workers revolution, even in Brazil, could not survive in isolation, nor could socialism be constructed without extending the revolution internationally, especially to imperialist centers like the United States.

We Spartacists fight to bring to the workers of Latin America the understanding that they have no common interests with their "compatriots" of the national bourgeoisie, but that, instead, their best comrades in the struggle against imperialism will be the workers of industrialized countries like the United States. In the last instance, only with the participation of workers in the imperialist states can capitalist imperialism be destroyed, and the enormous resources of these countries be placed at the service of all humanity. It is necessary to break the workers in countries like the U.S. from the influence of their chauvinist trade-union leaders who push the interests of imperialism, and win them to an internationalist perspective of joint struggle with the workers of all the oppressed countries.

The Responsibility of the Left

The four PT members who were expelled from the party for voting against the pension "reform" last December are all part of the PT "left wing," which reportedly influences some 30 percent of the membership of the PT and the CUT trade-union federation. Expelled Senator Heloísa Helena and others have recently launched a new party to "reclaim" the traditions of the PT. But workers disillusioned with Lula deserve better than old garbage hidden in new pails.

The PT is a social-democratic party; that is, an organization whose basis of support in the workers movement is in contradiction with its programmatic goal: administering the capitalist state. In the 1980s, the PT's local governments administered the interests of the bosses, collaborating in layoffs, budget slashing and state repression. The best known case was that of Luiza Erundina, the PT

mayor of São Paulo, who broke an important strike by the municipal transport workers. Beginning in 1999, the PT held the governorship of the state of Rio Grande do Sul for four years, where they controlled the state police forces and implemented the austerity program of the federal government.

Where were these distinguished "left" PTers all these years? One particularly grotesque case is that of minister Miguel Rossetto, one of the most famous "left" PTers, a member of Socialist Democracy, the Brazilian associate of the United Secretariat (USec) and also Lula's minister for agrarian development—i.e., he is helping to *directly administer the capitalist Brazilian state.* As our comrades of the Ligue Trotskyste de France wrote in *Le Bolchévik* (No. 166, December 2003):

"Miguel Rossetto is 'minister of agrarian development' in a government that has distributed less land to the landless peasants than all preceding governments, jailed José Rainha, the historic leader of the Landless Peasants Movement (MST), and grants immunity to the killers in the pay of the *latifundistas*. In the November issue of *Lutte de classe*, journal of Lutte Ouvrière, you can read: 'On August 14, the Supreme Court annulled a decree allowing the expropriation of 13,200 hectares [about 25,000 acres] to 500 families, sparking the occupation of the land, which led Miguel Rossetto to declare that "in a democratic state of law, the decisions of the Supreme Court must be respected".'"

"We are opposed in principle to participation in an executive organ of the bourgeois state because it would mean taking responsibility for and participating in the repression of workers and the oppressed."

This has been a split issue ever since the French Socialist Millerand accepted a ministerial post in 1899. The debate this betrayal precipitated in the Marxist movement drove the revolutionary Marxist Rosa Luxemburg to write her classic 1900 polemic *Social Reform or Revolution*. The bourgeoisie allows "socialists" into their governments on the condition that they defend capitalism against its enemies. To accept executive office is to accept in practice the false proposition that the working class can lay hold of the bourgeois state machinery and wield it for its own purposes. In reality, the lessons of the bloody suppression of the 1871 Paris Commune showed that the levers of the existing capitalist state power cannot simply be seized by the workers and used to liberate the proletariat. The bourgeois state, the executive committee of the capitalist class, at its core consists of bodies of armed men committed to defending capitalist property. It must be smashed through socialist revolution and replaced by organs of proletarian power, i.e., a workers state.

Now, while his fellow Socialist Democracy tendency members, like Heloísa Helena, are purged from the PT for voting against Lula's attack on pensions, Rossetto has opted to hold on to his ministerial portfolio. Indeed, most of the Socialist Democracy parliamentary cretins are more than willing to maintain their little niche inside Lula's PT. In fact, Heloísa Helena's vote against the pension reform was in *opposition to the general line of Socialist Democracy*—the tendency's other MPs voted in favor, with two

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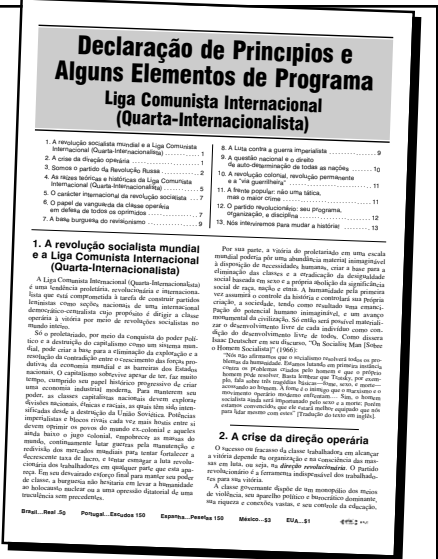
Declaration of Principles and Some Elements of Program International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist)

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Brazil...

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abstaining! This should be enough for any member of the USec who considers himself a socialist, or at least an opponent of the IMF's measures, to abandon his organization with disgust. This is the bitter fruit of "doing work" within a popular front.

In November 1994, when the USec's association with Lula's PT was still a point of international "pride," and the USec boasted of its "influence over the masses in Brazil," the speaker for the International Communist League, Joseph Seymour, said in a public debate with the USec leader Ernest Mandel:

"You've got nothing! You know what you have in Brazil? You have a bunch of *apparatchiks* for Lula! If tomorrow Lula said, 'Repudiate the Fourth International, repudiate Trotskyism, repudiate the dictatorship of the proletariat, or you're expelled,' you know what would happen? Half of you would be expelled, the other half would repudiate Trotskyism."

— "Spartacist League Debates
Ernest Mandel," WV No. 611,
25 November 1994

The majority of the leaders of the "left" tendency in the PT belong to other organizations which cynically claim to be Trotskyist. Luciana Genro and João Batista Araújo (Babá), for example, belong to different currents which follow the late pseudo-Trotskyist Argentine *caudillo* Nahuel Moreno. But the PT, with its internal currents, is not the only organization of the Brazilian workers movement. The Partido Socialista dos Trabalhadores Unificado (PSTU), Brazilian section of the Morenoite tendency, is another group that seeks to take advantage of the disillusionment among workers by presenting themselves as the left alternative to the PT. In the first round of elections in 2002, the PSTU ran independent candidates, obtaining more than 400,000 votes and the support of a big part of the so-called "far left" in Brazil. However, the PSTU voted for Lula's popular front in the second (and decisive) round of the elections.

In fact, the campaign documents of Zé Maria, presidential candidate for the PSTU, are distinguished from those of Lula by their more nationalist rhetoric. Far from utilizing its campaign to unmask the fraud of bourgeois "democracy," the PSTU explicitly promised to administer the capitalist state supposedly for the benefit of the dispossessed majority. Yet the most revealing part of its electoral program is the extensive section dedicated to "public security," where they promise to subject the Brazilian police and army to "democratic control" by the population. As core elements of the bourgeois state, the police and army can never be reformed to serve the interests of workers and the oppressed. Moreover, consistent with its reformist politics, the PSTU in its 2002 electoral program called to improve the salaries and the working conditions of the police, complaining that currently the police lack "security equipment such as bulletproof vests and even handcuffs and ammunition."

Let's not forget that we are talking



Mexican police assault anti-globalization protesters in Cancún during WTO meeting, September 2003.

about the racist Brazilian police, which uses its bulletproof vests to "safely" (for the cops) repress workers demonstrations, its handcuffs to chain peasant fighters and its ammunition to assassinate street children! It should be an elementary truth, for anyone claiming to be a Marxist, that police are not part of the workers movement but the attack dogs of the bourgeois state!

In the end, it was a division of labor in the service of class collaboration: the PSTU used its extensive influence among workers to bolster the "proletarian" credentials of the PT; the PT, in turn, subordinated the workers to the bourgeoisie in a capitalist popular-front government which is now implementing the IMF's austerity plans. The PSTU shares responsibility for the Lula regime's anti-working-class measures.

Another organization on the Brazilian left, the Liga Bolchevique Internacionalista (LBI), is characterized by covering its reformism with revolutionary phrasemongering and *vile anti-Semitism* (see "The Brazilian LBI: Centrism of Fools," WV No. 806, 4 July 2003). The LBI correctly denounced Lula's popular front and refused to give any support to the reformist PSTU, criticizing them in particular for their position to reform the police. But, in reality, the LBI does not oppose the popular front out of any principle, as shown by its support to the PT in the 1989 elections.

When the criminal World Trade Center attack took place in September 2001, the LBI described it as a legitimate act "by the Islamic militants who responded militarily to the permanent war that imperialism imposes on the peoples and oppressed nations of the Near East, by means of the unconventional 'military' resources they had available" (*Jornal Luta Operária*, September 2002). The LBI went so far as to assert that the workers killed in the attack on the WTC were a "minority" among "CIA agents" (*Marxismo Revolucionário*, December 2001)!

As for the cops, in a polemic against us in the same issue of *Marxismo Revolucionário*, the LBI complains with bitterness: "The most incredible thing is that

this tendency [the ICL] grossly falsifies the LBI's positions, accusing us of defending the police, or that the police are part of the working class. Grotesque lie against the LBI." Really? While they hypocritically recite: "No support to the reactionary police strike" ("Strike in the Police," *Marxismo Revolucionário*, December 1997), the LBI explained touchingly that "to support the demands of the police is not the best way to accelerate an open fissure within the ruling classes." And then they proceeded to propose a "better" way: "For the formation of red unions inside the troops of the armed forces and the Military Police!" In the Brazilian steel town of Volta Redonda in 1996, the LBI ran for leadership (and won control) of a cop-infested municipal workers union. Their leader, Artur Fernandes, was a staunch supporter of keeping the cops in the union. *Cops out of the unions!*

The LBI's rotten bloc partner for control of the municipal workers union in Volta Redonda was the LM/LQB (Luta Metalúrgica/Liga Quarta-Internacionalista do Brasil), which was later to be embraced by the minuscule Internationalist Group of Jan Norden as its Brazilian affiliate. An LQB supporter and ex-cop, Geraldo Ribeiro, ran for president and won with a majority of the cops' votes. The ICL insisted that LM/LQB act in accordance with its professed agreement with our program and act to separate the cops from the municipal workers union. But after a sufficiently lengthy period of discussion, we broke fraternal relations with the LQB over its unprincipled trade-union opportunism (see "A Break in Fraternal Relations with Luta Metalúrgica," WV No. 648, 5 July 1996). Afterward, when the LQB's rotten bloc with the LBI fell apart, each side dragged the union through the bosses' courts to hold tight to their union posts.

For a Leninist Party in Brazil!

Increasingly, the workers are calling the PT the "Party of Traitors." With its gigantic working class becoming more disillusioned with the broken promises of the popular front, the peasant movement

fighting desperately for land and the political situation highly volatile, Brazil promises to be the stage of convulsive class battles. However, there are no impossible situations for the bourgeoisie; it is necessary to throw them out.

The situation in Brazil powerfully exemplifies the statement that Leon Trotsky made in the Transitional Program in 1938: "The world political situation as a whole is chiefly characterized by a historical crisis of the leadership of the proletariat." We Marxists in the ICL understand that what's necessary to unchain the revolutionary potential of the Brazilian proletariat is to forge a revolutionary internationalist party. Such a party would struggle to break the working-class base of the PT away from its current leadership as part of the struggle for workers power, fusing intellectuals and students won to the side of the proletariat with the most advanced elements of the working class.

In a 7 September 2003 manifesto, the PSTU declared, "We Need a New Party to Unite the Brazilian Left." In opposition to the Brazilian fake Trotskyists, we fight to build a *Leninist vanguard party*. Their "new mass party" is in fact an old reformist idea: Karl Kautsky's "party of the whole class." It was one of Lenin's greatest contributions to the Marxist movement to realize that the *precondition* for a successful proletarian socialist revolution was a *split with the opportunists* in the workers movement, the labor lieutenants of capital in the trade unions and the "socialist" parliamentarians who cling to the coattails of the bourgeoisie.

We fight for an authentically Marxist party which will champion the rights of all the oppressed—blacks, women, homosexuals, peasants—with a class-struggle program dedicated to bringing the working class to power. In Brazil, while suffering intense racial oppression, black and mulatto workers have enormous potential social power as part of the proletariat.

A revolutionary party must aspire to become the "tribune of the people"; that is, to be capable of counterposing, in practice, the liberating ideas of communism to the prejudices of the dominant ideology in all aspects of social life: against prevailing male-chauvinism in Brazil's Catholic society; for the struggle for women's liberation as a central element of the party's program, fighting for free and legal abortion and against anti-gay discrimination; fighting against deeply rooted racism, raising the banner of black liberation and fighting in defense of peasants and indigenous people against the landowners' and cattle ranchers' brutal campaign of extermination. Such a party must be built in the struggle against the narrow and economist perspective of the pro-capitalist labor bureaucracy. It must put itself at the head of the struggles of all the oppressed as part of the fight to establish working-class rule, smashing the rule of the bosses and placing the immense resources and energies of the country in the service of the most urgent human needs. This perspective is necessarily internationalist and is part of the struggle to reforge the Fourth International to lead new October Revolutions. It is the perspective of the International Communist League. ■

CORRECTIONS

In "U.S. Imperialists Rape Iraq" (WV No. 817, 9 January), the article "Guilty of Being a Palestinian in Iraq" was attributed to the *Nation*. In fact, the article was printed on the *Counter-Punch* Web site on 22 December 2003. In "Federal Court Rules Against Ashcroft, Bush on Padilla" in the same issue, we stated that the ruling by the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals in California that "the law was unconstitutional because it would ensnare anyone who did anything from donating to an orphanage run by a banned group to buying 'cookies from a bakesale'" referred to the court's 18

December decision that the government's indefinite detention of prisoners in Guantánamo, Cuba was unlawful. In reality, this statement referred to the 3 December ruling by the same court against Clinton's 1996 Anti-Terrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act, which is referred to later in the paragraph. Finally, in "Build Picket Lines! Extend UFCW Strike!" in the same issue, we incorrectly wrote that the supermarket workers strike was moving "into its third month." In fact, the strike was already in its third month and moving into its fourth month.

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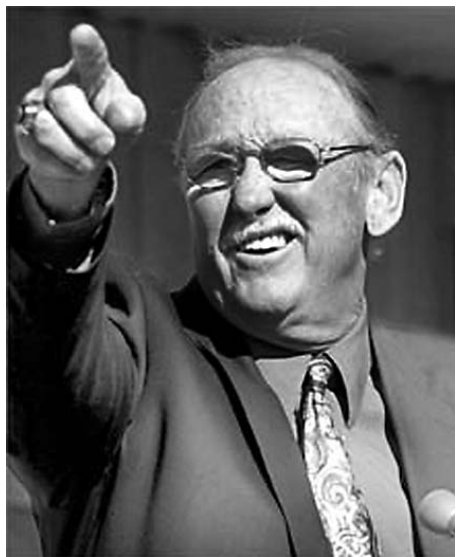
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Jackson...

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(30 November 2003) notes, the boy only revealed the supposed “improprieties” after seeing a therapist—and he was taken to the therapist *after* his family had already contacted a lawyer linked to the 1993 allegations of child molestation against Jackson. And despite the D.A.’s assertion that the sexual contact happened after the first investigation by the Los Angeles authorities, there’s a curious overlap, since the charges state the “lewd acts” happened starting on February 7, that is, a week before the first investigation. As former L.A. prosecutor Chris Darden, of O.J. Simpson fame, said: “Apparently the D.A....expects us to believe that Michael Jackson not only molested this kid prior to the children’s services investigation, but while the investigation was going on. And then continued to molest this child even after that investigation” (*CNN Legal Roundup*, 19 December 2003).

According to Harvey Levin, producer of *Celebrity Justice*, “This boy told a



AP

Obsessed Santa Barbara County D.A. Thomas Sneddon, who failed to get Jackson a decade ago, still pursuing his vendetta.

therapist that Michael Jackson fondled him in his private parts, but he’s a very reluctant witness. He did not come out and spill his guts about what allegedly happened between him and Michael Jackson. We’re told it literally had to be pulled out of him, first by attorney Larry Feldman and then by a therapist, who ultimately got the story from the boy” (Yahoo! India News, 29 November 2003). This all sounds like it’s another of those cases of fake “recovered memories.” What is clear is that whatever happened (if anything happened) between the two was entirely consensual.

Within the boy’s family, accusations have been flying back and forth about the

character of those involved. The boy’s father, who lost custody of the children after he pleaded no contest to charges of spousal abuse and child cruelty, claims the mother made their kids lie about those charges and is now fighting to overturn them. He says he believes Michael Jackson’s side of the story and is trying to get a separate lawyer for the kid in the case (*Celebrity Justice*, 1 December 2003).

A Modern-Day Lynching, Indeed

This case has garnered worldwide attention, as befits a record-breaking entertainer. Fans from Tokyo to Budapest have held vigils and demonstrations in support of Michael Jackson. Even spunky Canadian Web site www.injusticebusters.com took time off from frigid Saskatoon, Saskatchewan for a moment to comment on this most evident of injustices, comparing it to the McMartin day-care case of 20 years ago in Los Angeles. Then, wildly fantasized tales of satanic rituals and sexual abuse of children led to a widespread anti-sex witchhunt and the destruction of dozens of lives, including those of the kids who were brainwashed into believing in their own victimization.

It is noteworthy that among American blacks, Jackson’s support runs particularly strong. In the entertainment business, several high-profile black artists, from “King of Comedy” Steve Harvey to R&B diva Alicia Keys to rappers LL Cool J and Missy Elliott, have rallied in support of Jackson. Black Democrats Jesse Jackson Sr. and Al Sharpton have taken short breaks from their perennial gigs as fringe liberals selling illusions in the Democratic Party to address the clear sense of injustice around this case. Even the virulently anti-gay, anti-anything-sexual Nation of Islam of Louis Farrakhan has taken up his defense with a front-page article in their paper, where they summarize black activist Dick Gregory’s reaction to Michael’s arrest: “If they can do this to a Michael Jackson—with his money and stature—then they can do it to anyone in the Black community” (“Michael Jackson: Innocent Until Proven Guilty,” *Final Call*, 4 December 2003). As his brother Jermaine Jackson so aptly put it, this persecution is a “modern-day lynching” (CNN, 20 November 2003).

Down With Puritanical Anti-Sex Laws!

There is a justifiable felt anger over seeing that, in racist America, having money does not exempt you from being a target for state persecution and frame-ups when you’re born black. But many of those who are defending Jackson this time around would quite like the idea of incarcerating proven “pedophiles.” People who normally embrace the most backward, anti-gay, anti-“pedophile” religious



Library of Congress

Internationally renowned Irish playwright Oscar Wilde was pilloried in Victorian England for homosexuality, “corrupting the morals of youth.”

consciousness are embracing Jackson, and that is in fact a good thing for him. But unlike the myriad ministers and rap stars around who claim Michael could never be guilty of such a “heinous crime” as having sex with 12-year-old boys, we defend him against state persecution particularly because we fight for people’s right to have consensual sex with whomever they choose. The only guideline that ought to exist in sexual relations is the rule of *effective consent*, regardless of age, gender or race. Michael Jackson’s defense is also a defense of everyone’s privacy and sexual freedom.

While it is possible that Michael Jackson has been thoroughly asexual in his relationships with boys, as he steadfastly maintains, to us that is irrelevant. Jackson has been charged under part of the California penal code involving a “lewd act upon a child.” It prohibits acts with the intention of arousing, appealing to, or gratifying the lust, passions or sexual desires of the person or the child. The state clearly and willfully does not distinguish between coerced and consensual sexual acts.

The capitalist state is intent on banning all sex for young people to prepare them for a life of unfulfilled desires and urges by imposing abstinence, guilt and fear about wanting to have sex. These laws have nothing to do with protecting children; all they do is enforce puritanical values pushed by religion, and provide a moral justification for government interference in all other aspects of life. As Marxists, we reject all laws that criminalize consensual sex for youth, with or without adult partners. ***Down with all reactionary “age of consent” laws!***

The Jackson case represents an intersection of blatant anti-gay bigotry, the reactionary state-enforced stigma against intergenerational sex, and racial prejudice. And just as we defend Michael Jackson against this vicious vendetta, we have always defended the North American Man/Boy Love Association (NAMBLA)—which advocates the right of men and boys to consensual sexual relations—against state repression. We oppose the government’s Internet snoop-

ing and anti-child-porn dragnets, which criminalize not only sexual encounters but even the use of visual aids for masturbation.

In the horribly repressive, anti-sex United States of the 21st century, people like Jackson who dare to openly interact physically with children, whether or not there is sex involved, are stigmatized and persecuted. When Oscar Wilde was sent to prison in 1895, by the standards of the narrow-minded, petty and intolerant morals of Victorian England he was “guilty” not only of “gross indecency” (homosexuality) but also of “corrupting the morals of youth.” Today nearly everyone agrees that Wilde was brutally victimized by his puritan prosecutors. Yet his two-year hard-labor sentence would be considered far too *lenient* by modern American standards; many a convicted “pedophile” has been sent to jail for decades for charges similar to those against Jackson or Wilde. How far we’ve progressed in the last century!

Michael Jackson is also facing attempts to yank his three children from his custody, since anyone charged with “child molestation” ends up being considered an “unfit parent” by the courts. Publicity hound Gloria Allred, an attorney on a personal vendetta against Jackson ever since she briefly represented his 1993 accuser, has again asked child welfare officials to take his kids, claiming a “substantial risk that a child will be sexually abused by his or her parent” (AP, 21 November 2003). Allred, notorious for trying to take away O.J. Simpson’s kids after his trial, has been gunning for Jackson ever since the odd (but hardly infanticidal) incident where he held his baby son over the balcony of a German hotel for the benefit of his fans. Anyone who has any knowledge about the horrors of “state custody” of children should see this as another example of the state’s complete disregard for kids’ welfare—and how these moral crusaders’ “family values” have nothing to do with protecting kids, or anyone else for that matter. ***Hands off Michael Jackson! Leave him alone!*** ■

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WORKERS VANGUARD

Stop Vendetta Against Michael Jackson!

Michael Jackson, the 45-year-old black megastar dubbed “King of Pop” for his stellar musical career, is once again being hounded by vicious state prosecutors and unscrupulous media vultures on yet another witchhunt over alleged “child molestation” charges, to which he entered a “not guilty” plea on January 16. Last November, Santa Barbara County District Attorney Thomas Sneddon announced an arrest warrant for Michael Jackson, a day after no less than 70 police investigators invaded Jackson’s 2,700-acre Neverland Ranch to conduct a privacy-busting search into his palatial estate. Set up for maximum humiliation, Michael Jackson surrendered himself to police for booking on November 20, and was released after posting an outrageous *three million dollar* bail, many times more than that set for high-profile murder cases. He was charged with seven counts of child molestation and two counts of administering alcohol to a child. After Jackson reported on *60 Minutes* that he was mistreated during the arrest, the Santa Barbara sheriff threatened further criminal charges against Jackson for daring to even speak out about his treatment.

Since then Jackson’s life has been plunged into chaos; reportedly already mired in debt, even if he wins this case, Jackson stands to lose millions of dollars in legal fees, not to mention what further impact it might have on his life and career. Should he lose, he could face the prospect of spending the rest of his life behind bars, as each charge carries three to eight years in jail.

This case is a government-sponsored anti-sex witchhunt, targeting a man who is famous for challenging both racial and sexual identities. It showcases the hell-hole that is capitalist America, where the government persecutes people for real or imagined sexual adventures—especially if they involve minors—while extolling the virtues of “democracy” and “freedom” by bombing whole countries into submission. The capitalist media, whose main job is to indoctrinate the population with bourgeois values and prejudices such as anti-gay bigotry and racial stereotyping, advance like hungry hyenas on celebrities such as Michael Jackson whenever they dare break the “one man on one woman for life” (as long as they’re “adults”!) ideal. “Deviance,” as can be seen by watching most of the “celebrity” shows available, is punished with harassment, moral reprobation and, whenever possible, state prosecution, to set examples for the masses. And to be a target for state and media harassment, who better than a black man who sounds very feminine, wears makeup, looks whiter than many “pedigreed” whites and openly professes a love for sharing his bed with pubescent, mostly white, boys?

As we said a decade ago when Michael Jackson was facing similar accusations: “Witchhunts like the one against Michael Jackson are manipulated for reactionary political ends and serve to reinforce the bourgeoisie’s warped and indecent values through fear and intimidation.”

—“Stop the Witchhunt Against Michael Jackson!” WV No. 592, 21 January 1994

These “morality” campaigns are really



January 16: Michael Jackson, accompanied by family members, leaves California court after pleading “not guilty” to charges of child molestation. Below: Protest on the Hollywood Walk of Fame defends Jackson.



designed to prop up and glorify the repressive institution of the family, the main source of oppression of women and children under capitalism. They serve as battering rams for social reaction, from anti-gay bigotry to anti-abortion and anti-science campaigns. The state has no business interfering in people’s private lives, much less in what goes on with people’s crotches. *Government out of the bedroom!*

Much has been said about Jackson’s bizarre appearance and lifestyle. He seems to commune with chimps and giraffes more than with human beings, loves children to the point of obsession, changes his facial features as one would change a cellphone plate. But despite decades of criticism over his facial reconstructive surgeries which have given him an otherworldly (and decidedly non-black) appearance, Michael looks downright angelic compared to the truly ghoulish creep-meister, District Attorney Thomas Sneddon. Sneddon exhibited such unbridled glee over his chance to nab Jackson—almost foaming at the

mouth in front of the cameras—that he later had to apologize for some of his remarks. These included referring to Jackson as “Jacko Wacko” in an interview with Court TV (20 November 2003) and urging the throngs of reporters and cameramen in town to report on the case to “stay long and spend lots of money because we need your sales tax to support our offices” (Associated Press, 26 November 2003).

This is the same guy who tried to put Jackson behind bars in 1993, when an equally flimsy accusation of child molestation by a then-13-year-old boy led to an eerily similar media circus and subjected the artist to unspeakable humiliation, including having pictures of his genitals taken. Everybody now knows the outcome: after months of unbearable scrutiny and a career left in tatters, Jackson reached a settlement resulting in a reported 20 million dollar purchase of the accuser’s silence.

But details that came out after investigation by *GQ* reporter Mary Fisher unveiled a very transparent frame-up by the

accuser’s parents and lawyers, including evidence that money had been asked for by the boy’s father *before* the boy actually alleged any sexual abuse. Most damning was the fact that the child had been administered Sodium Amytal, a drug that puts people in a hypnotic state, before the first accusations of sexual abuse were made. As far back as 1952, studies have shown that false memories can be easily implanted in those under its influence. Fisher quotes Cleveland psychiatrist Phillip Resnick: “It is quite possible to implant an idea through the mere asking of a question.... The idea can become their memory, and studies have shown that even when you tell them the truth, they will swear on a stack of Bibles that it happened” (“Was Michael Jackson Framed? The Untold Story,” *GQ*, October 1994). And this is what Sneddon wanted to use as “evidence,” until the settlement denied him any witnesses to prosecute the case.

A Case Made in...a Hollywood Basement?

This time around, the prosecution’s basis for a case, even using the current draconian, anti-sex laws being invoked, is running thinner than a Hollywood diet soup. In fact, new California laws on child molestation were passed specifically in response to the 1993 witchhunt of Michael Jackson. These include tougher sentencing and relaxed requirements for admitting evidence, including allowing “hearsay.” Even if the child retracts his charges of sexual abuse, the prosecution of the defendant can still continue. Strangest of all, any prior *allegations* against the accused can be admitted into “evidence,” even if the charges had been retracted or were shown to be outright lies, because they supposedly show a “propensity” to commit an offense—sounds more like a “propensity” to be framed up by vindictive prosecutors.

The current case itself is one of flimsy argumentation, unreliable characters and zero evidence. It turns out that between 14 and 27 February 2003 the accusing boy, his mother and his siblings were interviewed by Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services in an investigation following a British TV documentary aired on ABC last February which shows the boy saying he had slept over at the Neverland Ranch with Michael Jackson. The mother told the investigators that her children “are never left alone” with Michael, and when her son slept in Michael’s bedroom, they never actually shared a bed. The boy and his brother explicitly denied any sexual contact with the pop star. His sister, who accompanied her brothers on sleepovers at Neverland, corroborated this, saying that she “had never seen anything sexually inappropriate between her brothers and the entertainer.” The department and the police concluded the allegations were “unfounded” (www.thesmokinggun.com, 9 December 2003).

Sometime later, the boy’s mother decided something “improper” indeed had happened. But as the *Observer*

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