

We Need a Fighting Workers Party!

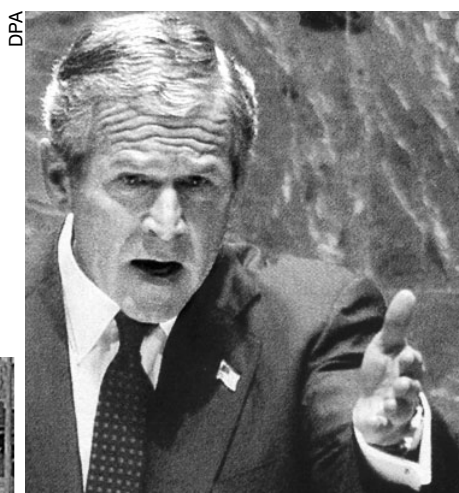
Break with the Democrats! No Vote to Nader!

The oddly demented George W. Bush administration's brutal invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq, the Abu Ghraib torture scandal, its "war on terror" at home, combined with scary Christian fundamentalism and crude war-profiteering, have generated disgust and dismay. It is not surprising that growing numbers of people view the upcoming presidential election as a referendum on the Iraq war and feel compelled to vote for "Anybody but Bush." The problem is you can't actually vote *against* the war, you have to vote *for* someone, and neither of the other two main white men running, Democrat John Kerry (richest man in the Senate millionaires' club) nor lawyer/small businessman Ralph Nader, speak for the interests of the working class and oppressed. While Kerry and the Democrats might have thought Bush's timing and unilateral launching of the Iraq invasion unwise, they understand that an immediate pullout would be a major defeat for the U.S. ruling class, and thus Kerry has vowed to stay the course. Nader's proposal for replacing U.S. troops with United Nations forces would merely continue the occupation of Iraq in different garb.

The awful machinery of the Pentagon will not stop grinding because a new man is in the White House. The American prison house for black people won't open, nor will factory owners, businessmen and bankers halt their relentless drive to maximize profits at the expense of the working class; nor will the cops, the armed thugs of capitalism, put down their guns. In Boston, where the Democratic National Convention (DNC) will be taking place, the cops shot in the back and killed a Roxbury black man, Bert W. Bowen, on June 27, then less than a week later killed a reportedly mentally ill Hispanic man, Luis Gonzalez, in his own home. Meanwhile, the citizens of Boston are treated like criminals and terrorists, as Boston transit has instituted a "random" search-and-seizure of passengers' bags! This is just a taste of what's in store for New York, where thousands of new cops have been sworn in to police the protesters against the Republican National Convention (RNC) in August.

Rock the Vote? Rock the System

The main organizers of rallies during the DNC focus on gently pressuring the Democrats, saving big protest for the



DPA



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Two faces of imperialist war in 2004 elections: George W. Bush carries out bloody colonial occupation of Iraq; Democrat Kerry calls for more U.S. troops.

RNC protests. One of the puppets for the Boston rallies represents a 70-foot backbone, supposedly to stiffen the Democrats' spine. The liberal *Nation* (7 June) quoted Boston activist Malia Lazu of the "League of Pissed Off Voters": "If you want to be an anarchist, that's fine, but then we'll all still be here. Could you just not be an anarchist on voting day?" There's a Punkvoter "Rock Against Bush" tour, while Def Jam founder Russell Simmons is working a "Rock the

Vote" hip-hop angle. Pressure is being put on young people to vote "wisely" or they'll blow the whole process.

But the path to ending war, exploitation and oppression lies outside the electoral process, since you can't vote capitalism out of existence. An economic system based on private ownership and extraction of profit from the working people who produce the wealth is defended by the capitalist state—its courts, cops and prisons. This systematic force and vio-

lence is cloaked in the guise of "democracy," whereby you get to vote every four years for which capitalist party and politician will rule. To sweep away the whole rotten system, we need to build a fighting workers party which leads militant, integrated class struggle *outside the electoral framework* to smash capitalist rule and replace it with a workers government based on an egalitarian, socialist, planned, collectivized economy. The purpose of the Trotskyist Spartacist League and Spartacus Youth Clubs is to participate in social struggles with the aim of building the revolutionary party necessary to achieve this future; this also requires contesting against reformists and ostensible socialists who in deeds work to reconcile disaffected workers, minorities and youth to their class enemy and its bankrupt social order.

The two capitalist parties, or as Gore Vidal called them, the two wings of the Property Party, are deeply intertwined. Republican Ronald Reagan and a Democratic Congress cut taxes for the rich in the 1980s, while Democratic president Clinton and a Republican Congress in the 1990s slashed welfare—both parties unite in serving the needs of capitalism. Today, John Kerry doesn't even pretend to oppose most of Bush's policies. Kerry is *for* an additional 40,000 troops to Iraq; he was *for* the Patriot Act, which assaults civil liberties. He was *for* Clinton's 1996 Welfare Reform Act, which denied hundreds of thousands, mainly children, food or housing. He supports Israel's war against the Palestinian people, writing a paper titled "The Cause of Israel Is the Cause of America." Objectively, a vote for Kerry is a vote *for* these positions, despite the subjective intentions of antiwar voters.

All this, and more, the ANSWER coalition will tell you, since right now they are sponsoring two rallies at the DNC and RNC against "the twin parties of the war machine." But talk is cheap. In fact, what the ANSWER coalition did was run the Iraq antiwar protests straight

continued on page 8

Trotskyism and Anarchism in the Spanish Civil War

See Page Four



Supreme Court Rulings— Partial Setback to Bush Administration

The following statement was issued by the Spartacist League and the Partisan Defense Committee on July 5. The PDC is a class-struggle, non-sectarian legal and social defense organization which champions cases and causes in the interest of the whole of the working people. This purpose is in accordance with the political views of the SL.

On June 28, the Bush administration’s efforts to institutionalize rule by presidential fiat ran into an obstacle when the U.S. Supreme Court declared that “a state of war is not a blank check for the president.” In a plurality decision written by Justice O’Connor and joined by three others, the court held that Yaser Esam Hamdi, an American citizen taken into custody in Afghanistan in 2001, could not indefinitely be held as an “enemy combatant” without “notice of the factual basis for his classification” and a “fair opportunity to rebut the Government’s factual assertions

Free Jose Padilla and All the Detainees!

before a neutral decisionmaker.” The court also ruled that he must be allowed some form of legal assistance. Four other justices condemned Hamdi’s incarceration, though reaching different conclusions as to what action the court should take. Justices Souter and Ginsburg found Hamdi’s detention violated the 1971 Non-Detention Act, which declared that “[n]o citizen shall be imprisoned or otherwise detained by the United States except pursuant to an Act of Congress.” But rather than call for his release, they concurred with the court’s ruling sending

Hamdi’s case back to the lower courts for further proceedings. Arch-conservative Scalia, joined by the liberal Stevens, dissented on the grounds that since Congress never voted to suspend *habeas corpus*, Hamdi must either be formally charged with a crime or released. Scalia declared, “The very core of liberty secured by our Anglo-Saxon system of separated powers has been freedom from indefinite imprisonment at the will of the Executive.” In another setback for Bush & Co., the court ruled by a six-to-three majority that the 600 detainees held in Guantánamo had a right to file *habeas corpus* petitions challenging their imprisonment. Justice Stevens’ decision rejected the government’s flimsy contention that American courts have no jurisdiction because the base is on Cuban territory. At the same time, by a five-to-four majority, the court dismissed the claim of Jose Padilla—another American citizen picked up at Chicago’s O’Hare airport in 2002—on the outrageous pretext it was filed in the wrong federal district court.

Had the court adopted the government’s case in its entirety, it would have eviscerated 200 years of American constitutional law giving the courts judicial oversight of executive branch decisions. In *amici curiae* (friends of the court) briefs submitted on Padilla’s behalf in the Second Circuit Court of Appeals and later in the Supreme Court by the Marxist Spartacist League and Partisan Defense Committee, we noted, “What the President asserts is nothing less than the right to disappear citizens.... This is an unprecedented assertion of imperial powers by the President. The District Court’s deference to the President’s determination of Padilla’s status as an enemy combatant relegates to the President the role of sole arbiter of the exercise and applicability of democratic, constitutional rights. This is consonant with the rationale of a police state.”

Any impediment to the government’s police state designs is welcome, but the Court’s decisions were far from the “emphatic repudiation” of the Bush administration the ACLU claimed them to be. Though upholding some limits on presidential power, the Court’s decisions recognize a right of due process and *habeas corpus* so truncated that in any other context, these decisions would be seen as consistent with the wholesale shredding of these protections. The dismantling of these rights began under Democratic president Clinton and has been carried forward with a vengeance by Bush. In Hamdi’s case, the lead decision not only affirms the government’s claim of authority to declare Hamdi an “enemy combatant,” but permits the government to base its case against him solely on hearsay evidence. Casting aside the presumption of innocence that is the underpinning of due process, O’Connor declares, “The Constitution would not be offended by a presumption in favor of the Government’s evidence.”

The “neutral decisionmaker” envisioned by the Court includes kangaroo courts like the military tribunals set up by Rumsfeld. In affirming the Guantánamo detainees’ right to file *habeas corpus* petitions, the Court evaded the question of whether even the minimal protections accorded to Hamdi would apply to them as well. Nor did the justices touch the question of citizenship rights in either the Padilla or Hamdi cases. But with an administration

that sees its actions as not merely above the law *but the law itself*, the Supreme Court has sent a message to the Bush regime that it can’t do whatever it wants—at least not yet.

The Court’s reluctance to decide Padilla’s case can be traced to its endorsement of the government’s bogus “war on terror.” While the Court held that the government has the authority to prevent “enemy combatants” from returning to the field of battle while fighting continues, Afghanistan in Hamdi’s case, a ruling on Padilla’s claim would compel the Court to confront the administration’s claims that the “battlefield” in the “war on terror” is everywhere and its duration eternal. As we wrote in the *amici* brief: “The ‘war against terrorism’ is a fiction, a political construct, not a military reality. It is a political crusade conducted in the name of ridding society of a perceived evil. It is no more a ‘war’ in a military sense than ‘war against cancer,’ ‘war against obesity’ or a ‘war against immorality.’ Like the ‘war against communism’ and the ‘war against drugs,’ this ‘war’ is a pretext to increase the state’s police powers and repressive apparatus, constricting the democratic rights of the population.”

From the outset of the “war on terror,” we have insisted that the government’s repressive measures, directed initially at Muslims and immigrants, and trampling on political dissent along the way, would necessarily broaden, with its ultimate targets being the multiracial labor movement and black people. This was borne out by the detentions of American citizens Padilla and Hamdi. As our brief stated, “The treatment of Padilla is intended as both the precursor and legal justification for application of Executive unilateral prerogatives on a broader scale, denying due process protections in criminal prosecutions, immigration proceedings and civil challenges to government policy. It is a frontal assault on the very concepts of due process and citizenship itself.... The target of the Executive is any and all perceived opponents of government policy.”

The democratic rights under attack today were won through centuries of struggle and revolution—the parliamentary partisans in the English Civil War, the U.S. Revolutionary War, the French Revolution, American Civil War, pitched labor battles of the 1930s and the mass movement against Jim Crow segregation. And they must be defended as well through the struggles of black people, immigrants and defenders of civil liberties welded to the power of the multiracial labor movement. ■



TROTSKY

Lessons of the Spanish Civil War

We translate below excerpts from a 1937 leaflet issued by the Spanish Trotskyists on the eve of the Barcelona May Days workers revolt. This took place almost a year following the heroic workers uprising known as the July Days of the Spanish Civil War. The combative Spanish proletariat had risen up against Franco’s coup attempt, posing point-blank the necessity of the proletariat to seize state power. But the treacherous leadership of the working class subordinated the masses to the popular-front government, paving

the way for the ultimate triumph of Franco’s reactionary forces.

On July 19 the proletariat lacked the revolutionary leadership that is indispensable for the conquest of political power, of state power.

The far left organizations were not prepared to defeat the bourgeois state. Anarchosyndicalism rejected, completely, the necessity for political power: set against the bitter reality, this theory has led some of its chiefs to demean themselves as servants of the bourgeois state instead of erecting the proletarian state. Nor was there, or is there, an authentically Marxist vanguard. On the other hand, the reformist movement unmasked itself as the principal prop of the liberal, that is, capitalist, bourgeoisie....

“Without world revolution, we are lost,” said Lenin. This is even truer for Spain; furthermore to lead the world proletariat to insurrection we must get ahead of them with our own example....

War and revolution are inseparable, or more exactly, the war cannot be won without the revolution, or even more precisely: only the dictatorship of the proletariat can win the war.

What is the dictatorship of the proletariat?

The domination of the immense majority over the exploiting minority, the concentration of the revolutionary forces for military, political and social victory over the reaction, the definitive rupture with the bourgeois past.

Who will make up the proletarian dictatorship?

The democratic organs of the masses, the workers, peasants and fighters councils, their assemblies and congresses of local, regional and national delegates, their revolutionary executive committees. The unions must organize the economy, but the whole class has to take the fate of society into its hands.

The emancipation of the working class can only be carried out by the working class itself.

DOWN WITH THE BOURGEOIS REPUBLIC!
LONG LIVE THE DICTATORSHIP OF THE PROLETARIAT!

—“Against Fascism and Bourgeois Reaction; *Dictatorship of the Proletariat!*”
Bolshevik-Leninist Section of Spain (for a Fourth International),
Barcelona, 1 May 1937

WORKERS VANGUARD

Marxist Working-Class Biweekly of the Spartacist League of the U.S.

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No. 829

9 July 2004

Partisan Defense Committee

CLASS-STRUGGLE DEFENSE NOTES

Number 31 50¢ Summer 2003

BRIEF OF AMICI CURIAE SPARTACIST LEAGUE AND PARTISAN DEFENSE COMMITTEE ON BEHALF OF JOSE PADILLA AND GRANTING HIS WRIT OF HABEAS CORPUS

In The
UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS
For The Second Circuit
Docket No. 03-2235
(03-2418)

JOSE PADILLA, Donna R. Newman,
as Next Friend of Jose Padilla,
Petitioner-Appellee-cross-Appellant,
v.
DONALD RUMSFELD,
Respondent-Appellant-cross-Appellee.

On Appeal from the United States District Court
for the Southern District of New York

SEE PAGE 2

Free All MOVE Prisoners! Free Mumia Abu-Jamal!
25th Anniversary of Powelton Village Siege 18
“Anti-Terror” Dragnet Threatens 13,000 with Expulsions
Stop the Deportations! 22

Class-Struggle Defense Notes
No. 31, Summer 2003
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Government “Terrorism” Frame-Up Threatens Everyone

Drop the Charges Against Lynne Stewart, Mohammed Yousry, Ahmed Abdel Sattar!

On June 22, the government’s sinister frame-up trial of leftist attorney Lynne Stewart, her translator Mohammed Yousry and paralegal Ahmed Abdel Sattar began in Manhattan’s old federal courthouse. The seven-count indictment is a bomb-shell of charges wrapped around the lie that the defendants conspired to defraud the U.S. government and “provide and conceal material support and resources to terrorist activity.” Lynne Stewart, Mohammed Yousry and Ahmed Abdel Sattar are not guilty of any crime. All three face decades in prison if convicted.

Lynne Stewart, a leftist lawyer and 64-year-old grandmother, had the courage to provide legal defense as a court-appointed attorney for Egyptian sheik Omar Abdel Rahman, a reactionary Islamic fundamentalist cleric. The sheik, a blind diabetic with heart trouble, was imprisoned for life on charges stemming from the 1993 World Trade Center bombing. Lynne Stewart continued to fight on behalf of her client and against his extraordinary and draconian prison conditions. For this, Stewart, Yousry and Sattar are themselves now smeared as accomplices to “terrorism.”

This case is a loaded gun the federal government has aimed at *everyone* in America. At issue is whether attorneys have the right to provide legal defense



Leftist attorney Lynne Stewart with her husband, Ralph Poynter.

for anyone with unpopular views without being accused of the crime themselves. At issue is whether anyone accused of a crime has the right to legal defense, the right to free speech and association, to publicize their views to the world outside the jail cell, or even the right to receive news of the world beyond the prison walls. This case is being prosecuted by the same capitalist rulers who ordered torture and maintained that their victims in Abu Ghraib and Guantánamo had no right to legal defense (see related article, page 2).

The government is trying to set a deadly precedent with this case by target-

ing the attorney of a Muslim cleric whose rights they think nobody will care about. Because they have the courage to represent sheik Adbel Rahman, Lynne Stewart and co-defendants are smeared by the government as guilty by association. We are atheistic communists who hailed the entry of the Red Army in Afghanistan against the CIA-backed Islamic fundamentalist *mujahedin*. Thus we are stalwart opponents of the views of an Islamic cleric like sheik Abdel Rahman. But we oppose any enhancement of the capitalist state’s machinery of repression because it will be used against the labor movement and the left.

Think of the implications: if Lynne Stewart is found guilty for defending a right-wing Islamic fundamentalist and conveying his views, what would stop the government from repressing its opponents on the left side of the political spectrum? Could Mumia Abu-Jamal, a former Black Panther, MOVE supporter and award-winning journalist, framed as a “cop killer” and now writing from death row, be next? The FBI tagged the Black Panther Party as “terrorist” and 38 Panthers were shot dead while hundreds more were railroaded to prison under the deadly COINTELPRO counter-intelligence program. Could the government rule it a “criminal conspiracy” to publish Mumia’s columns, fight for his freedom and the abolition of the racist death penalty? Could one be accused of “material support to terrorism” for publishing or buying his books or broadcasting his powerful voice? Could a union leadership be charged as co-conspirators in “terrorism” for rightly defending a union militant arrested for stopping scabs with an effective picket line?

Uncle SAM and Big Brother

None of the defendants are charged with knowledge, planning or participation in any of the following crimes: the bombing

continued on page 5

For a National Unionization Campaign! Port Truckers Strike East, Gulf Coasts

Coming some two months after the May West Coast port truckers strike, hundreds of non-union, heavily black and immigrant independent truck drivers struck last week at ports throughout the East and Gulf coasts in a fight against rising fuel costs, grinding exploitation and anti-union laws. On June 28, the strike was 90 percent effective at Port Newark, New Jersey, one of the country’s principal container ports. At the Port of Charleston, the country’s fourth-busiest container port, 80 percent of the truckers participated in the strike. Scores of protesting truckers demonstrated at the ports of Newark, Charleston, Savannah, Miami and New Orleans. By June 30 most picketers had returned to work, but the Port of Miami remained virtually shut down, and Charleston truckers continued their strike until the end of the week.

Charleston truckers struck two days earlier on June 26, and the picket lines were honored by railway workers at the CSX rail yard, shutting the yard down for most of the day. Bill Campbell, elected spokesman for the Charleston port truckers, told WV of the International Longshoremen’s Association (ILA) “giving us water, food for the cookout, coming to speak to the drivers, letting them know how important this labor movement was and that we set history down here in South Carolina sticking together.” Yet the ILA undercut the port truckers strike by continuing to work ships behind the truckers’ pickets.

The drivers who transport containers on and off the docks are treated like dirt. Paid by the load, they typically work 60-hour weeks for the equivalent of less than \$8 an hour, with no benefits. The drivers are forced to use chassis (wheeled flat trailers) owned by the terminals and shipping companies, which don’t give a damn



Truckers picketing Port of New Orleans, June 28.

about maintaining the brakes, tires and overall safety. They have to wait long, unpaid hours because the bosses prefer to save money by stacking containers in high piles on the ground instead of loading them directly onto road-worthy chassis. Although there are record levels of cargo, most port truckers struggle to eke out an existence.

Port truckers are victims of a system that gutted unionization, replacing unionized workers with owner-operators after deregulation of the trucking industry in 1980. Many drivers had to buy their own rigs and absorb the cost of insurance, fuel, maintenance and other operating expenses. A trucker in Norfolk, Virginia declared: “It’s a situation where I’m not sure if I should put tires on the truck, buy fuel or [put] food on the table. Try and tell that to your kids.”

The strike in late June, though involving only a fraction of the 50,000 port truckers nationally, was an impressive demon-

stration of social power. Unionization is key to harnessing this power for the direct benefit of the port truckers. A successful campaign to organize port truckers nationally would give the union-organized workers control of each link in container shipments, from the docks to the highways and rail yards. Because they are owner-operators, the port truckers are deemed by the shipping bosses and the courts to be independent businessmen subject to federal price-fixing laws, thereby prohibiting them from unionizing. Typical was the January 2000 decision by a California superior court in L.A. that ruled that port truckers were “independent contractors.” Such union-busting schemes hark back to the 1890 Sherman Antitrust Act, supposedly directed against capitalist monopolies but used for decades to break strikes.

Port truckers have real social power. An article in the 17 May issue of the *Journal of Commerce* noted, “Shippers could face a long, hot and tense summer

if recent protests by container truckers at the ports of Oakland, Los Angeles-Long Beach and Norfolk are any indication.” In fact, following the West Coast strike this May, many port truckers made some real gains, including 15 percent or more increases in the amount paid per container load by some companies.

In December 2001, the Teamsters, the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) and the ILA announced an alliance to organize port truckers. Organizing the port truckers is a basic requirement for working-class unity on the docks. As a result of their experience in the 2002 lockout, some West Coast longshoremen are starting to recognize that the fight to organize the port truckers is in their interest. Indeed, organizing the port truckers would open the road to uniting all dock workers into one industrial waterfront union coast to coast and beating back the capitalists’ divide-and-conquer strategy. Such a perspective would require mobilizing union power on behalf of the port truckers.

But the Teamsters, ILA and ILWU have made no real effort to organize the country’s port truckers. In fact, Teamster-organized “SeaLogix” truckers were seen working during the Oakland strike this spring (see “Support and Organize the Port Truckers!” WV No. 826, 14 May). And the ILWU bureaucracy has sought to take away a portion of the port truckers’ work to give to the ILWU longshoremen. On the other hand, a WV sales team was told that on June 28, Teamsters stickers were distributed by the ILWU at the Local 10 union hall in the Bay Area calling to “Free the Oakland 3,” port truckers who were facing a lawsuit stemming from the May strike. A port trucker told WV that he thought the suit was dropped

continued on page 9

Trotskyism and Anarchism in the Spanish Civil War

We conclude below a slightly edited presentation by Spartacist speaker Adrian Ortega at a Spartacist League/Spartacus Youth Club public educational in New York City on April 3. Part One of this talk appeared in WV No. 828 (11 June).

PART TWO

With the armed proletariat in the militias and the workers committees growing at a great rate, the capitalists were afraid of a new workers radicalization like that of July. In September 1936, in order to appease the workers, Azaña appointed a new cabinet in his government with the PSOE [Socialist Workers Party] and UGT [General Workers Union—affiliated to the Socialists], the PCE [the Stalinist Communist Party] and the bourgeoisie. In Catalonia, the anarchists for the first time joined the government; and two months later, they entered the national government. In Catalonia, the popular-front government also included the POUM [the centrist Workers Party of Marxist Reunification] for four months. That is, the Spanish left groups with significant influence in the working class sealed their



Augusti Centelles

Leftist militiamen fight Francoist forces on Aragon front, 1937.

torial staff. How about that for “anti-authoritarian organizations”?

Now I’ll read another quote:

“As soon as they were faced with a serious revolutionary situation, the Bakuninists had to throw the whole of their old programme overboard. First they sacrificed their doctrine of absolute abstention from political, and especially electoral,

orders of a centralized *bourgeois* army. The Republicans ordered the militarization of the militias, and the Socialist and anarchist ministers in the popular front voted for it. The majority of the members of the Friends of Durruti came from the thousands of anarchist militants who refused to submit to the militarization. Pablo Ruiz, who had fought with Buena-ventura Durruti himself on the front, represented one wing of the group, and the prominent writer Jaime Balius represented another.

The four thousand members of the Friends of Durruti stood against the class collaborationism of the CNT-FAI and counterposed to it the call for revolution. They defended this by pointing out that “all revolutions are totalitarian.” They raised the call for a “Revolutionary Junta!” According to Amorós, this was a variant of the concept advocated by the CNT of a “National Committee of Defense” in the face of the failure exhibited by the decentralization of the militias against Franco. The Friends of Durruti were CNT workers and militiamen who faced the prospect of being disarmed under the orders of their anarchist leadership. Their opposition to class collaboration was the empirical conclusion of their direct experience with the forceful “militarization” of the militias. However, this didn’t contradict their affiliation to the CNT since the anarchist ideal of libertarian communism, a stateless society based on a decentralized economy run by local workers committees, was something that still looked feasible to them. However, the Friends of Durruti’s political positions were in motion, like those of

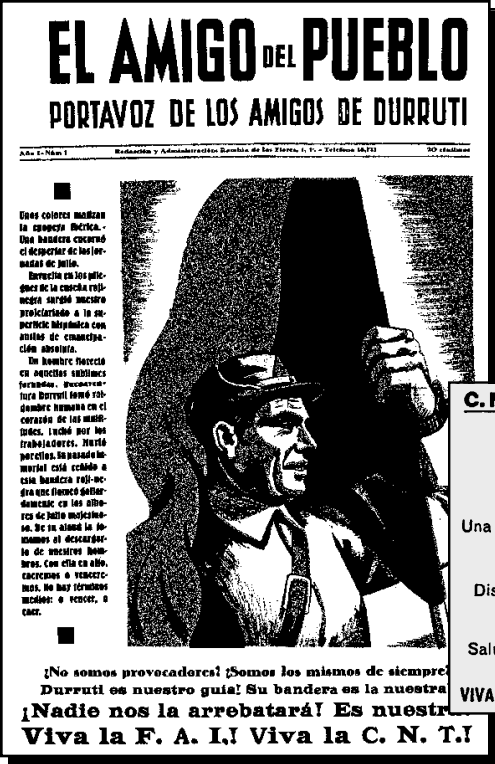
the Spanish anarcho-syndicalists who witnessed and embraced the 1917 Russian Revolution. The Friends of Durruti learned from the negative example of the CNT; but they first had to break with their anarchist prejudices against the Leninist vanguard party and the dictatorship of the proletariat in order to fully embrace a revolutionary program. That opportunity presented itself in May 1937.

The Barcelona May Days

Almost a year had passed after the “July events” in Barcelona when on 3 May 1937 the government decided to take the Telefónica building out of the hands of the CNT workers who ran it. Assault Guards commanded by the Stalinist Rodríguez Salas arrived at the building and, on behalf of the popular front, ordered the workers to abandon it. Workers put up resistance and the exchange of fire began. The word of an attack on the Telefónica spread like wildfire. In four hours a general strike was declared and the city was engulfed in street fighting with barricades being formed, as during the “July events,” by workers of the CNT-FAI, the left-POUM and, this time, the Friends of Durruti and the Trotskyist Bolshevik-Leninists.

The CNT-FAI tops and the popular-front government sent García Oliver and other CNT bureaucrats from Valencia to order the workers back to their homes. He urged the workers: “Hold your fire; embrace the Assault Guards!” The POUM defended their headquarters at the Hotel Falcon from the Assault Guards but refused to take any step forward. The local leaderships of the CNT and POUM met that night, but the anarchist bureaucracy insisted on no more than the dismissal of Salas and the formation of a new government in order to stop the confrontation. The workers had a different agenda though, pushed by their instinct of class self-defense.

On May 4, Barcelona was under the control of the workers, except for the center of the city, where the battles continued until dusk. One of the first workers detachments in the early hours of that night was 400 Friends of Durruti fighters who occupied the whole of Las Ramblas Avenue and patrolled the surrounding area. The same day, the Bolshevik-Leninists handed leaflets to the workers on the barricades that called for a “General strike in all the industries that don’t work for the war” and for the “arming of the working class.” Workers desperately needed a leadership!



Left: First issue of left anarchist Friends of Durruti’s newspaper, *El Amigo del Pueblo* (Friend of the People), depicting Buenaventura Durruti. Below: Group’s 5 May 1937 leaflet calls for a “revolutionary junta,” concludes with, “Long live the social revolution! Down with the counterrevolution!”



alliance with the bourgeoisie. What was the internal functioning of the CNT [the anarchist National Confederation of Labor] and the FAI [the political arm of the CNT] at the time? Miguel Amorós explains in his book *La revolución traicionada: La verdadera historia de Balius y Los Amigos de Durruti*:

“The plenums didn’t take into account the assemblies of the unions and ignored the opinion of the militias. Against every norm of the confederation, it was the committees who called on them and elaborated the agenda, which was not always communicated to the delegates. The delegates attended without a mandate and without knowing what they were going to discuss or the relevance of decisions to be adopted.”

The CNT and FAI bureaucracies, sharing power with the bourgeoisie, started going after those anarchists who criticized the corrupt methods of the leadership. Such anarchists included the writer Jaime Balius, a future leader of the Friends of Durruti group who was ousted from *Solidaridad Obrera* (Workers Solidarity—the CNT’s main paper) in December of 1936 along with other members of the edi-

activities. Then anarchy, the abolition of the State, shared the same fate.... They then dropped the principle that the workers must not take part in any revolution that did not have as its aim the immediate and complete emancipation of the proletariat, and they themselves took part in a movement that was notoriously bourgeois. Finally they...sat quite comfortably in the juntas of the various towns, and moreover almost everywhere as an impotent minority outvoted and politically exploited by the bourgeoisie.”

Is this Leon Trotsky on 1936? No, it is Friedrich Engels polemicalizing against the Spanish anarchists in 1873! Anarchism was, is and will always be class collaborationist at its core.

But not all the anarchists in Spain in 1936-37 shared the class collaborationism of the CNT-FAI bureaucracy. The Friends of Durruti group organized in opposition to that treachery. The CNT-FAI, in an attempt to better consolidate the forces against Franco’s right-wing reactionaries, began to acquiesce to, and carry out, the “militarization” of the proletarian militias in September of 1937. This meant putting the militias under the



Cambio 16

Madrid, 1939: Generalissimo Franco presides over victory parade. Popular front paved way for rise of Falangist reaction in Spain.

The Friends of Durruti met with the Executive Committee of the POUM and apparently acquiesced to the POUM’s position that the movement was lost given the CNT’s capitulatory actions. Both agreed on seeking guarantees against retaliations before the workers began to abandon the barricades. However, the next day the Friends of Durruti issued a leaflet which caused a hue and cry among the CNT-FAI bureaucracy, calling for a revolutionary junta, the disarming of the armed bodies (meaning the Assault and Civil Guards) and the socialization of the economy. The leaflet was received with great enthusiasm on the barricades. Needless to say, the Friends of Durruti had used extremely “authoritarian” measures to get their leaflet printed in the middle of a general strike! Balias describes the scene as follows:

“We banged on the door until the owner [of the print shop] came out, who didn’t want to know anything and refused categorically to open the print shop. He promptly backed up in the face of ‘armed violence’.... Just before midnight...we were able to take with us four to five thousand leaflets still wet.”

Still on May 5, the local bureaucracy of the FAI in Barcelona, in another despicable act of betrayal of the working class, refused reinforcement by militias ready to leave the front. But even worse than that, the CNT workers committees started to abandon the barricades, obeying the call of the top bureaucracy.

On May 6, various anarchist groups, including the Friends of Durruti, met with the POUM. The POUM held a minority position, which was for the creation of a “revolutionary central committee.” This was against the local representatives of the anarchist committees, who, following orders from their national leadership, advocated withdrawal from the barricades.

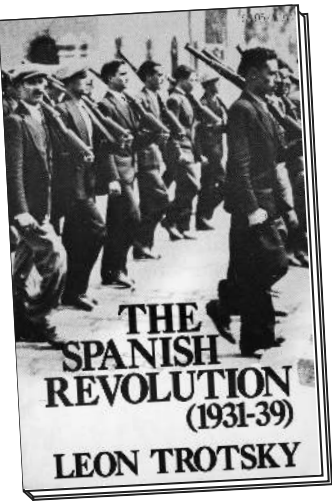
What was the response of the POUM? Let’s have their leader Gorkin tell the story:

“But we couldn’t impose our views. It was the representative of the Regional Committee [Nacional] who they [the workers] were listening to.... The Friends of Durruti advocated a CNT-FAI-POUM government. Due to tactical reasons we didn’t attack the leadership of the CNT.”

—Quoted in Amorós,
La revolución traicionada

I want to emphasize some points here. During the May Days, the CNT carried out a contemptible and clear betrayal

against the working class in Barcelona, as they had already chosen to collaborate with the bourgeoisie. The centrist POUM knew this, and instead of fighting against it, they buried their heads in the sand like ostriches and waited for the CNT to give the order to disband. The Friends of Durruti, in contrast, called for a local junta centered on the CNT and the POUM. *Had there been an authoritative revolutionary leadership then, it would have*



Leon Trotsky and Spanish Bolshevik-Leninists fought against popular-front betrayal, for workers revolution in Spain.



Wide World

taken up the Friends of Durruti’s call for a junta and transformed it first into a military united front against the bourgeois forces and the Stalinists *and then into the core of a workers government* to fight the counterrevolution with an internationalist program. It would have called for independence for Morocco in order to undermine Franco’s army and appealed to the workers on the other side of the Pyrenees to follow their example.

After the May 6 meeting, Balias proposed that CNT workers advance a column to the town of Tarragona and bring reinforcements to Barcelona. Predictably, the CNT bureaucracy boycotted this proposal. Amorós explains: “The Friends of Durruti couldn’t understand why the CNT committees had stopped the fight, when victory was so close.” The Friends of Durruti didn’t have the understanding that flows from a revolutionary program—the understanding to realize the dead end of anarchism and to politically break with the CNT. *That had to be the role of a Marxist vanguard party.*

Unfortunately, the Bolshevik-Leninists didn’t have the time to generate roots in

the proletariat during the few months of their existence and they lacked authority among the working class. However, the power of their Trotskyist program is shown by the fact that despite their small numbers they were one of the first to be targeted by the Stalinists and the bourgeois reactionaries once the proletariat was defeated and the barricades were brought down. Before the May Days, the Friends of Durruti helped to distribute the

Trotskyists’ press on the streets and made their offices available to the Bolshevik-Leninists to organize their meetings. However, the Bolshevik-Leninists didn’t achieve much in a meeting with the Friends of Durruti’s leadership on May 5:

“Every time the word Authority was pronounced...Balias got mad. The interview or meeting ended without discussing the real problems at bottom.... As for Balias, Carlini and others—not everybody—to continue the fight only on the barricades was the just position, and that is how we split.”

Under the orders of the CNT-FAI, and in the face of the POUM’s prostration, the workers were ultimately demobilized and defeated. Five hundred died and over a thousand were wounded during the May events. Following the defeat, the state, with the aid of the Stalinists, launched its persecution, imprisonment and murder of the Trotskyists and POUMists (the latter on charges of “Trotskyism”). The anarchist bureaucracy proceeded to attempt the expulsion of the Friends of Durruti from the CNT ranks; meanwhile, the government censored the CNT’s paper *Solidaridad Obrera*. The POUM’s paper, *La Batalla*, was banned and its main leader,

Andrés Nin, as well as anarchist leader Camilo Berneri, died at the hands of the Stalinists.

During the Franco dictatorship, 300,000 workers and peasants were assassinated and many others were locked up in concentration camps. All working-class leaders were exterminated or expelled, political and trade-union groups and associations were dissolved. The popular-front government paved the way for Franco’s triumph in 1939. One of the greatest revolutionary opportunities for the international proletariat had been drowned in blood.

Anarchists proclaim that the Friends of Durruti never broke with the principles of anarchism. Unfortunately, they are right. They continued to believe, as their leaders in the CNT did, that a classless society could be created simply through force of will; that such a society could be created without first establishing the dictatorship of the proletariat, a centralized democratic workers state to suppress the forces of counterrevolution. Anarchist historian Vernon Richards, in his book, *Lessons of the Spanish Revolution (1936-1939)* [second enlarged edition, 1972], expresses the ultimate consequences of such an idealist perspective:

“We believe there is something more real, more positive and more revolutionary in resisting war than in participating in it; that it is more civilised and more revolutionary to defend the right of a fascist to live than to support the Tribunals which have the legal powers to shoot him; that it is more realistic to talk to the people from the gutter than from government benches; that in the long run it is more rewarding to influence minds by discussion than to mould them by coercion.”

Marxists, on the other hand, reject the false arguments of anarchists that classless communism is simply the product of a psychological regeneration. We fight to overthrow the capitalist system in order to organize production so as to raise it to such a high level that scarcity will no longer exist. Only then can we lay the material basis for the emancipation of humanity from exploitation, war and poverty. We tell anarchist youth today, as Trotsky said to the international proletariat in *Lessons of October* (1924): “Without a party, apart from a party, over the head of a party, or with a substitute for a party, the proletarian revolution cannot conquer.” This is the main lesson of the Spanish Civil War. ■

Stewart...

(continued from page 3)

of the World Trade Center in 1993 or its destruction in 2001; the 1997 murders of some 60 tourists at an archeological site in Luxor, Egypt; the kidnapping of foreign hostages in the Philippines in 2000; the bombing of the USS *Cole* in Yemen in 2000. Yet outrageously, the prosecution has been allowed to enter as “evidence” a September 2000 video tape of Osama bin Laden calling for the sheik’s release, as well as testimony and transcripts pertaining to the other events, because it is alleged that the perpetrators were linked to the Egyptian “Islamic Group,” with which the sheik is linked, with whom Lynne Stewart is linked as his attorney!

The prosecution is pushing hot buttons with the jury, smearing Stewart and co-defendants as accomplices to bin Laden in a lower Manhattan courthouse just a few blocks from the huge pit where the World Trade Center once stood. Fairness and logic should dictate that the chief executives of the United States government should be standing trial: Osama bin Laden and the “Islamic Group” were armed, trained and financed by Washington in its “holy war” against the Soviet Red Army in Afghanistan! Now, after Frankenstein’s monster, bin Laden and other anti-communist CIA “assets,” turned on their creator, the government turns and threatens a leftist lawyer with decades behind bars.

The core of the government’s case was captured by prosecutor Christopher Morvillo, who said, regarding sheik Omar

Abdel Rahman, “*the United States government locked the door to his cell and threw away the key*,” but the defendants “pulled off the jail break” by allowing the sheik to communicate. The government tried to “lock the door and throw away the key” with “special administrative measures” (SAMs) which strip prisoners and the public of basic rights and privileges. SAMs limit a prisoner’s access to mail, telephone, media and visitors. In this case, the SAMs barred Stewart from visiting the sheik unless she submitted to the intrusive and outrageous restrictions in signed “letters of affirmation.”

SAMs were introduced in 1996 by Democratic president Bill Clinton who also signed into law the “Anti-Terrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act,” which led to a diminution of democratic rights and an expansion of death penalty provisions. Democrat Clinton’s legislation was inherited and enhanced by the Republican Bush gang in the wake of September 11 with the USA-Patriot Act. The government’s case against Lynne Stewart, Yousry and Sattar is based on secretly recorded, supposedly constitutionally protected and privileged attorney-client communications, including telephone conversations and prison visits. The case against Sattar is based on **90,000** government interceptions of private e-mail, faxes and telephone conversations over a period of seven years.

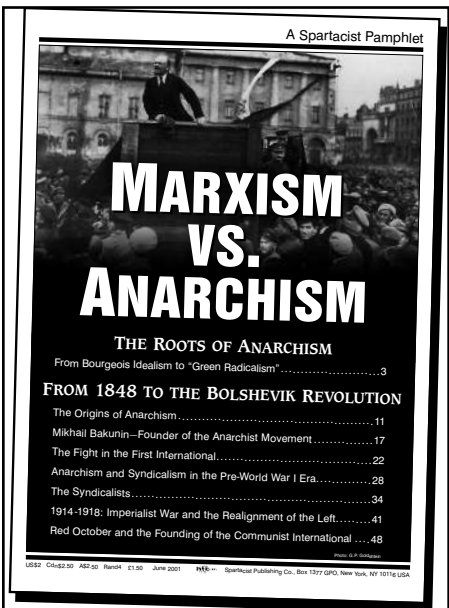
If the government’s own wiretaps and surveillance revealed that a conspiracy to support “terrorism” was taking place over a protracted period of time, why did they allow it to continue? The government’s flimsy answer is that they were bugging the prison meeting room to “gather intel-

ligence for national security purposes.” What vital national security intelligence did they gather? None! And according to the government, it’s the *absence* of evidence that proves guilt! The prosecution told the jury that the recorded evidence they would hear was admittedly “coded and cryptic” because “the defendants knew that they had to be sneaky because they were concerned about monitoring.”

The “evidence” against Mohammed Yousry, a government-approved translator, is his notebooks of discussions with the imprisoned sheik. Yousry is a doctoral candidate in Middle Eastern Studies at New York University. His thesis adviser suggested he take advantage of his rare access to the sheik to develop a theme for his doctoral dissertation. An opponent of Islamic fundamentalism who has never set foot in a mosque in his life, Yousry took notes for a thesis on the Mubarak dictatorship and “Muslim totalitarianism” in Egypt. Paralegal Ahmed Abdel Sattar is a U.S. citizen and a religious supporter of the sheik whose “crime” in the government’s eyes is his faith and “evidence” such as his receipt of phone calls from an alleged “international terrorist”—calls which Stewart’s team presumed were the dirty work of an FBI agent.

The first targets of the “war on terror” were immigrants, particularly from Muslim countries. Now the government is going after their lawyers, just as it did the attorneys who defended communists during the McCarthyite witchhunt. But the ultimate targets are the labor movement and all perceived political opponents of the government. As we wrote in an earlier article (“Hands Off Lynne

Stewart!” WV No. 779, 19 April 2002): “What the government is able to get away with will be determined by the level of social struggle.” The labor movement, fighters for black rights and all opponents of capitalist injustice have a direct interest in joining in defense of Lynne Stewart, Mohammed Yousry and Ahmed Abdel Sattar, and in calling for freedom for all those detained in the “war on terror’s” anti-immigrant witch-hunt. **Drop the charges now!** ■



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Noam Chomsky: The Liberal's "Anarchist"

Former Fan Shows Up the Esteemed Professor

Many left-wing youth activists look to MIT professor Noam Chomsky for inspiration, and he is a featured speaker at the Boston Social Forum preceding the protests against the Democratic National Convention later this month. His "anarchism" and voluminous critiques of U.S. foreign policy notwithstanding, Chomsky is at bottom an anti-communist liberal. This radical impostor despises us Spartacists because we explode his pretensions as a "critic" of "the system," exposing him as a wannabe adviser to an "enlightened" imperialism.

Illustrative is what he has said over the years about the U.S. and Iraq. Chomsky of late has saluted the end of the "regime" of UN sanctions against Iraq, which had

claimed the lives of over one and a half million Iraqis. But Chomsky himself urged the imperialists in 1991 to use "the peaceful means prescribed by international law: sanctions and diplomacy" to force Iraq out of Kuwait (*Z Magazine*, February 1991). For more than eight years, Chomsky plugged Ahmed Chalabi to the imperialists. In a debate with former CIA director James Woolsey, Chomsky referred to Chalabi as "a leading figure of the opposition" and later argued: "We have a responsibility, I think, to ensure that they [proposals by the "Iraqi Democratic opposition" for overthrowing Saddam Hussein] receive serious and honest attention" (PBS *NewsHour*, 12 March

1998). The very same Chalabi was an advance man for the Pentagon in last year's imperialist attack and was one of its leading candidates to govern Iraq before falling from favor earlier this year. In the months before the war, the esteemed professor called for redeploying UN weapons inspectors—themselves spies for the imperialists—and helped "manufacture consent" by echoing imperialist war propaganda. He said: "WMD programs make the world a more dangerous place, Saddam's in particular" ("Interview with Noam Chomsky About US Warplans," ZNet, 29 August 2002).

By invoking treaties and institutions like the UN, an imperialist den of thieves and their victims, Chomsky's purpose is to peddle the myth that through pressure from radlibs like himself, the imperialists can undertake "humanitarian efforts." But capitalism cannot be reformed, as competition over profits is central to the system. In his *Imperialism, The Highest Stage of Capitalism*, Lenin described how the free competition of thousands of entrepreneurs in the early days of capitalism gave rise to and was superseded by the rapid concentration of production in ever-larger enterprises, in monopolies. As Lenin explained, in the imperialist epoch, while there are fewer competitors, the struggle between them is greater and

more violent, not less. This competition fuels interimperialist rivalries and breeds war, and is precisely what Chomsky obscures when he talks fondly of the rule of "international law."

Where Chomsky appeals to the imperialists, we revolutionary Marxists are for sweeping away their whole system of exploitation through workers revolution. Last year, Spartacist sympathizer T.M. powerfully skewered "America's leading dissident intellectual" for his "loyal opposition" to the U.S. imperialists in an e-mail exchange.

At the beginning of his "Comment on Chomsky's Reply," T.M. refers the reader to his essay "Chomsky on Communism, Socialism: Fake and Real," which among other topics addresses Chomsky on dialectical materialism and his distortions of Lenin. For an answer to the accusation that Lenin and Trotsky were responsible for the crimes of Stalin, as Chomsky maintains, see "Exchange with NEFAC Open City Anarchists—Trotskyism vs. Anarchism on the State and Revolution" (WV No. 811, 10 October 2003); for a historical analysis of the anarchist worldview, see the Spartacist pamphlet *Marxism vs. Anarchism* (June 2001).

We reprint below this exchange, originally posted on the Web as "Chomsky Replies to Questions" (6 May 2003).



Krzysztof Gajos/The Tech

Chomsky's Advice to Imperialists on Iraq



Karen Robinson

Sanctions, not war, Chomsky counsels in 1991. Years of U.S./UN starvation sanctions deprive children of medicine, kill over 1.5 million Iraqis.

From Chomsky's man to "Pentagon's favorite." Ahmed Chalabi (right), with Defense Secretary Rumsfeld in September 2003, played key role in helping U.S. make their case for war.



AFP



AP

"Return inspectors to Iraq," Chomsky says, August 2002. Students at Baghdad campus protest in February 2003 against UN weapons inspectors, spies for the imperialists.

Chomsky Replies to Questions by T.M.

Chomsky has replied to a few questions I put to him on the ZNet Sustainer's Forum.

The Question

I asked, on 4-30-03:

Professor Chomsky,

I am a long-time admirer of your work, but have recently been won to communism. I have had occasion to go over some of your own writings on communism, and wrote an essay on your views, which you can find here: <http://www.geocities.com/newoctobers/Chomsky_communism.htm>.

You may or may not want to read the entire essay, but I had a few particular questions:

He replied to the questions Sunday, May 04, 2003 08:50 AM as follows: (My questions are preceded with a ">" [and are italicized].)

Chomsky's Reply

Sorry, but with 100s of e-mails every day, I just cannot read essays. Can only put them aside and hope to get to them later.

>(1) *In your essay "The Soviet Union Versus Socialism" [SUVS] you stated, "Lenin's dictum that 'socialism is nothing but state capitalist monopoly made to benefit the whole people,'..." You don't*

give a reference for this "dictum," even though it appears in quotes. Where does this "dictum" come from?

When I wrote the article 15 years ago, I had the reference at hand. Now I'd have to search for it, which wouldn't be too much trouble—it's a famous stand—but I just don't have time for it now. The article probably did have footnotes in the original, which may or may not be what you have seen.

>(2) *You have stated that if the left is understood to include Bolshevism then you would "flatly dissociate" yourself from the left. If the left is understood to include the Democratic Party, will you similarly dissociate yourself from the left?*

Of course, though the Democratic Party is far less objectionable than Bolshevism, in my judgment.

>(3) *Are you being honest when you say that you are unable to understand what is meant by "dialectical materialism"?*

Yes.

>(4) *Do you make any distinction between Leninism and Stalinism?*

Of course. I assume it's made in that article. If not, elsewhere. But the basic steps to destroy the socialist elements that developed before the Bolshevik takeover were taken by Lenin and Trotsky, almost immediately, and for principled reasons (from their point of view),

as was the repressive apparatus that was turned into a much worse monstrosity by Stalin.

>(5) *Who constituted the “mainstream of the Marxist movement” that considered Lenin to be “counter-revolutionary”?*

Pannekoek, Korsch, etc., and with some ambiguity Luxemburg. You can find a list of some of the main figures in Lenin’s “ultra-leftist” monograph.

>(6) *You continually use the term “we” to describe U.S. imperialism. Do you agree or disagree with the proposition that capitalist societies are cleaved into antagonistic classes?*

That’s trivially obvious, isn’t it? The term “we” is used informally, to indicate that you and I, for example, share responsibility for these atrocities.

>(7) *What is your opinion of the term “U.S. imperialism”?*

I rarely use the term, except in quotes from others. Like most terms of political discourse, it’s been debased by the way it’s been used over the years, and wasn’t that clear to begin with. There’s a huge current literature, in the mainstream as well, over whether US global domination should be called “imperialism.” I don’t personally take part in it.

>(8) *What do you see as the primary cause of the defeat of the Spanish Revolution?*

There was no “primary cause.” There were many causes. One major cause was the tacit agreement among Stalin, the Western democracies, and the fascists (Spanish and abroad) that the Spanish Revolution had to be defeated. The Communists happened to be in the lead in the endeavor, for a variety of reasons. There were also plenty of steps by the (wide range) of often conflicting elements that

ities of the state. You can’t have it both ways.

Chomsky’s insistence on placing the blame for the atrocities of the state on *every citizen of the country* implies that we all have a say in the policies that are carried out. Thus, black factory workers, migrant farm workers, and the board of directors of Exxon all have a say in the policies that are carried out by the state.

It is important to notice that Chomsky lays particular stress on the idea that we are all *responsible* for the atrocities. It is not just a matter of a duty to *oppose* what the capitalists are doing, “we” are responsible for what they do!

I oppose these bastards and their rotten system with every ounce of my being, yet Chomsky will continue to insist that we are all responsible.

Chomsky simply identifies himself with the capitalists. He views the U.S. as a democracy, where “the people” can determine policy. It is true enough, then, that he is responsible. But, for those who are not privileged academics or rich capitalists, blame cannot be accepted.

The state is not neutral. The state is merely an organization of violence for the maintenance of a social order benefiting a particular class. The police, military, courts, etc., are not neutral—their purpose is to protect the rich. As James Madison put it, the primary function of government is to “protect the opulent of the minority against the majority.” The state is not “our” state, it is THEIR state, the state of the capitalists.

Secondly, Chomsky undercuts the only available means for fighting the capitalists, namely class struggle. His insistence that “we” are responsible is merely a cry to tie oneself to one’s “own” bourgeoisie.

Bolshevik-led Russian Revolution brought proletariat to power, backward regions of former tsarist empire out of the Dark Ages. Right: Literacy campaign for women in Soviet Caucasus in 1920s. Central planning made possible massive industrial development like building of Turkestan-Siberia railroad line (below).



M. Alpert

geoisie they represent. There is, in principle, little difference between the Republicans and Democrats. The same general anti-worker, racist policies are carried out by Democrats and Republicans alike. Wilson plunged the U.S. into the first imperialist slaughter, Roosevelt the second; Truman incinerated 140,000 Japanese civilians for the purpose of demonstrating The Bomb to the commies; Kennedy and Johnson initiated the mass slaughter of Vietnamese; Carter funneled arms to the genocidal Indonesian military to slaughter Timorese; Clinton murdered over a million Iraqi civilians. The list could go on...and on.

A couple of particular slaughters should be noted. The U.S. attack on Vietnam was initiated by Democrats. On the other side, the Stalinists sent arms to the communists fighting the U.S. killing machine. (They would have sent more, but the venal Chinese Stalinists prevented them.) As the Democratic Party is “far less objectionable” than the Bolsheviks, then they must be even further less objectionable than the Stalinists. Thus, the support for the Vietnamese communists must be...what? Another bloodbath initiated by a Democrat was the “Afghan trap” laid by Carter’s Secretary of State, which drew in the Red Army to fight CIA-fundamentalist cutthroats. Which side of that battle was Chomsky on, I wonder?

So, if the Democratic Party is “far less objectionable” than the Bolsheviks, and the Republican Party is pretty much the same as the Democratic Party, one can only conclude that the Republicans must be at least “less objectionable” than the

Bolsheviks. In other words, the capitalists are less objectionable than the communists. This is Chomsky’s true class loyalty.

Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism, or a Bad Idea in Somebody’s Head

When asked about his opinion of the term “U.S. imperialism,” he says,

“I rarely use the term, except in quotes from others. Like most terms of political discourse, it’s been debased by the way it’s been used over the years, and wasn’t that clear to begin with. There’s a huge current literature, in the mainstream as well, over whether US global domination should be called ‘imperialism.’ I don’t personally take part in it.”

I should think that Lenin was *exceptionally clear* about the meaning of imperialism, as described in his book *Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism*. Lenin explained that imperialism is that stage of capitalism marked by *monopoly capitalism*, where monopoly had superseded competition in capitalist economies. In this stage, the drive for capital accumulation forces the capitalists to expand their field of exploitation to the whole world through a massive influx of capital investment, through which the entire world is brought under the domination of the large capitalist states. Lenin gives precise figures for the growth of investment capital, and the concomitant growth in colonialization, etc. There is nothing at all unclear about it.

Should U.S. global domination be called imperialism? What else would you call it? Chopped chicken?

continued on page 9



Ronald Haeblerle

Among many crimes of Chomsky’s “far less objectionable” Democrats is escalation of U.S. offensive against heroic Vietnamese workers and peasants, including 1968 massacre of some 500 villagers in My Lai.

were part of the Spanish revolution, in a broad sense, that were dubious or worse.

Comment on Chomsky’s Reply

Chomsky continues to march in the anti-communist parade....

The issues of Chomsky’s dishonest use of the term “state-capitalism,” and the cowardly way he evades dialectical materialism through demagoguery are dealt with in the essay. In the following I will address Chomsky’s use of the word “we,” the Democratic Party, the Spanish Revolution, and the “mainstream of the Marxist movement” that considered Lenin to be counter-revolutionary.

“Our” State

When asked about the use of the term “we” to refer to the acts of the U.S., Chomsky replies,

“That’s [the fact that capitalist societies are cleaved into antagonistic classes] trivially obvious, isn’t it? The term ‘we’ is used informally, to indicate that you and I, for example, share responsibility for these atrocities.”

First of all, this is contradictory. The oppressed do not share responsibility for the crimes of their oppressors. Chomsky grants that capitalist societies are cleaved into antagonistic classes, yet insists that “we” share responsibilities for the atroc-

Sure, you can be a dissident and complain about how bad “we” are, but by no means are you to struggle *independently* against the ruling class!

F[---] that.

The Evil Bolsheviks and the “Far Less Objectionable” Democratic Party

This one is priceless:

“...the Democratic Party is far less objectionable than Bolshevism, in my judgment.”

What can you say to that? The U.S. is unique in the industrialized world, as far as I know, in that it doesn’t have a mainstream political party that can even pretend to have some roots in the labor movement. Even the anti-worker British Labour Party evolved out of the workers movement. The Democratic Party in the U.S., the “left” party, can lay no pretense whatsoever to being a workers party. It evolved directly from the party of the Confederate slavocracy. As Malcolm X put it, “A Democrat ain’t nothin’ but a Dixiecrat.”

The Democratic Party and the Republican Party are simply factions of the party of the bourgeoisie. They could join into the Capitalist Party with no change of platforms. They represent the capitalist class; the only difference between them being *which* interests among the bour-

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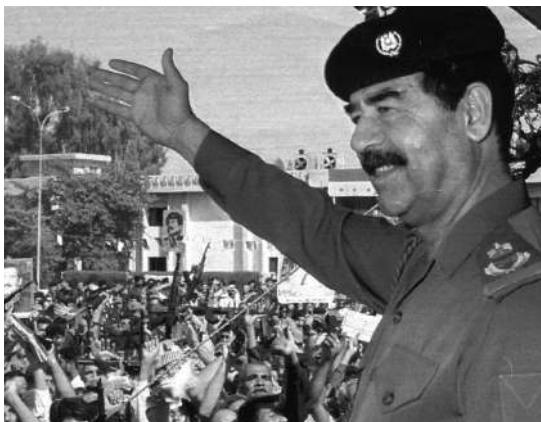
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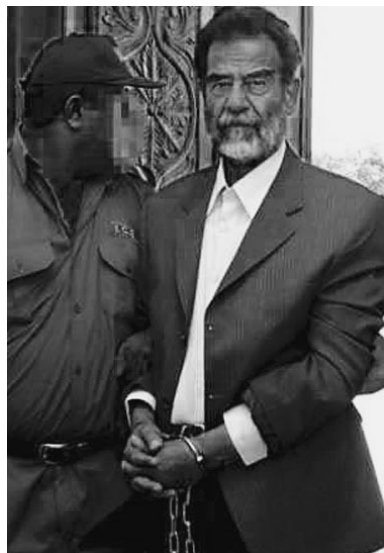
On July 1, former Iraqi strongman Saddam Hussein was brought before a court in Iraq, and his image was broadcast all over the world. As Robert Fisk put it, “Now is the time for bread and circuses” (London *Independent*, 1 July). Forget all the lies about “weapons of mass destruction” and supposed links between Iraq and Al Qaeda; forget about the sadistic torture and killing of Iraqi prisoners at Abu Ghraib; forget about the tens of thousands of Iraqis slaughtered and maimed by the American war and occupation—the U.S. has got Saddam and they plan to parade their trophy around. Perhaps Hussein himself captured it best when he said during his hearing, “Bush is a villain, all of this is theatre. It is for his re-election.”

But all this could backfire on the Americans, too, inflaming an already combustible situation. Doubtless there are many in Iraq who have suffered from Hussein’s brutality and butchery and would like to see him get his, as well as the eleven other former regime officials facing trial. But there is also a strong sense of utter humiliation that an Arab leader who dared to snub his former American patrons is now being displayed as a prisoner of the occupying power. An Iraqi pharmacist told the *New York Times* (2 July), “He may have put me in jail for seven years, but still it’s not right for the enemy to sit as his judge.” A young taxi driver in Damascus said, “I was about to cry as I was watching Saddam being brought to justice in this disgraceful way. I want his own honest people to try him, not those supported by the Americans. What we saw is a humiliation for all the Arabs.”



Reuters photos

Above: Saddam Hussein as president of Iraq, 1997. Right: Hussein being taken to court, 2004. (Guard's face was altered prior to release of photo by U.S. military clearance.)



Saddam Hussein *is* a criminal and butcher with plenty of blood on his hands. But as we wrote when he was captured: “When workers tribunals of a victorious socialist revolution in the United States try America’s capitalist exploiters for their crimes against the oppressed masses of the world, black America, labor, immigrants and the poor, and when Iraqi Kurds, leftists and workers rip the oil wealth out of the hands of the military occupiers and judge them and their former henchmen, *then* we can start talking about justice” (WV No. 816, 26 December 2003).

Most of the charges brought against Hussein, like the gassing of Kurds, refer to crimes carried out with the forbearance of the American imperialists, who lent their support, monies and arms to the Ba’athist dictatorial regimes that had ruled Iraq since the 1960s. Among the

charges *not* brought against Hussein is the massacre and imprisonment of thousands of Iraqi Communists and trade unionists in the early 1960s, many of whom were tortured and killed by Hussein himself—it was the CIA that gave the Ba’athist torturers the names of those to go after. *Saddam Hussein was U.S. imperialism’s man in Iraq*, their very own Third World tinpot dictator who fell out of favor with his 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

Notwithstanding the transparent facade of an “Iraqi” court trying Hussein, it is cruel and grotesque hypocrisy that the supposed bearers of “justice” in Iraq are the U.S. imperialists, the same forces that are not only imposing this occupation, but that launched the 1991 Gulf War which killed over 100,000 Iraqis and imposed the UN starvation sanctions which killed over 1.5 million more. The crimes of Sad-

dam Hussein pale in comparison with the far greater crimes of U.S. imperialism against working people and the oppressed around the world, from the over six million Asian lives cut down in the wars in Korea and Vietnam to the countless others who have been on the receiving end of U.S. imperialism’s wars and machinations from Latin America to the Near East and elsewhere. Whether under Democratic or Republican administration, U.S. imperialism is the deadliest enemy of working people and the oppressed around the world, including right here in the U.S.

Much has been made in the media over the supposed “handover of power,” done in secrecy with former administrator Bremer fleeing the country like he was fleeing the plague. But it’s all a sham. The leader of the new Iraqi “government,” Allawi, is a straight-out CIA asset, the former head of European operations for the Ba’ath Party and its intelligence agency in London, described by CIA veterans as a “thug” with Iraqi “blood on his hands.” The occupation continues with all its barbarity and brutality unabated. The thousands of Iraqi prisoners detained by the U.S. continue to be held by the U.S. Drinking water and electricity are still scarce and life is hell for most people in the country.

It takes some chutzpah for the U.S. to charge Hussein for his invasion of Kuwait—this from the same people who ravaged Iraq. The “liberation” promised to the Iraqi masses—the modern version of the “white man’s burden”—is borne on an ocean of blood. It seeks its legitimacy on a mountain of lies, and then more lies when the masses at home realize that they are paying with their lives and well-being for the appetites and perfidy of their rulers. We fight for the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of all U.S. and allied forces from Iraq. This is part of the fight for the socialist revolution necessary to free the peoples of Iraq from their subjugation. It is in the interests of working people around the world that we struggle to forge the workers party necessary to lead the multi-racial American working class in socialist revolution to sweep the bloody American imperialist system off the face of the earth forever. *Down with the colonial occupation of Iraq! All U.S. troops out now!* ■

Workers Party...

(continued from page 1)

into the dead end of the Democratic Party. They built platforms *for* Democratic Party politicians and pandered to the “peace is patriotic” crowd. And when the war began and the real horror and terror began to rain on the people of Iraq, the Democrats rallied ’round the flag and their commander in chief.

Now what’s ANSWER’s answer? Their “Call to Action” for the DNC/RNC rallies says, “The real hope for change...will come about from an enlarged and politically conscious mass movement of the people.” There is no such thing as an undifferentiated “people” in the U.S. Rather, this society is split into two main classes with counterposed interests—the capitalists and the workers they exploit—and founded on the bedrock of chattel slavery and the continuing vicious racial oppression of black people. The interests of labor and capital can never coexist in a common “people’s” program; one class or the other must dominate. ANSWER’s evasion of the class line is not an omission; it is deliberately done to prevent seething discontents from exceeding the bounds of pressure politics on the Democrats and taking the form of independent working-class political action.

Ralph Nader: Unsavory at Any Speed

Why do we say Ralph Nader, who ran on the Green Party ticket in 1996 and 2000, and is running independently this time, is a bourgeois politician, and that therefore we shouldn’t support him? “Bourgeois” is not a snotty insult meaning someone’s boring lifestyle; it is a term Marxists use for the class of property-owning capitalists who buy labor power



WV Photo

Chicago, March 20: SL/SYC contingent raises call to break with Democratic Party at rally protesting Iraq occupation.

from the working class. American Trotskyist leader James P. Cannon explained the class character of parties in 1948:

“It is not determined by the class which supports the party at the moment, but rather by the class which the party supports; that is to say, by its program. That is the basic meaning of a political program, the support of one class rule or another. The class character of a party is also determined by its actual practice.... Another factor to be considered is the composition of a party. A bourgeois party of the classical type is easily recognized because it has all three of these qualities—it is bourgeois in program, in practice, and in composition.”

The American working class does not have its own political party, not even a reformist one like the Labour Party in Britain or the social-democratic parties in Europe. Instead, the U.S. tends to produce “third party” populist formations, which can appear somewhat left or right, and are sometimes virulently racist. This reflects the enormous weight of the American petty bourgeoisie, that intermediate class between the workers and the bosses, composed of small “independ-

ent” businessmen, students, professionals, intellectuals, managers, doctors, lawyers, bureaucrats of all sorts. Lawyer/publisher Ralph Nader, who is against trade unions in his *own* businesses, is a perfect example of this type, as is his running mate, Green Party member Peter Camejo, stockbroker/founder of Progressive Asset Management, promoting “socially responsible investments.”

Neither the Green Party nor Nader call for ending capitalism, only for giving breaks to the “little capitalists.” Many of the proposals of the Greens and Nader go against the interests not only of the industrial working class, but against human progress. In Germany, the Social Democratic/Green government attacked the living standards of the workers to increase Germany’s competitiveness, while Green foreign minister Joschka Fischer deployed German jets, tanks and troops, for the first time since the Third Reich, to participate in the wars against Serbia and Afghanistan. And what about the Green Party’s “key value,” that people must “live within the ecological and

resource limits of our communities” and “move to an energy efficient economy”? What does this mean for the already desperately poor in inner-city ghettos? For the fight against the horrible worldwide AIDS pandemic, which requires sophisticated medicines, refrigeration—i.e., electrification and a modern industrial infrastructure?

We need an international *expansion* of advanced technology, science and production to solve these world problems, not a retreat to some utopian sentimental pre-industrial Hobbiton of happy farmers, honest tradesmen and small craftsmen, which is impossible in any case. Technology and large-scale industry, which is extremely efficient and saves huge amounts of human labor, can be used to solve human problems. But first these instruments have to be ripped out of the hands of the capitalists by the working class, which actually knows how to run things. Abolishing private ownership of factories means abolishing the stock market, putting brokers for “ecologically correct” capitalism like Camejo out of business.

There is a more sinister side to the Nader campaign. While Camejo plays up his immigrant roots, Nader calls the shots for this bum ticket and his message on immigrants is toxic racism. In an interview with the sinister rightist Pat Buchanan in the *American Conservative* (21 June), Nader (himself the son of Lebanese immigrants) attacks immigrants, saying, “I don’t like the idea of legalization because then the question is how do you prevent the next wave and the next?” While Nader is explicit that the whole purpose of his campaign is to push the Democratic Party in a more “progressive” direction, he is running on the Reform Party ballot and openly appeals to conservative Republican voters. His foam-

WORKERS VANGUARD

Chomsky...

(continued from page 7)

The thing is that for Chomsky the nefarious actions of the U.S. around the world are just bad policies carried out by evil men, as a result of some bad ideas that got into somebody's head somehow. They are not the result of economic pressures in the material world. If only we can preach to them loud enough to obey international law, this nasty thing called "imperialism" can be ended.

And pigs will fly.

The Communist Devils and the Anarchist Saints

When asked what the primary cause of the defeat of the Spanish Revolution was, he replies,

"There was no 'primary cause.' There were many causes. One major cause was the tacit agreement among Stalin, the Western democracies, and the fascists (Spanish and abroad) that the Spanish Revolution had to be defeated. The Communists happened to be in the lead in the endeavor, for a variety of reasons. There were also plenty of steps by the (wide range) of often conflicting elements that were part of the Spanish revolution, in a broad sense, that were dubious or worse."

Predictably, no mention is made of the anarchists in the Confederación Nacional del Trabajo (CNT). The Stalinists and the Western democracies (no quotes around "democracies") certainly have plenty of blame for the defeat. However, crucial to the defeat of the revolution was the betrayal of the CNT.

The CNT was the largest and most influential anarchist party ever. It is the only anarchist party to lead a revolution with a chance of success. When a real revolutionary turning-point came, though, they played right into the hands of the bourgeoisie, which led directly to fascism. In 1936 Spain entered a pre-

revolutionary stage of *dual power* between the armed workers and the "Republican Left" in the government. At the crucial moment, the CNT leaders entered the government in a popular front, and tried to *subordinate* the workers movement to the "left" government. The crucial battle was described by Orwell in *Homage to Catalonia*. On May 3, 1937 the government and the workers in the CNT fought over the telephone exchange in Barcelona. As the Stalinists moved in, the CNT exhorted the workers to *lay down their arms*. The workers were not willing to comply, but lacking organized leadership and in the face of the demoralization at the sell-out, the workers' resolve dissipated and the government regained control of the city. The Stalinists and the bureaucrats, with the collaboration of the CNT tops, then executed a purge which broke the back of the anti-fascist struggle.

As Leon Trotsky explained,

"In opposing the *goal*, the conquest of power, the Anarchists could not in the end fail to oppose the *means*, the revolution. The leaders of the CNT and FAI not only helped the bourgeoisie hold on to the shadow of power in July 1936; they also helped it to reestablish bit by bit what it had lost at one stroke. In May 1937, they sabotaged the uprising of the workers and thereby saved the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. Thus anarchism, which wished merely to be antipolitical, proved in reality to be antirevolutionary, and in the more critical moments—counterrevolutionary."

—"The Lessons of Spain: The Last Warning" (December 1937)

Chomsky also, as usual, paints "the Communists" as being in the lead of crushing the revolution. Which communists? Perhaps he needs reminding of the fact that his hero Orwell fought with the POUM in Spain, against the fascists. The POUM, the "Party of Marxist Unification" was also communist...Orwell was himself the victim of a Stalinist witch-hunt, as he describes in *Homage to Catalonia*. Yet, at the crucial moment

the Stalinists, the Anarchist mis-leaders and the bourgeoisie acted in concert to stave off the dreaded specter of workers' revolution.

It is hard to avoid surmising that Chomsky would himself act similarly to the anarchist mis-leaders. Being against the workers' dictatorship, he cannot help but oppose the means. Chomsky has nothing but praise for the Spanish anarchists, who were never soiled by actually having to hold onto power.

Lenin the Counter-Revolutionary

When asked who were the "mainstream of the Marxist movement" that considered Lenin to be counter-revolutionary, he replies,

"Pannekoek, Korsch, etc., and with some ambiguity Luxemburg. You can find a list of some of the main figures in Lenin's 'ultra-leftist' monograph."

Does "Lenin's 'ultra-leftist' monograph" refer to "*Left-Wing Communism: An Infantile Disorder*"? This is an excellent work, but it does not, as far as I am aware, contain a list of people who considered Lenin to be counter-revolutionary.

Were there sharp differences in the Marxist movement? Of course. Were there lots of Marxists who criticized Lenin and the Bolsheviks? Of course. Was there a mainstream of the Marxist movement that considered Lenin to be counter-revolutionary? Of course not.

After October 1917 the Bolsheviks *were* the f[-----] mainstream of the Marxist movement! The October Revolution energized and inspired the workers movement around the world. The best of the movement were virtually all won to revolutionary Marxism, i.e. Bolshevism. True, a number of opportunists like Karl Kautsky, criticized the Bolsheviks, and then led their own parties to disaster, but the Bolsheviks had enormous prestige around the world.

We shall have to consider Chomsky's claim that Lenin was considered to be counter-revolutionary by the mainstream of the Marxist movement as absurd.

The idea that Luxemburg, in particular, considered Lenin *in any way* (ambiguity or no) to be counter-revolutionary is, frankly, asinine. True, she was harshly critical of certain aspects of Bolshevik policies and actions, but she left no doubt as to her immense admiration for the work of Lenin and Trotsky. She wrote, for example, in her book *The Russian Revolution*,

"The Bolsheviks have shown that they are capable of everything that a genuine revolutionary party can contribute within the limits of the historical possibilities. They are not supposed to perform miracles. For a model and faultless proletarian revolution in an isolated land, exhausted by world war, strangled by imperialism, betrayed by the international proletariat, would be a miracle.

"What is in order is to distinguish the essential from the non-essential, the kernel from the accidental excrescences in the policies of the Bolsheviks. In the present period, when we face decisive final struggles in all the world, the most important problem of socialism was and is the burning question of our time. It is not a matter of this or that secondary question of tactics, but of the capacity for action of the proletariat, the strength to act, the will to power of socialism as such. In this, Lenin and Trotsky and their friends were the *first*, those who went ahead as an example to the proletariat of the world; they are still the *only ones* up to now who can cry with Hutten: 'I have dared!' "This is the essential and *enduring* in Bolshevik policy. In *this* sense theirs is the immortal historical service of having marched at the head of the international proletariat with the conquest of political power and the practical placing of the problem of the realization of socialism, and of having advanced mightily the settlement of the score between capital and labor in the entire world. In Russia the problem could only be posed. It could not be solved in Russia. And in *this* sense, the future everywhere belongs to 'Bolshevism'." ■

flecked anti-Communism is expressed in his article "The China Price" (21 June, published by CommonDreams.org), wherein he attacks U.S. corporations for going to Chinese "production facilities inside a communist dictatorship."

Yet what bothers liberals and even self-proclaimed socialists is *not* Nader's anti-immigrant bigotry, his anti-worker positions or his anti-Communism, but their fear that a vote for Nader might siphon votes from the Democrats! Thus Noam Chomsky and Howard Zinn call to vote for Nader only in "safe" states (i.e., it's OK in Massachusetts where they live, but not in Florida). The Green Party split over the question, deciding *not* to endorse Nader but run their own candidate only in "safe" states. Socialist Alternative shamelessly touts Ralph Nader as a real "alternative." The International Socialist Organization, which supported Nader in 2000, is torn. Their *Socialist Worker* (25 June) is over the moon about Nader's selection of Camejo, approvingly quoting the *Los Angeles Times* that "Nader's selection of Camejo gave further shape to a left-leaning, antiwar campaign," while their next issue deplores

"The Green Party's step backward" in rejecting Nader.

Fight for a Revolutionary Workers Party

A workers party in this country will not be a tame electoral party that just makes speeches and gets "protest votes." A fighting workers party will be based on the struggle for black liberation and socialist revolution. No decisive gains for blacks or labor were ever won in a courtroom or by an act of Congress—or by a presidential election. It took the Civil War to open the road to black freedom in this country. And the only reason black people reconquered the right to vote and broke formal Jim Crow segregation in the South in the 1950s and 1960s was because of militant struggle that went outside the channels of the capitalist parties, including armed self-defense against Klan terror. The limited legal and social reforms made by Lyndon Johnson's "war on poverty" were a response to ghetto upheavals in every major city from New York to Los Angeles. The end of the draft and the legalization of abortion nationwide were a reaction to the social turmoil then convulsing the country

in opposition to the Vietnam War.

Liberals always hail Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal 1930s coalition as a model of how Democrats can be "friends of labor." But in fact the New Deal only tied down labor and minorities to capitalist politics—a wretched tradition cravenly continued today by the AFL-CIO labor bureaucracy, which has resulted in the significant weakening of the labor movement. The New Deal sold out the fight for black rights by cementing an alliance with Southern racist Dix-

iecrats, and the South is still largely non-union today as a result. The gains workers made back then resulted from hard-fought general strikes and plant occupations typically led by reds. The capitalist class continually seeks to illegalize such militant, successful tactics, and must be continually challenged if the working class is ever to change this reactionary political system. Those are the kinds of battles a fighting workers party must take on, because that's how things are going to change. ■

Port Truckers...

(continued from page 3)

because the shipping bosses feared that West Coast port truckers angry about the suit might join in the East Coast strike.

Two weeks before the strike, a June 14 meeting took place at Teamsters headquarters with port truckers and leaders from 18 North American ports to discuss working conditions and low pay. Later that week, Teamsters head James P. Hoffa released a list of "recommendations" to the steamship lines, while simultaneously declaring that his union was not sponsoring the shutdown. One proposal advocated by the Teamsters is that regional trucking companies hire port truckers as direct employees, which would allow the drivers to be unionized. But for this gain to be real, the existing workforce—i.e., the current owner-operators—should be the first ones hired by unionized trucking companies.

The Teamsters along with others are also lobbying for a federal law to make the terminal and shipping companies responsible for maintaining chassis to national safety standards. As part of their struggle for unionization, port truckers must fight for union safety committees with the power to shut down unsafe conditions, to protect not only the drivers but the public on the highways.

It will take hard class struggle against the bosses and the capitalist state to organize the independent port truckers. Such a fight must necessarily go beyond the bounds of narrow trade unionism. From Oakland to Port Newark, port truckers constitute a largely immigrant and minority workforce; for example, they're predominantly Latino in L.A. and majority black in Charleston. To organize such workers, the union must be in the forefront of the *fight for full citizenship rights for immigrants, for black equality and against all forms of discrimination*.

The fact that the strike was strong in the Southern ports of Miami and Charleston underlines the crucial importance of organizing the "open shop" South. A determined drive for unionization there will not have a strictly economic character, nor will it likely emanate from the top echelons of the AFL-CIO. It will have to confront not only the police, company goons and scabs, but also race-terrorists like the Ku Klux Klan.

A sharp political struggle is necessary to oust the labor lieutenants of capital, the trade-union misleaders who tie the unions to the Democrats—or, in the case of the Teamsters bureaucracy, at times the Republicans. It is necessary to forge a class-struggle leadership within the unions as part of the fight to build a revolutionary workers party. ■

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Fahrenheit...

(continued from page 12)

is organized to extract profit for the minuscule class of capitalists, who own the factories, banks, transportation, etc., from the labor of those who produce the wealth, the working class.

Moore’s worldview explains some of the glaring omissions in the film. For example, his populist outlook leads him to ignore the Bush administration’s close ties to the Christian right, to take notice of which would mean acknowledging that Bush really has a popular base. The box office figures of *The Passion of the Christ*, remember, are real. The neocons come in for personal ridicule, but not for braintrusting the Iraq invasion policy. They are closely aligned with the religious right, particularly in support of Zionist Israel. To mention this fact would get in the way of his Democratic bandwagon-building, as the Democrats are, if anything, more wedded to support of the Zionists than the Republicans. In fact, Moore himself declared in a *Los Angeles Times* (22 June) interview that “Israel is a democracy.”

Where Moore (and lots of other people) see the need to hold your nose and vote Democrat in November, we argue



Soldier’s mother at NYC press conference called by military families in support of Moore’s movie, June 30.

that a vote to the Democrats is a vote in favor of chaining the working masses to their oppressors and that the need is to fight to lay the basis for a conscious *class* break from the Democrats in the direction of political independence for the workers. The hoopla surrounding

Fahrenheit 9/11 and its “anybody but Bush” popularity is a perfect illustration of why the Russian revolutionary Lenin argued in his work *State and Revolution* that “a democratic republic is the best possible political shell for capitalism.” As he put it, “To decide once every few years which member of the ruling class is to repress and crush the people through parliament—this is the real essence of bourgeois parliamentarism, not only in parliamentary-constitutional monarchies, but also in the most democratic republics.”

Think about it. Through the last few years a growing number of activists have participated in struggle against the capitalist system’s madness. But then bring up the question of elections. All of a sudden, many of those who had become increasingly open to getting rid of the capitalist system as a whole now get all emotional about how much we need to fire the capitalist oppressor Bush, even if it means supporting the capitalist oppressor Kerry. Add in a few left-sounding voices to the chorus (like Moore’s) and you end up with a pretty solid array of forces working to convince everyone that there *is* a real alternative within the capitalist framework.

In discussing some of these ideas with audiences following showings of *Fahrenheit 9/11*, we occasionally encountered something like the following argument: “There’s not a huge difference between the Democrats and Republicans, but things would have been better if Gore were president.” From Moore’s film you’d think that no American capitalist did anything about Iraq until George W. Bush met September 11. Not nearly true. While a Gore administration might not have invaded Iraq and established a colonial occupation—an optional aggression from the standpoint of the ruling class—he likely would have “merely” continued the Democratic Clinton Iraq policy, a regime of sanctions punctuated regularly by bombings that completely ravaged Iraq and *killed hundreds of thousands more Iraqis than Bush’s war*. All this was accomplished under a humanitarian guise (along with his adventures in Somalia, Haiti and Serbia) and with minimal protest.

So why do the capitalists wage all these wars? As much as Moore brilliantly evokes the hypocrisies of the Bush administration’s war propaganda, his explanation of the underlying motives is shallow. In line with the latest in anti-globalization ideology he offers as an explanation the incestuous web linking the Saudi royal family to the Bush family, who are in turn in bed with Cheney and a handful of similar rich white corporate profiteers. But it’s ridiculous to think that the personal profit interests of a handful alone motivated either the Afghanistan or Iraq wars.

The government represents the executive committee of the ruling capitalist class, which means more than obtaining tax breaks for a bunch of robber barons.



Democrat Bill Clinton, imperialist war criminal: passenger train destroyed by 1999 U.S./NATO terror bombing of Serbia, carried out in the name of “humanitarian” intervention on behalf of Kosovars.

The White House and Congress must defend the strategic interests that serve the capitalist social system. So while you might see capitalist politicians bickering over tactics (“We need the UN!”—Democrats; “Screw those pansies!”—Bush & Co.), there is mutual commitment that, with the Soviet Union gone, U.S. imperialism must use its overwhelming military might to expand and solidify its grip on world resources and markets in the interest of raw profit for U.S. capitalists at the expense of their European and Japanese rivals. Controlling the world’s oil faucet helps in doing this. So does dictating to your imperialist competitors what wars (or trade agreements, spheres of influence, etc.) will take place and what role they’ll have in the world arena. International capitalist competition drives the ruling class of each dominant industrialized country to expand and extend its profit-making reach. In other words, imperialism is not a policy that a particular government can take or leave, but nothing other than modern capitalism itself.

If an American ruler launches a war effort proclaiming that, for example, it will “make the world safe for democracy” or “liberate the oppressed Kosovars,” then 1) he is lying and 2) these lies, necessary to get working people to fight and die for the profits of their own exploiters, are not simply the product of individual moral depravity (as Moore portrays it with Bush) but are a result of the way capitalists and their representatives see their class interests, which they must pass off as the national interest.

At the end of *Fahrenheit 9/11*, Moore says of U.S. troops: “They offer to give up their lives so that we can be free. It is remarkable their gift to us. And all they ask for in return is that we never send them into harm’s way unless it’s absolutely necessary.” And then, referring to Bush’s lies about Iraq, Moore intones of the troops, “Will they ever trust us again?” Hmmm. Have American presidents lied for war before? Well, if history is good for anything, it’s to answer questions like this.

•The Spanish-American War: The sinking of the American battleship USS *Maine* in 1898 was blamed on Spain, and “Remember the Maine” became the war cry for America’s first imperialist war to defeat Spain and seize its colonies in Cuba and the Philippines. It is now well established that the explosion that sank the ship was caused by faulty construction design.

•World War I: Democrat Wilson justified U.S. intervention vowing that “the world must be made safe for democracy.” In fact, the war, which saw unprecedented bloodletting on all sides, served only to redivide the world among the capitalist powers, with up-and-coming U.S. imperialism coming out on top.

•World War II: This supposed “war against fascism” was, except for the

Soviet Union, in reality another war to redivide the world, this time touched off by Germany’s drive to reverse the results of its defeat in the First World War and Japan’s competition with the U.S. over who would dominate the Pacific and East Asia. For over a year prior to Pearl Harbor, Roosevelt sought to provoke a Japanese attack to justify an American declaration of war. He got it.

•Vietnam: The Democratic Johnson administration fabricated stories of an unprovoked attack on an American ship in the Gulf of Tonkin to get Congress to pass an effective declaration of war, enabling a massive escalation of the U.S.’s dirty colonial war against the Vietnamese workers and peasants.

In fact, most of American imperialism’s wars were launched under Democratic administrations (in addition to the above, the Democrat Truman initiated the Korean War under United Nations auspices, and Democrat Clinton directed General Wesley Clark, whom Moore supported during the primaries, to bomb much of the life out of Serbia). So, why have the Democrats led most of America’s wars? *Fahrenheit 9/11* eloquently shows why, though Moore didn’t mean to do so. In one scene Bush addresses his rich corporate friends, quipping, “This is an impressive crowd, the haves and the have-mores. Some people call you the elite. I call you my base.” Who would want to fight and die for *these people*? Moore chronicles perfectly how Bush’s Iraq lies were transparent and stupid—not like the Democrats, who provide much nicer-sounding, humanitarian war lies and pose as “friends of labor.”

It is this kinder, gentler, friendlier-to-the-people image relative to the other big party of capitalism that makes the Democrats more pernicious, more deceptive, and *more effective* than the Republicans. Look at what Moore recently had to say about Kerry, a man who wants to substantially increase the American troop presence in Iraq: “He is a person of integrity whose heart is in a good place. He will never send kids off to war unless he absolutely has to. Because he’s been there himself” (*San Francisco Chronicle*, 30 June). It is precisely for the same reason that the Democrats are able to masquerade as a lesser evil than they are American imperialism’s *preferred* party for racism and war.

Perhaps the most glaring omission in the film comes when Moore treats the “war on terror” simply as a mechanism used to instill fear of terrorists in the populace, but ignores its central use—as a racist witchhunt of immigrants, the first target of a wider war on blacks, workers and all the oppressed. Why would Moore leave out this central component of the capitalists’ cynical use of September 11? Moore in his own way echoes the Democratic politicians who argue that Bush is not prosecuting the “war on terror” effectively. In an inter-

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Los Angeles...

(continued from page 12)

and Educational Fund (MALDEF) with racist epithets. This past week the Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement rounded up and deported 47 workers, including two pregnant women, at a clothing factory in downtown L.A. We say: Down with the racist roundups! No deportations!

Meanwhile, on June 23, televisions across the country flashed the all-too-familiar images of the brutal beating of a black man in Compton after a car chase by the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD). *After* surrendering, then getting tackled by cops, and while lying face-down on the ground, Stanley Miller was repeatedly kicked and beaten with a heavy metal flashlight by the cops, who then glad-handed each other. Placed in a state prison medical facility after showing signs of brain damage from the attack, as of June 30 Miller had not yet received an independent medical examination! As his mother said, “First they beat my son like a dog, then they won’t give him the proper medical care.” The racist rulers are waging a “war on terror” against working people from Iraq to the ghettos and barrios of the U.S., and their targets at home are black people, immigrants and the working class as a whole.

Despite the widespread fear in the immigrant population, thousands have come out this past month in protest against the racist roundups, from Ontario in San Bernardino County to downtown L.A. Members of the Spartacist League rallied with others in Los Angeles on June 26, marching with signs in English and Spanish calling for “Full Citizenship Rights for All Immigrants!” “Down With the Colonial Occupation of Iraq!” “Anti-Terror Witchhunt—Deadly Danger to Immigrants, Blacks, Workers” and “For Black Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!” At the L.A. demonstration called by ANSWER, Latino Movement USA and Hermandad Mexicana, SL spokesman Lisa Martin addressed the crowd, pointing out what is necessary:

“The ‘war on terror’ is a war against immigrants, labor and blacks. We say break with the national unity lie; we’re for the international unity of the working class. The labor movement must be mobilized to demand full citizenship rights for all immigrants! It’s a matter of defense of the labor movement.”

The multiracial working class organized at the point of production has both the interest and the power to fight in defense of the ghettos and barrios. Latino workers must resist the treacherous appeals of aspiring bourgeois politicians who would pit them against black people.

In the U.S. the black question is strategic for proletarian revolution, and immigrant workers must grasp clearly that the fight against black oppression is central to any struggle to defend democratic rights and the interests of the working class. Attacks against immigrants always go hand in hand with attacks against blacks—anti-immigrant Proposition 187 led directly to the racist Proposition 209 against affirmative action.

Immigrant workers are not helpless victims; they’re a vital component of the multiracial working class. Armed with militant traditions of struggle in their homelands, immigrant workers have been a key part of labor battles in this country, from the 1912 “Bread and Roses” strike

fathers” and their attack dogs in the LAPD. The main obstacle to unleashing working-class power is the pro-capitalist union misleaders, who are the bosses’ lieutenants in the labor movement. Through their allegiance to the Democratic Party, they seek to ensure that the militancy and determination shown in the struggles of the organized proletariat are confined within the boundaries of the bosses’ rules.

The daily terror meted out to minorities by the Border Patrol and the LAPD is not some aberration that can be remedied by electing more black and Latino bourgeois politicians. In fact, liberal Democratic L.A. city councilman Antonio Villaraigosa, currently poised to run again for mayor next year, expressed his



KABC-TV

Sign at protest outside L.A. police station, June 25, two days after video captured flashlight-wielding cops beating Stanley Miller (above).



AP

in the Lawrence, Massachusetts textile mills to the 1990s Justice for Janitors organizing drive in L.A. Together with black workers, who are a key component of the U.S. industrial working class, they can play a vital role in a working-class offensive against racial oppression and capitalist exploitation. This underscores the need for the labor movement to fight to organize the unorganized. This past year Southern California saw a five-month strike by the multiracial grocery workers of the UFCW, and on July 1 the heavily immigrant hotel workers, organized in the Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees International Union (HERE), overwhelmingly voted down the hotel bosses’ proposal, which rejects the union’s demand for a uniform national contract expiration date and shifts soaring health care costs onto the workers.

A victory by L.A.’s working class would be in the interest of the impoverished residents of the city’s ghettos and barrios, and would be a major blow against the historically anti-union “city

main concern as “restor[ing] the public’s confidence in our law enforcement” during the Rampart police brutality and corruption probe four years ago.

Meanwhile, black ex-police chief, now city councilman, Bernard Parks, who is also running for mayor, is attempting to portray himself as the enlightened defender of the black ghetto—this from the man who presided over the LAPD killing machine for years. In 1999, when daily protests took place over the LAPD’s brutal killing of Margaret Mitchell, a 100-pound, mentally ill, black homeless woman, Parks denounced protesters for having an “agenda” and for “stereotyping” the cops as racist! What *all* these capitalist politicians represent, Democrat and Republican, from the mayor on down, are the interests of *their class*—the bosses who own the means of production. The police and Border Patrol are an integral part of the capitalist state—the apparatus of repression against the working class by the capitalist rulers—which at its core consists of the army, the courts, the

prisons and the cops.

In the two weeks since the LAPD beating of Miller, many references have been made to the brutal beating of Rodney King by cops, whose acquittal sparked the 1992 L.A. upheaval. With the mayor facing an election next year and the LAPD operating under a federal consent decree as a result of the Rampart scandal, the city’s rulers have been nervously working overtime to prevent any mass response of outrage. To that end, Mayor Hahn quickly appointed a “committee of community leaders” in the wake of the LAPD beating of Miller so that “the community [will] be able to be informed at every step in the process.” Through this committee, composed largely of black front men for the racist rulers, these representatives from “respectable” black organizations such as the Urban League and the NAACP are assisting in dousing any expressions of outrage by the masses.

Also lending his hand as a fireman is cynical hustler Al Sharpton, fresh from his run in the Democratic Party primaries. Appearing briefly at a South-Central meeting on June 28 called in protest against Miller’s beating, Sharpton stayed just long enough to call for a “federal law on police conduct” and “national standards of policing”! Perhaps the reason Reverend Sharpton hightailed it out of South-Central before anyone from the audience could get to the mike is because he realized that people there understand there *is* a national standard of policing, enforced by none other than an avowed admirer of the Confederacy, Attorney General John Ashcroft! Among the speakers from the floor that night was a spokesman from the Spartacist League, who said in part:

“There *is* no such thing as reforming or rehabilitating the police. Civilian review boards, sensitivity training, hiring more black, minority and female cops—none of this will change a thing because cops are an instrument for repression of all the working class. A little bit of punishment for a few cops is not going to change anything. The courts aren’t going to change anything—they’re the same capitalist courts that locked up Geronimo Pratt and Mumia Abu-Jamal. It’s only the abolition of this racist, capitalist system that will bring an end to police terror. It’s the multiracial working class that has the power to shut down this city, to protest cop terror and brutality in a demonstration that would really cut across all the racial divisions in Los Angeles. But it’s the Democrats, like Al Sharpton and [Congresswoman] Maxine Waters, who do everything they can to prevent that. We can’t have illusions in the Democrats *or* Republicans, that they will *ever* defend any of our interests. What we need is a multiracial revolutionary party of the working class that will fight with class struggle means and overthrow capitalism with a socialist revolution.”■

view in the July issue of *Playboy*, Moore advises that the U.S. should “Hire the Israelis to find Osama and kill him.”

Moore ridicules Bush for going after the wrong people—harmless peaceniks and a guy in a gym who was critical of Bush—and demonstrates that Bush doesn’t even take his own terrorist warnings seriously by showing the comically sub-skeletal police force assigned to keep Oregon’s serene coastline “safe.” But in doing so, Moore implicitly gives credence to the capitalists’ xenophobic framework of national security. Take his intimations that the Saudis control some 7 percent of the American economy and were therefore able to escape scrutiny following September 11. To begin with, it’s a joke to think that American imperialism answers to the Saudi royal family. More importantly, by saying nothing about the

witchhunt against Arabs and Muslims in the U.S., Moore plays into the still rampant government-led chauvinism that all Arabs are potential terrorists who need to be watched.

While we’re on the topic of state repression, we can’t let pass Moore’s disgusting statement in his book *Dude, Where’s My Country?* that black journalist and former Black Panther Mumia Abu-Jamal “did indeed kill that cop.” Moore willfully ignored the overwhelming evidence proving the innocence of this fighter against black oppression, put on death row in a transparent frame-up targeting him for his political views. This is the type of repression that the government wants to seriously escalate. On a case that touches America’s racist core, this statement is like a pledge of loyalty to the racist capitalist order.

Fahrenheit 9/11 features a number of scenes focusing on the impact of war on black people in America: Lila Lipscomb’s story, the Marine recruiters prowling a mall parking lot looking for young black recruits, and the group of young black men who all raise hands when asked who has a friend or relative fighting in Iraq. These sequences powerfully evoke the economic draft, where it is those who are most ground down by the

structural poverty and racial oppression of this profit-driven society who end up on the front lines of their oppressor’s wars. Moore evokes sympathy for the plight of these working and oppressed youth sent off to do imperialism’s dirty work. Many, including Moore, take this to argue that those who oppose the war should “support the troops.” But Iraq is a clear case where it is necessary to take a side, and not the side of the U.S. or those doing its fighting—every blow struck against the American occupation forces is a blow struck against the enemy of workers and the oppressed all over the world, including in the U.S.

The capitalists’ timeless lie that there is a “national unity” must be smashed. It is essential to drive home the point that a vote for the Democrats is a vote for a democratic facade to the “war on terror” and the occupation of Iraq, which they will continue not because they’re spineless, but because the Democrats are devoted to the capitalist system. Moore’s proposed solution cannot change this reality, and more to the point, his populism, his identification with the American on the street, his awareness of racism make him especially effective in mobilizing support for the Democratic Party in a way that the Democrats cannot do

for themselves. This *counteracts* exactly what is most pressing—a political break with the capitalist framework, and therefore the Democratic Party.

There is a force that can change things—the multiracial working class, the collective producers who have both the power and the need to remake society based on production for need rather than profit, and thereby lay the basis for obliterating class and therefore inequality from history. The fight to unleash that power is the fight for a workers party that is independent of the capitalist parties and based on a policy of class struggle—the mobilization of its power through strikes and other work actions—in defense of itself, blacks, immigrants and all the oppressed toward ultimately smashing the existing state power. While powerful in many ways, *Fahrenheit 9/11* expresses a worldview all too common among workers and leftist youth today—that workers are good people who form a potentially powerful voting bloc as victims of a corporate-dominated system. The key to human liberation is to understand the working class as a class with power, *the* force for change. The working class and oppressed can’t elect capitalism out of office. We need a workers revolution.■

NOTICE

Workers Vanguard skips alternate issues in June, July and August.

Our next issue will be dated August 6.

Fahrenheit 9/11

Michael Moore's powerful new documentary, *Fahrenheit 9/11*, offers a rare commodity in this era of stage-directed "reality"—a dose of truth, conveyed in human terms. Its images of mangled Iraqi limbs and mutilated babies are rare glimpses of what happens on the receiving end of America's bombs. Where much of America sees either a faceless "enemy" or faceless beneficiaries of American "liberation," Moore gives voice to human victims, as in the Baghdad woman in agonized rage over the American military's murder of her family, or the family terrorized by U.S. troops on Christmas Eve. A black man in Flint, Michigan, sees images of war-torn Baghdad and remarks, "There's parts of Flint that look like that, and we ain't even been in a war." Wrenching stories like that of Lila Lipscomb, whose son's death in Iraq convinced her of the depravity of the Iraq war, go untold by the mass media.

The film's resonance across the country has been intense. It set the record for the highest-grossing opening weekend in documentary film history. It has caught the attention of Bush's right-wing keepers, and for good reason: Moore's raw talent as a propagandist perhaps best comes through in his portrait of the dim and banally monstrous George W. Bush, who plays golf and vacations while thousands of Iraqi people and hundreds of American troops die at his command. Fearing this, the Republican-beholden Disney corporation refused to distribute the film, which was subsequently given an R rating to deter most teenagers from seeing it. (Moore points out that this prevents those who could soon be drafted from seeing exactly what they might be doing in the armed forces.) A small group of prominent Republicans calling themselves Move America Forward has campaigned to intimidate theaters from showing the film; a parallel group called Citizens United filed a complaint with the Federal Election Commission to ban advertising for it.

But there's a problem. From the point of view of *changing* the reality that Moore powerfully depicts, *Fahrenheit 9/11* is fundamentally defective. It is a sad comment on the state of American leftist political consciousness to witness the spectacle of audiences rightfully agitated by Bush's deadly war, inflamed by the sinister Patriot Act, disgusted by the

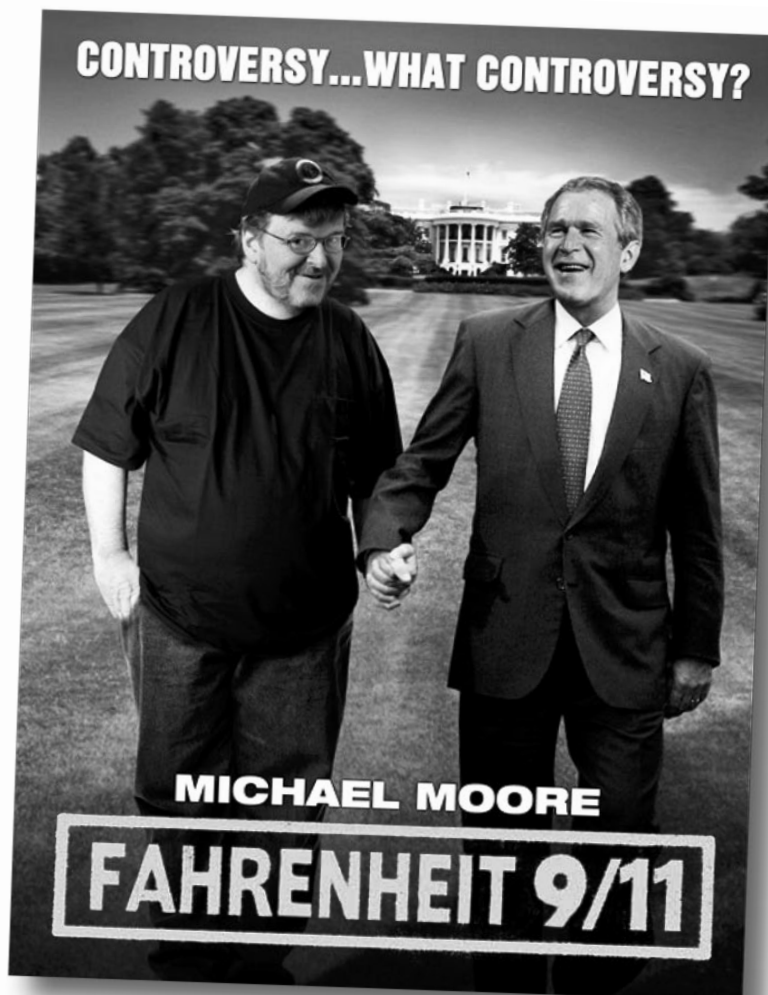
Democrats' pathetic one-ness with the White House, who then come out of the theater all pumped up and ready to...register voters. But that has indeed been all the rage. And that was *exactly* Moore's intent: he has stated that "It's my personal aim that Bush is removed from the White House" (*New York Times*, 24 June), adding that he hoped the film would "inspire

people to get up and vote in November" because "We cannot leave this to the Democrats this time to f--k it up and lose" (London *Guardian*, 17 May). Moore's perspective is one shared by many, particularly those who have been out on the streets demonstrating against the "war on terror," that Kerry and the Democrats are nothing to get excited about, but that they nevertheless deserve support, however critical, because Bush is so damn intolerable. Behind this "anybody but Bush" enthusiasm is a fundamentally liberal—and dangerous—view of American democracy.

Moore's vignette on the chicanery around the 2000 elections is compelling. He casts a spotlight on black oppression in the footage of black Congressional representatives rising in the Senate to protest the disenfranchisement of black voters and the fraudulence of Bush's "victory," only to be ruled out of order by an Al Gore unwilling to fight for his election victory because to do so would highlight capitalist America's disregard for black people and undermine the legitimacy of the imperial presidency. That nothing changed shows exactly why the black Democrats are kept around—to head off outrage and revolt against this racist, capitalist order, particularly among black Americans, whenever it breaks out.

Moore believes that the American people have been betrayed by a small clique of reactionary thieves (the Bush administration and its corporate network) and a few spineless Democrats. In other words, he thinks it's Bush & Co. who have violated a national unity that must be restored based on the sensibilities of the common people. In his words, a Democratic victory brings us a step closer to getting "this country back in the hands of the majority" (*New York Times*, 24 June). But there is and can be no national unity because this society is divided into social classes with mutually hostile interests. The whole of society

continued on page 10



A Marxist Review

by Aman Singh

La Migra, LAPD Terrorize Latinos, Blacks

Los Angeles

The past few weeks have seen massive Border Patrol roundups of Latino immigrants in Southern California. From June 4 to June 15 alone, over 400 people were detained by a recently formed 12-man "Mobile Patrol Group" in neighborhood sweeps near immigrant shopping centers, bus stations, churches, schools and other public places in Ontario, Corona, Escondido and the San Diego area, striking fear into the entire immigrant Latino community. Terrorized parents, fearful of being separated from their children, have stayed home and kept their children out of school. Stores and shopping centers have been empty. Many are afraid to drive or take public transit for fear of being stopped. Mexican president Vicente Fox, visiting the U.S. at the time, sent a formal diplomatic protest against the roundups to the U.S. government. Racist anti-immigration forces, mobilized in part by right-wing talk radio such as the "John and Ken Show," have harassed the offices of immigrant rights organizations like the Mexican American Legal Defense

continued on page 11



Peter Holderness

Spartacists join June 26 immigrant rights march in downtown L.A. against Border Patrol raids.