

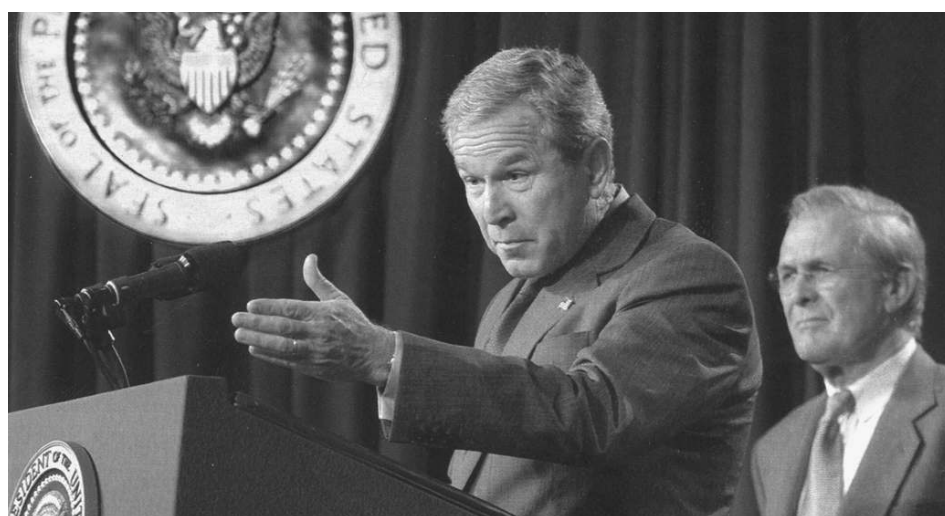
U.S. Hands Off Iran! Out of Iraq Now!

Imperialists Threaten Iran

"All options are on the table." That was the response of George W. Bush, head of the most blood-drenched, massively armed imperialist power in history, on April 18 when asked whether his administration is considering nuclear strikes against Iran under the pretext that Iran is developing nuclear weapons. The whistle was first blown by the *New Yorker's* Seymour Hersh, who argued in a thoroughly documented article, "The Iran Plans" (*New Yorker* Web site, 8 April), that even as the Bush administration goes through the motions of pursuing "diplomacy" to stop Iran from developing a nuclear weapon, it has stepped up covert activities aimed at overthrowing the Iranian government and escalated plans for a major air attack. As Hersh revealed and as a series of *Washington Post* articles described in further chilling detail, such an attack may or may not involve deploying part of the U.S.'s own massive stockpile of "tactical" nuclear weapons against Iran's underground nuclear sites.

There is clear agreement across the U.S. bourgeois political spectrum, from the religious fanatics in the White House to the Democratic Party, that Iran has to be "dealt with." If anything, the Democrats have been more belligerent over Iran, with a common criticism of Bush being that the occupation of Iraq has been a distraction from dealing more forcibly with Iran, as well as with the North Korean deformed workers state.

As the bipartisan threats demonstrate, the greatest menace to the workers and oppressed of the world is the U.S. imperialist rulers—who have not only acquired the means to destroy the world several times over, but who have actually carried out nuclear holocaust, incinerating some 200,000 Japanese people in the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945. The Iranian regime says that its nuclear energy program does not include plans to develop the bomb. The fact of the matter is that in the context of threats by the nuclear-armed imperialists, Iran clearly *needs* nukes to defend itself and deter a U.S. attack. In today's world, possession of nuclear arms has become the only real measure of national sovereignty. As a Pentagon "war on terror" adviser quoted by Hersh observed, "The Iranians realize that only by *becoming* a nuclear state can they defend themselves against the U.S." Recall that in 2003—notwithstanding the Bush administration's lies that Saddam Hussein had amassed "weapons of mass destruction"—it was precisely Iraq's obvious vulnerability, after more than a decade of U.S.-dictated United Nations sanctions and disarmament programs had stripped it of the means to defend itself, that paved the way for the second Persian Gulf War and Iraq occupation.



Getty

Nuclear madmen in Washington target Iran. Right: Iranian women form human chain at Isfahan Uranium Conversion Facility in support of Iran's nuclear program, January 22.



AP

With its military currently overstretched, the U.S. cannot launch an all-out invasion and occupation of Iran without reinstating the draft, an option seen by most bourgeois politicians as likely political suicide. This underlines that the threats of military strikes against Iran, including a nuclear attack, are very real as they do not require the mass mobilization of troops.

With the exception of the U.S., all other members of the United Nations Security Council today formally oppose military action against Iran. At the same time, they have all ordered Iran, which announced on April 11 that it had succeeded in enriching uranium, to stop its atomic activities, hinting that the country will be subject to sanctions if it does not obey. The UN is

historically little more than a fig leaf for the dominant imperialist power.

In "U.S. Hands Off Iran!" (WV No. 863, 3 February) we urged:

"In the event of military attack against Iran by U.S. imperialism or by Israel, or by any other force operating on behalf of the imperialists, we Marxists declare: *The international proletariat must stand for the military defense of Iran against imperialist attack.* At the same time, we give not one iota of political support to the reactionary Tehran regime. Our defense of capitalist Iran is conditional: In military conflicts between an imperialist power and a dependent semicolonial country, our policy is revolutionary defensism. We defend the oppressed country against the oppressor country and promote class struggle in the imperialist centers, as well as in the oppressed

country. Every victory for the imperialists in their military adventures encourages more predatory wars; every setback serves to assist the struggles of working people and the oppressed."

In the lead-up to the U.S. invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq, we called for the military defense of both countries against attack without giving any political support to the reactionary Taliban or the bloody capitalist regime of Saddam Hussein. Today, we call for the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of all U.S. and allied troops from Afghanistan, Iraq and Central Asia.

We fight for class struggle against the U.S. capitalist rulers at home. The same ruling class that is butchering the people of Iraq, that is threatening Iran, is also carrying out a war against the working people of the U.S.—shredding democratic rights through the reactionary "war on terror," gutting pensions and health care, crushing unions. It is the same ruling class that abandoned the black and poor of the Gulf Coast to Hurricane Katrina. Its interests and the interests of the working people of the U.S. are polar opposites. Our perspective for class struggle demands a political fight against the pro-capitalist labor bureaucracy, which chains the U.S. proletariat to its class enemy, most often through the capitalist Democratic Party, under the rubric of the "national interest."

The "national interest" is the class interest of the bourgeoisie. We fought for the military defense of Iraq and Afghanistan—and would stand for the military defense of Iran against U.S. attack—not least because these positions express the vital interests of the multiracial U.S. proletariat. We fight to build a multiracial revolutionary workers party in the U.S. to lead the American proletariat in struggle for socialist revolution and the establishment of working-class rule.

The International Communist League's struggle is to forge workers parties throughout the world to fight for international socialist revolution, including in backward countries such as Iran. While the bulk of the left internationally cheered on the victory of the mullahs against the CIA-backed Shah in Iran in 1979 as "anti-imperialist," we said, "Down with the Shah! No to the mullahs! Workers to power!"

Iran is ruled by a reactionary mullah regime that has enslaved women under the veil, slaughtered thousands of leftists and trade unionists and intensified repression against Kurds and other minorities. A recent bus workers strike in Tehran, one of an increasing number of strikes in the country, has been met by fierce government repression, including the jailing of strikers and their leaders. It is the task of the working class in Iran, leading all the oppressed behind it, to overthrow the Persian-chauvinist Islamic regime. Key to this perspective is the forging of a Marxist workers party. The fight to forge Marxist workers parties in the Near East is essential to break the proletariat of the region from fundamentalism and all forms of nationalism in the struggle for a

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On Anti-Muslim Cartoons and Fundamentalist Reaction

17 March 2006

Dear *Workers Vanguard*:

Re: your article “Racist Anti-Muslim Cartoons Spark Fundamentalist Frenzy” ([WV No. 864] February 17):

Much of your analysis and critique of religious foolishness in this piece was excellent, as was your critique of “imperialist domination” and “anti-immigrant nationalist demagoguery.” But your discussion of the cartoons published by *Jyllands-Posten* (and subsequently by a number of papers in Arab and Muslim countries as well) raises questions you did not address.

You nowhere describe the cartoons—let alone reprint them. To my knowledge, no leftist papers in the United States, and very few bourgeois papers, have published them. One wonders if you actually saw them. Certainly, your readers who have not would have a distorted impression of them based on your article.

You say the cartoons are “racist” and that “several...depicted the Muslim prophet Muhammad as a bomb-wielding or Satanic terrorist.” But where’s the rac-

ism? They are in fact quite anodyne, far tamer than most cartoons in any Western paper. Not one of them, so far as I could tell, depicts Muhammad as “Satanic.” A few are actually progressive. Two critique women’s oppression. One is hilarious: it shows the prophet turning away smoking suicide bombers from paradise, saying, “Stop. Stop. We have run out of virgins!”

Most commentators, including you, describe the cartoons as “blasphemous.” That seems a bit of a stretch, based solely on the Muslim proscription against any visual depiction of the prophet (though huge photos of present-day quasi-fascist imams are paraded by fanatical Muslims in demonstrations). But what gives Muslims a right to think this proscription applies to non-Muslims? Furthermore, what gives any religion a right to impose a ban on blasphemy on nonbelievers? That is unrealistic and the height of arrogance.

I would argue that without blasphemy there would be no freedom of speech in the West. We would still be subject to burning at the stake and torture at the hands of the pope and his henchmen.

Blasphemy may be offensive to believers in religious superstitions, but so what? Let them live with it. In this, Islam is centuries behind the West, though even in the United States fundi fanatics and some Roman Catholics would like to recriminalize blasphemy. Now Muslims are demanding that the European Union pass a law banning speech that they find offensive on religious grounds. This shows only the difficulty some religions have in coexisting with the post-Enlightenment modern world.

The Danish cartoons may have been offensive to some people, but again, so what? Those Arabic newspapers and Web sites that have published them are to be commended.

David Thorstad

WV replies:

David Thorstad thinks we may not have even bothered to look at the cartoons. We did. But, in all seriousness, we wonder if he read the WV article. That many Muslims perceive such pictorial representations as blasphemous is simply a statement of fact, not a pledge to fast during Ramadan. Our opposition to all attempts to ban blasphemy and to all and any religion in general is made crystal clear. As we state: “Anti-blasphemy constraints must be opposed by the international proletariat. Religious ‘impieties’ should be of no concern to the working class.”

It is not, as Thorstad implies, that only blasphemous non-Muslims and “unbelievers” are besieged by Islamic religious righteousness. Again, from the article:

“One does not have to be a Marxist to view with contempt and revulsion the hundreds of millions of lives forfeited in the names of the various prophets and their fictional deities—whether they be of the Christian, Jewish, Muslim or any other faith—in wars and communal bloodbaths. Those who pursue religious violence are often driven by the hope for such ecstasies in the afterlife as are typically promised to ‘holy’ warriors, martyrs and saints. Nor does one need to be a Marxist to appreciate the miserable existence, the forfeiture of human potential of the many, particularly women, bound by religious superstitious constraints.”

Most of these victims were and are believers who not infrequently worshiped the same god as their persecutors. Their slaughter, the myriad miseries they have and continue to endure are of great concern to us. This is because it is our task to mobilize and educate the vast majority of the working class and oppressed, through the leadership of a necessarily atheist revolutionary proletarian party, to overthrow the capitalist order through socialist revolution and begin the process of destroying for all time the exploitation and oppression of man by man. In this, we look to the example of the Bolshevik Party, which convinced the masses that their bigotries should be vacated in the service of a working-class revolution in tsarist Russia. And if there is no socialist revolution, then religious persecution and religion, which derives its “right” from its role in history as a major prop for class society, will remain.

For the most part we share Thorstad’s fondness for blasphemy. For years we have appreciated his letters to *WV* and, more frequently than not, have concurred with many of the points he has made. His contempt for religion is superior to the utter silence on the dangers of religious reaction that is manifest in the articles on the cartoons promulgated by the International Socialist Organization (ISO) and *Workers World Party*. And Thorstad at least commends the Arab editors imprisoned in the Near East for publishing the cartoons. But in the pages of the ISO’s



Lebanon: Muslim students protest racist cartoons, February 2.

Socialist Worker and *Workers World*, these editors, whose very lives could be at risk, go unmentioned and undefended.

But the differences Thorstad raises with our article are serious matters both in the particular, i.e., his denial of the racist nature of the publication of the cartoons, and in general, i.e., his contrast of the “post-Enlightenment modern world” (the West) with the Muslim East. Thus, while he commends the Arab editors, Thorstad maintains silence on the European papers that spread the cartoons in the service of what they proclaim as a campaign for democracy. Thorstad does not assert that this campaign should not be protested, but it seems fair to assume that that is his position.

What Thorstad ignores is the racist dynamite contained in the admixing of the anti-immigrant frenzy in Europe—where the focus is almost solely on the Arab/Muslim “intruders”—and U.S. imperialism’s “war on terror,” where even American citizens with Arab/Muslim affiliations can be snatched off the streets and held without legal recourse. The cartoons were a racist provocation. To illustrate: Muhammad’s turban in one of the cartoons is a terrorist bomb. Is this really much different from, say, a cartoon of a hooknosed rabbi poised with a supposedly ritual knife over a Christian baby? And are Satan’s horns on the prophet’s head different, in intent, from the forked tail peaking out from under the rabbinical robes that was and is the stock-in-trade caricature for those animated by the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*? The current situation in Europe was eloquently delineated in *Al-Ahram Weekly* (9 February):

“The debate on the cartoons tells us less about fanatic Muslims than about how Europe is choosing to deal with its ‘Muslim question’ and its growing anxieties about Muslim demographics. The recent riots in the poorest slums of France and the violent anti-immigrant policies of right-wing political parties across Western Europe speak volumes about the sordid reality of repression, racism, and poverty that most European Muslims contend with. The hysterical tone of some free speech defenders comparing official apologies for the cartoons to a dangerous form of appeasement thus betrays a fantastic sense of delusion. Wake up, Europe! This is not Munich in 1938. The real siege is in Iraq, Afghanistan, and other sites of the U.S.-led war on terror, not in the editorial offices of European capitals. Indeed, if a comparison must be made to that era of impending fascism, then recalling the anti-Semitic cartoons of the 1930s and 1940s would be more appropriate.”

On one level it is simply preposterous to assert the moral superiority of Western civilization since the rise of imperialist capitalism over a century ago. Two world wars, hundreds of millions of corpses, fascism, genocide and nuclear incineration are the most outstanding accomplishments of this social order to which is occasionally added mostly cosmetic dollops of free speech and the right to franchise—rights that can be tolerated so long as they are not “inappropriately” exercised. In the immediate aftermath of the September 11 attack, the Indian-born novelist Salman Rushdie, who was targeted for assassination by Muslim fundamentalists for his sacrilegious and quite funny

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Proletarian Revolution and the Fight Against War

Writing in 1936 for the Workers Party of the United States, as interimperialist World War II loomed on the horizon, then-Trotskyist James Burnham (John West) explained why the struggle against imperialist war is inseparable from the struggle to overthrow the capitalist system.

The most common mistake made in the attempted struggle against war comes from the belief that this struggle is somehow “independent” of the class struggle in general,

that a broad union of all sorts of persons from every social class and group can be formed around the issue of fighting war, since—so the reasoning goes—these persons may be all equally opposed to war whatever their differences on other points. In this way, war is lifted from its social base, considered apart from its causes and conditions, as if it were a mystic abstraction instead of a concrete historical institution. Acting on this belief, attempts are made to build up all kinds of permanent Peace Societies, Anti-War Organizations, Leagues Against War, etc....

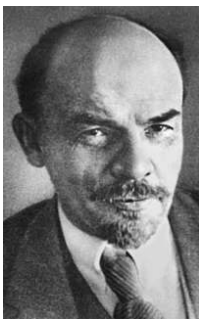
There is no “separate” or “special” struggle against war. The struggle against war cannot be divorced from the day-to-day struggles of the workers so far as, in their historical implications, these lead toward workers’ power. No one can uphold capitalism—whether directly, as an open adherent of the capitalists, or indirectly, from any shade of liberal or reformist position—and fight against war, because capitalism means war. Only a revolutionist can fight against war, because only a revolutionist takes the road to the overthrow of capitalism.

To suppose, therefore, that revolutionists can work out a common “program against war” with non-revolutionists is a fatal illusion. Any organization based upon such a program is not merely powerless to prevent war; in practice it acts to promote war, both because it serves in its own way to uphold the system that breeds war, and because it diverts the attention of its members from the real fight against war. There is only *one* program against war: the program *for* revolution—the program of the revolutionary party of the workers.

—John West, “War and the Workers” (1936)



TROTSKY



LENIN

WORKERS VANGUARD

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28 April 2006

Protest Cop Killing of Steel Workers

Mexico

The following statement, translated from Spanish, was issued by the Grupo Espartaquista de México, section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist).

APRIL 20—This morning, state and federal authorities stepped up their anti-union, anti-worker campaign, launching a murderous attack to break the strike at the Sicartsa steel plant in Lázaro Cárdenas, Michoacán. At least two workers, members of SNTMMSRM Local 271 [miners and steel workers union affiliated with the former ruling Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI)], were killed and dozens were wounded during the siege by 800 federal and state police. As we write, workers still hold the plant at Lázaro Cárdenas, having beaten back the police attack, and the union local has vowed to continue the strike begun on April 2 in opposition to the government's replacement of the national union leader [Napoleón Gómez Urrutia].

Attacks by the bosses and the state on the union have been steadily mounting; the siege takes place just one day after the strikes carried out by the miners union in five locations were declared illegal by the Federal Council of Conciliation and Arbitration. A week ago, a special delegate of the union's National Executive Committee, Indalecio Pérez Morones, was jailed on trumped-up charges in transparent retaliation for leading a strike at the La Caridad mine in Nacozari de García, Sonora, that has gone on since March 24. He could be sentenced to 45 years in prison, and there is an order for the capture of 22 members of the strike committee. As we wrote in an 11 March statement (printed below), "The target of this attack is the labor movement as a whole. *An injury to one is an injury to all!* We call on all working people and opponents of capitalist exploitation to oppose this attack."



Carlos Torres Oseguera/La Jornada Michoacán

April 20: Brutal cop siege killed at least two striking workers in Lázaro Cárdenas, Michoacán.

Many striking workers *Espartaco* recently talked with in Lázaro Cárdenas expressed their hope that a PRD [Party of the Democratic Revolution] federal government would represent a change for the better. But the PRD, a bourgeois party, has joined forces with the federal PAN [National Action Party] government in carrying out this attack on the union through the state government of Michoacán that it heads. After the death of 65 miners in Coahuila in February, AMLO [PRD leader López Obrador] expressed his anti-union position, stating that union leaders are merely "contract traffickers" (*La Jornada*, 24 February). During a campaign stop in Lázaro Cárdenas on April 7, López Obrador claimed that he would respect trade-union autonomy—there you have the PRD's notion of union autonomy! As we warned in *Espartaco* No. 25 (Spring 2006), the PRD "is an *enemy* of the working class. As it has already done in Mexico City, in the event of winning the presidency it will administer brutal

capitalist exploitation on a national level and will not hesitate for a second to unleash the repressive force of the state against those who support it today." The PRD, like the other parties of capital, defends only the interests of the capitalist class and its state, seeing workers' lives as worthless in its attempts to put an end to a strike that has already cost the company some \$80 million. *Mobilize the power of the working class to defeat this deadly anti-union offensive! Break with all the bourgeois parties: PRI, PAN, PRD! Workers to power!*

* * *

Government Hands Off the Miners Union!

The Grupo Espartaquista de México, a revolutionary Marxist organization, strenuously protests the attack by the government on the miners and steel workers union and fully solidarizes with these workers' struggle. The mining bosses'

insatiable drive for profit drove 65 workers to their deaths in the Pasta de Conchos mine in Coahuila, in an explosion on February 19. Faced with the anger and indignation of the miners' families, co-workers, important sectors of the working class and of the population as a whole, the government launched a union-busting attack, removing the national leader of the SNTMMSRM to replace him with a bureaucrat more to their liking, filing charges against the union leader, and freezing the union bank accounts. This is a transparent and calculated move by the government to shift attention away from itself and the Grupo México mining company, who are directly responsible for this atrocity. Not satisfied with having driven the miners to their deaths through their criminal negligence and super-exploitation, now they also want to destroy their union.

The union fired back with a small taste of its social power—rolling strikes on a national scale that lasted 40 hours, that mobilized 270,000 workers protesting the government attack and demanding better working conditions and wages, and that caused losses estimated at over \$17 million to the bloodsucking bosses. Already over 30,000 workers from the SME, CROC, CROM and UNT unions mobilized on Tuesday, March 7, in Mexico City with the miners in solidarity. The target of this attack is the labor movement as a whole. *An injury to one is an injury to all!* We call on all working people and opponents of capitalist exploitation to oppose this attack.

Class-struggle defense of the unions requires a fight for their complete and unconditional independence from the bourgeoisie and its state—the prerequisite to achieving trade-union democracy and to transforming the unions into organs of struggle for the interests of the great exploited masses. This means breaking with all illusions in the bosses' parties—PRI, PRD, PAN. This means a fight to build a revolutionary workers party to smash the profit-driven, murderous system of capitalism and replace it with the rule of the working class through international socialist revolution. That is the purpose of the Grupo Espartaquista de México, section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist). *Bourgeois state, hands off the SNTMMSRM! Drop the charges against Napoleón Gómez Urrutia! Down with the reprisals against striking workers!*

11 March 2006

Down With Slave Labor Taylor Law! Bosses' Court Slams TWU for Striking

New York City

APRIL 24—There is no justice in the capitalist courts. Witness how in the past week and a half state Supreme Court justice Theodore T. Jones sentenced Roger Toussaint, president of Transport Workers Union (TWU) Local 100 in New York City, to ten days in jail, fined the union \$2.5 million and revoked its automatic dues checkoff indefinitely, thereby threatening to bankrupt Local 100. The court also fined Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU) locals 1056 and 726 and suspended their dues checkoff for 30 days. The unions' crime? Transit workers crippled the financial center of U.S. imperialism by carrying out a powerful two and a half day strike last December

in defiance of the state's Taylor Law.

The slave-labor Taylor Law shackles the unions by banning public employee strikes. And without the right to strike, the very purpose of a union is undermined. The retribution meted out to the TWU and ATU, including docking union members two days' pay for each day on strike, sends a clear message: workers have no rights which the capitalists are bound to respect.

Defense of Local 100 and its officials for using labor's strike weapon should be the starting point for united action by the labor movement to smash the Taylor Law. Many Local 100 members are rightly furious with the Toussaint leadership for pulling the rug out from under the strike while it was having a major impact. In protest, some plan to refuse to pay dues. But this would mean giving aid to the class enemy that wants to crush the TWU.

Toussaint is not headed to jail for sending workers back to the job without a contract but for representing the striking union. Transit workers should be proud of the power, unity and organization they showed during the strike. All members must pay their dues so the union can engage in its future battles, while fighting for a class-struggle leadership that stands for their interests. A fighting labor movement with a leadership worth its salt would respond to the jail sentence and fines with labor action, not by turning the outpouring of justified anger into hot-air protests such as today's "solidarity" rally organized by the AFL-CIO tops. *Free Roger Toussaint now! Down with the fines!*

The transit strike was provoked by the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) with the goal of imposing drastic cutbacks in workers' benefits. The strike

was hugely popular among working people and in the ghettos and barrios, and workers in the U.S. and abroad took notice of the transit workers' defiance. But the capitalist rulers saw the strike by the predominantly black and immigrant Local 100 as a modern-day slave rebellion.

That the people who "Move New York," fed up with years of MTA "plantation justice" and a vicious disciplinary system, had the nerve to demand decent medical care and money to eke out some kind of retirement after working all their lives infuriated the billionaires, Wall Street financiers and real estate barons like MTA chief Peter Kalikow. The stock market just hit a six-year high, the economy has been in a five-year "recovery," new millionaires are being minted at a record rate, and the MTA itself was sitting on a \$1.5 billion surplus! Kalikow just bought a brand-new customized Ferrari that cost at least \$260,000 to add to his "awe inspiring" car collection, as one Ferrari buff put it. Yet supposedly there's no money for workers, as the banks and corporations look to slash wages and shred benefits won through hard class struggle by earlier generations of working people.

In the TWU's *Local 100 Express* magazine (January 2006), Toussaint wrote: "Strikes are like little wars." That's true—strikes are won or lost on the battlefield. As the December strike showed, Local

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Letter...

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novel, *Satanic Verses*, was moved, in a manner not dissimilar to that expressed by Thorstad, to extol a West with its music, godlessness and sex, with its relative freedom for women, to the “vast number of ‘believing’ Muslim men” who



Texas Book Festival
Salman Rushdie, author of the novel *Satanic Verses*.

fear “the prospect that their own immediate surroundings could be taken over—‘Westoxicated’—by the liberal Western-style of life” (see “Salman Rushdie’s Verses for Imperialism,” WV No. 772, 11 January 2002).

While religion is a contributing factor, the backwardness of the East, and in particular the Muslim East, was not and is not fundamentally a product of religious and retrograde social attitudes, but rather a product of the world imperialist economic order. The wealth, and thereby the cultural “superiority,” of the mostly Western (but including Japan) order was in no small measure provided through the mech-

anisms of an unrelenting exploitation of those societies that had not yet experienced bourgeois-democratic revolutions (such as the French Revolution) and by a thoroughgoing military suppression of any forces that sought a modicum of independence from imperialism. In particular in the Muslim world, in the aftermath of World War I, states were created to accommodate the appetites of the existing imperialist powers and, where necessary, these powers installed indigenous forces that could competently repress any aspirations that threatened imperialist dominance.

The fly in the ointment for the imperialists was the October 1917 Bolshevik Revolution that ignited the strivings for national liberation and freedom from imperialist domination in the East. Even in the aftermath of the onset of the Stalinist political degeneration of the Soviet workers state in 1923-24, the existence of a world power based fundamentally on working-class property forms—the nationalization of industry, the monopoly of foreign trade, the absence of private ownership in the means of production—provided some leverage for modernizing forces in the Muslim East to mitigate the stringencies of imperialist domination.

Against the Soviet Union, the imperialists logically enough turned to the forces of religious reaction to resist godless communism. This was most notable in Afghanistan where, in response to the Soviet military intervention on the side of a modernizing Afghan regime, U.S. imperialism literally organized and financed the forces of religious reaction, one component of which was later to become the motive force for the attacks on September 11. With a similar logic, not a few of the sham socialist groups, most notably in this country the ISO, which

Ronald Reagan meeting with Afghan mujahedin at White House, 1983. U.S. imperialists armed and financed Islamic fundamentalists against Soviet Union in Afghanistan.



staunchly opposed the defense of the USSR against imperialist and/or internally inspired capitalist counterrevolution, developed a parallel taste for Islamic reaction. And with the counterrevolutionary destruction of the USSR in 1991-92, things are much, much worse.

Thus, with the Soviet Union gone, religious reaction in the Muslim East has gained ground. The norm for the strivings of the oppressed and exploited masses of the Muslim world is no longer a deformed vision of socialism or even the secular nationalism of the type of Egypt’s Nasser that one saw in the 1950s and ’60s. Instead, there is increasingly a *false* struggle between a return to religion to answer imperialist subjugation and an embrace of Western imperialist “democracy” to answer the growth of stifling religious reaction. And that phenomenon is hardly limited to the Muslim East. One can see it right here in the United States, one can see it in the positions adopted by intellectuals like Salman Rushdie, and, for that matter, one can see it in Thorstad through his letter.

Probably Thorstad would agree that Bush’s war against certain selected forces of Islamic religious reaction—certainly not directed at the Saudis or the oil emirates—is not a return to the secularism that fueled the Enlightenment. The world we live in, the epoch of imperialist decay, is only temporally “post-Enlightenment.” As we said in our Rushdie article:

“It is Marxism that is the heir—the only legitimate heir—to the secular humanism of the Enlightenment that was the ideological driving force behind the bourgeois revolutions of the 18th century in the West. Fearful of proletarian revolution, the imperialist bourgeoisies have since supported or embraced all manner of social obscurantism and religious fundamentalism; in the U.S., this prominently includes the bigotry of the Christian right, which is heavily represented in the current White House. The only road to the social, economic and cultural modernization of the countries of the Islamic East lies through proletarian revolution—new October Revolutions—leading to an internationally planned socialist economy extending from the oil fields of the Persian Gulf to the industrial plants of the American Midwest and German Ruhr.”■

TWU...

(continued from page 3)

100 has tremendous power. After all, it is impossible to replace 33,700 transit workers en masse and you can’t “out-source” transportation. The union should have demanded: No reprisals or fines! By demobilizing an effective strike and pulling down the picket lines, Toussaint & Co. shifted the terrain from one where the union could fight to one where the workers were shackled to arbitration board meetings and court hearings where the bosses call the shots.

Once the workforce was off the streets, the Local 100 tops struck a contract deal with the MTA that included a major concession: open-ended contributions by the current workforce, beginning at 1.5 percent of gross pay, toward some improvements in retiree health care. Saddling transit workers with crushing health care costs is meant to be an opening wedge into smashing hard-won pension and health benefits for all New York City labor. This contract was rightly *rejected*, albeit narrowly, by defiant transit workers.

So the Toussaint leadership waited, kept the membership dispersed and let scare tactics run their course. The state’s Public Employment Relations Board ordered the union into binding arbitration. Union officials used the threat that binding arbitration would enforce an even more onerous contract to get the previously rejected contract

Striking transit workers paralyzed city for three days, showed labor’s power. Union leaders’ ties to capitalist Democratic Party undermined workers struggle against bosses and state.



passed in a revote. Nonetheless, nearly 30 percent of the over 20,000 who voted still rejected the contract, including a majority of train operators and almost half of conductors. One furious train conductor told a WV salesman that Toussaint “should have respected” that initial vote. Another, seeing our paper, yelled out, “They’re trying to end all New York unions!” For its part, the MTA has dismissed the new vote as an “empty gesture,” insisting the old offer is no longer on the table.

Why was an effective strike demobilized by the union tops? It wasn’t just that Toussaint caved in. While on strike, Local 100 was stabbed in the back by the TWU International, which opposed the strike and

urged strikers to return to work. The TWU was also left high and dry by the entire New York City labor officialdom, including the Central Labor Council and other key unions. UFT teachers union president Randi Weingarten, SEIU 1199 head Dennis Rivera and other union tops refused to even say that they supported the strike.

The reason the union tops continually sell out their memberships is that, at bottom, it is not possible to serve two masters. There are only two real sides: either the side of the workers or the side of the capitalists who exploit them. The union bureaucrats in this country, while drawing their salaries from the trade unions, support the capitalist system and the politicians who front for it, centrally in the Democratic Party (even though its pose as a “friend of labor” has worn pretty threadbare).

The strategy of the Local 100 tops is the vain hope that the Democratic politicians whom they have supported will come to the union’s aid. They have poured millions into the coffers of politicians in recent years, including thousands in donations to Attorney General Eliot Spitzer from 1998-2004. Spitzer’s office spearheaded the reprisals against the TWU for striking and has jailed the TWU president. Senator Hillary Clinton, a favorite of the Toussaint leadership, hailed Spitzer’s earlier use of the Taylor Law against transit workers during the heated contract



Ferrara/Newsday

April 24: Cop “union” head Patrick Lynch (right in photo) introduces TWU Local 100 president Roger Toussaint at rally before Toussaint’s jailing. Cops, courts are enemies of labor!

negotiations in 1999. Though the union is appealing the fines, Toussaint nonetheless accepts the state’s “right” to punish the union. Following the court ruling, he declared, “Two and a half million is excessive, it’s too much and it’s one-sided. We don’t think the judge should have gone that far” (*Amsterdam News*, 20 April).

In court, Toussaint was backed by such union “allies” as Jesse Jackson, black front man for the Democratic Party, and Patrick Lynch, head of the Patrolmen’s Benevolent Association (PBA). The role of Jackson, who said the strike was a “necessary evil,” is to defuse struggle and lure workers back into the fold of electoral politics. The PBA and other cop “unions” are not part of the workers movement. The cops are enemies of working people and minorities and are duty bound to safeguard the bosses’ profit system, which includes smashing strikes. Cops, security guards out of the unions!

For unions to become instruments of militant struggle against the capitalist exploiters requires fighting against the policies of the union bureaucracy. This includes fighting against any government or court intervention into the union movement. One immediate example of this danger is the revocation of dues checkoff. We oppose the court’s penalties against the union. However, as we have pointed out, this shows the danger of letting capitalist employers control dues collection through payroll deduction. Dues collection should be done by elected union officials, which would also make them answerable to the membership.

To unchain the power of labor, a political fight is required to oust the pro-capitalist union bureaucrats and to forge a labor leadership dedicated to *class struggle* against capitalism. The labor movement desperately needs a leadership based on the complete *independence* of the working class from the bosses’ state and its political parties. Such a leadership would be forged in class struggle as part of the fight to build a workers party to fight for a workers government, under which industry will be ripped out of the hands of the capitalists and a planned, collectivized economy will be built, based on production for social need and not for profit.■

Defend Chinese Deformed Workers State! For Workers Political Revolution!

In the recent period, differences within the Chinese state bureaucracy over the direction of economic policy have become highly visible. A number of Stalinist bureaucrats and ideologues worry that the layoffs and other dislocations produced by Beijing's "market reforms," which opened the door to investment by Western and Japanese imperialists and the overseas Chinese bourgeoisie, are laying the basis for an uncontrollable social explosion.

According to Chinese government statistics, there were 87,000 "mass incidents" of unrest last year—an average of some 240 per day—against corruption, social inequality, loss of benefits, seizure of peasants' land by officials without equitable compensation. The privatization of many state-owned factories has resulted in millions being laid off. The unrest has led to debate at a number of meetings and forums sponsored by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) between leading elements of the bureaucracy who want the economic "opening up" to continue unabated, self-styled "neo-Marxists" who want more state intervention to check the ravages of "market reforms," and Maoist "conservatives" who seek a return to a bureaucratically planned economy. A dispute over proposed legislation to protect private property rights at last month's meeting of the legislative body, the National People's Congress, resulted in the shelving of the draft law.

The situation in China highlights the Trotskyist understanding of that country as a deformed workers state, in which a privileged, parasitic bureaucracy sits atop the collectivized property forms created by the 1949 Revolution. Guided by a desire to protect its privileges, the bureaucracy defends state property only to the extent that it fears the proletariat. As Marxists, we see a collectivized economy with centralized economic planning based on workers democracy as essential for the development of the productive forces. Marxists seek to liberate the creative powers of humanity, which have been shackled by the capitalist system and earlier forms of class-divided society. This conception of a communist future presupposes a global economic order based on the appropriation of the productive resources of the advanced capitalist countries through international proletarian revolution.

As our 1988 pamphlet "*Market Socialism*" in *Eastern Europe* explains:

"There is an *inherent tendency* for Stalinist regimes to abandon central planning in favor of an economic setup with the following major elements: output and prices determined through atomized competition between enterprises; investment, managerial salaries and workers' wages geared to enterprise profitability; unprofitable enterprises are shut down, resulting in unemployment; price sub-

"Left Forum" Debate on "Market Socialism"

dies are eliminated, resulting in a higher rate of inflation; the role of petty capitalist entrepreneurs is expanded, especially in the service sector; increased commercial and financial ties to Western and Japanese capitalism, including joint ventures, are encouraged. These measures do not amount to creeping capitalism, as many Western bourgeois commentators and not a few confused leftists contend. But they do strengthen the internal forces for capitalist counterrevolution."

The basic weakness of central planning in China, as under Mao Zedong, was that it was based on bureaucratic commands and

restored in China. For the social democrats and others behind the "Left Forum," the idea that China is capitalist is a convenient justification for refusing to defend it against the imperialists. Our comrade pointed out: "China is not capitalist. At the core of the economy is collectivized property.... We stand for unconditional military defense against imperialist attack and counterrevolution of the Chinese deformed workers state." He continued by expressing our opposition to Stalinist misrule, stating:



China Labour Bulletin

Over 6,000 workers, mostly women, at Tianwang Textile Factory in China's Shaanxi Province struck for almost seven weeks in 2004 against Hong Kong capitalists who took over their plant.

arbitrariness, rather than soviet democracy (workers councils). The result, as Leon Trotsky wrote in *The Revolution Betrayed* (1937) concerning the Soviet Union under Stalin, is that "Soviet products are as though branded with the gray label of indifference. Under a nationalized economy, quality demands a democracy of producers and consumers, freedom of criticism and initiative—conditions incompatible with a totalitarian regime of fear, lies and flattery."

Many of the dissident bureaucrats and intellectuals—at least those now being granted a public hearing by the CCP regime—have a modest reform program whose ultimate aim is to preserve the rule of the Stalinist bureaucracy. They call simply for increased government regulation and intervention—not even necessarily a return to state planning. Representative of this trend is Cheng Enfu, executive director of the Institute of Marxism at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, who declared: "If you accept Marxist economic ideas, you will agree that the government should have some control over the market economy" (Knight Ridder, 22 February).

Cheng was a featured speaker at a session of the "Left Forum" in New York City on March 12 titled "Marxist Views of China's Contemporary Development." Identifying himself as a "neo-Marxist," Cheng declared that in China "the proportion of private ownership is too high" and that "it is impossible to realize harmony in a privatized capitalist society." At the same time, he defended Beijing's policy of "opening up"—that is, to capitalist/imperialist penetration—as "very correct."

A Spartacist speaker from the floor first took aim at those forum participants who argued that capitalism has been

monopoly of foreign trade. At the same time, it would seek to take advantage of the international division of labor by promoting a high level of exports and imports and would renegotiate economic agreements with U.S. and other capitalists in the workers' favor.

A corollary of "socialism in one country" is the bureaucracy's vain quest for "peaceful coexistence" with imperialism, a policy that has undermined the defense of the workers states, not least through the betrayal of proletarian revolutions internationally. Chinese president Hu Jintao's glad-handing last week in Washington with George W. Bush served as a reminder of Beijing's embrace of the "war on terror," which is directed against workers, the oppressed and anyone perceived by the U.S. imperialists to stand in their way. Washington has a two-pronged strategy for preparing capitalist counterrevolution in China, combining economic penetration with military pressure. The U.S. and Japan have strengthened their military agreements, including one to defend Taiwan and "counter the Chinese military threat." Bush's encouragement to India's nuclear program aims to further tighten the military noose around China.

It is the historical role of the Chinese working class to build a Leninist-Trotskyist party to lead the struggle for proletarian political revolution. As our comrades of the Spartacist Group of Japan wrote in "Why China Is not Capitalist—Defend, Extend the Gains of the 1949 Revolution!" (WV No. 850, 10 June 2005):

"The Chinese workers and peasants have waged many struggles in the past ten years, but they are atomized and without a leadership whose perspective is to overthrow the political rule of the bureaucrats and place power in the hands of the workers, soldiers and peasants soviets. In addition to coordinating and leading the spontaneous and localized workers struggles, an international Trotskyist party would link the fight against the corrupt bureaucracy in China with that of the North Korean and Vietnamese workers against their Stalinist rulers. Such a party would work in concert with their comrades in Japan fighting for a workers revolution, and together with the class struggles of the militant Philippine and South Korean workers against their capitalist rulers."

The fate of the Chinese proletariat—and the fate of working people and the oppressed throughout the world—will be decided in the struggle for international socialist revolution, not least in the belly of the U.S. imperialist beast. ■

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Young Spartacus

No Administration Reprisals! Cops Off Campus!

Defend San Francisco State Professor Akom!

We reprint below, edited for publication, a March 27 statement issued by the Bay Area Spartacus Youth Club on the case of San Francisco State University (SFSU) professor Antwi Akom.

The racism endemic to capitalist society, and the role of its repressive state apparatus and its lackeys in the university administration have been revealed yet again with the release of the results of the “independent investigation” into the cop attack on black Ethnic Studies professor Antwi Akom last October. The investigation was organized by President Corrigan in the wake of campus protest following the arrest of Akom. He was charged with resisting arrest and assaulting a police officer after he was stopped by a security guard and campus cops while exiting his *own office*, while his young children waited in the car. As we wrote about the people heading the “investigation” team in November 2005 after Akom’s arrest:

“The Democratic Party figure Willie Brown is a black front man whose job is to make it easier to enforce segregation and oppression through brutal cop terror and economic marginalization in San Francisco’s poor black neighborhoods.



Golden Gate [X]press
Spartacus Youth Club joined over 200 students and faculty at March 22 rally.

Louise H. Renne is a hangman of the capitalist injustice system, the president of the Police Commission that oversees the San Francisco police and its ‘Office of Citizen Complaints,’ whose purpose is to whitewash the cops’ image.”

—“Hands Off Antwi Akom! Drop All Charges!” WV No. 859, 25 November 2005

As we predicted, the investigation commission did just that, denying any racial bias on the part of the cops and actually *accusing Akom* of being the aggressor, manipulating the evidence to support their witchhunt.

On March 17, S.F. District Attorney Kamala Harris dropped the criminal charges against Professor Akom, but the threat against him is far from over. The administration could still fire him or suspend him without pay, or demote him. Campus unions should come out in defense of Akom. The administration

and the state’s targeting of Akom is a threat against all black students, workers and the faculty on campus. *An injury to one is an injury to all! Hands off Akom!*

The Spartacus Youth Club has a tradition of defense of those targeted by the administration, like when the International Socialist Organization and Students Against War were sanctioned last year for protesting military recruiters. In 2004, when four female students from predominantly Muslim countries who defended themselves against the attacks of campus right-wingers were targeted by the administration and the FBI, we demanded: “No reprisals! Down with the right-wing witchhunt!” The current escalation of racist provocations and witchhunts against leftists and minorities across the country comes in the context of the phony “war on terror.” The “war on terror” is an all-sided attack against neocolonial countries like Iraq, Afghanistan and Iran which is accompanied by a domestic war on blacks, immigrants, leftists and the working class.

On March 22, over 200 students and faculty rallied in support of Professor Akom and against the findings of the “independent investigation.” Many speakers expressed their outrage at the report, demanding an apology by Corrigan and a new investigation with student/faculty participation. While we add our voices to those opposing this racist outrage, we warn against illusions in the campus administration—the ruling class agents on college campuses—and oppose schemes for “community control” or supervision of the police, which have historically served to alibi the inherent racism of the capitalist state. The role of the cops on campus is the same as their role on the streets—subjugation through terror. SYCers at the rally held signs that read “No Administration Reprisals Against Prof. Akom!” and “Cops and Military Recruiters Off Campus!” We



Golden Gate [X]press
Professor Antwi Akom at SFSU defense rally, March 22.

call to *abolish the administration!* The universities should be run by the students, teachers and workers who study and work there!

Decades after the end of the civil rights movement, higher education is still out of reach for many minority youth, and blacks in particular. The rising cost of tuition and the gutting of affirmative action are a racist purge of higher education. The attack against Akom is not an aberration, rather it is the logic of the capitalist system that views black people as a “surplus population” who belong in prison or serving as cannon fodder for the wars of U.S. imperialism, not at an institution of higher learning. The SYC fights for *free, quality education for all! For open admissions and no tuition!*

The Spartacus Youth Club looks to the working class as the only social force with the power and interest to smash the capitalist system of exploitation and eliminate the racism it produces once and for all. Just as it took the Civil War to smash slavery, nothing short of an overturn of the capitalist system will succeed in destroying the economic base of black oppression. We advance a program of *revolutionary integrationism*, seeking to mobilize the power of the labor movement to fight against all instances of racist oppression, while understanding that to eliminate black oppression will require a socialist revolution. To accomplish this requires breaking the chains that bind labor to the Democratic Party of war and racism and forging a revolutionary workers party. The Spartacus Youth Club fights to win youth to the perspective of building such a party. *Hands off Antwi Akom! Cops off campus! For black liberation through socialist revolution!■*

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SF State University, HSS 104

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Administration Hands Off Students Against War!

SFSU Suspends Protesters Against Military Recruiters

The following statement protesting repression against student activists at San Francisco State University (SFSU) was issued by the Bay Area Spartacus Youth Club on April 16. Attendees at a press conference organized in the students' defense on April 17 expressed appreciation for our solidarity, with the notable exception of the International Socialist Organization's Todd Chretien who is running for the U.S. Senate on the capitalist Green Party ticket and who pointedly refused to take a copy of this statement. The campus administration reduced the students' suspension to three days. However, *Students Against War*, which organized the protest, may face further administration reprisals.

The Spartacus Youth Club vehemently protests the SFSU administration and police repression against students protesting military recruiters on April 14. Ten students were ejected from the "career fair" by campus police and cited for "disrupting campus activities." They have been suspended from the campus for 7-14 days. Additionally, Students Against War (SAW), which organized the protest, could face being disbanded, stemming from its March 9, 2005 anti-recruiter protest, after which the International Socialist Organization (ISO) and SAW were outrageously sanctioned by the administration [see "No Reprisals Against Anti-Military Recruitment Protesters!" WV No. 846, 15 April 2005 and "Protest SFSU Clampdown on Antiwar Activists!" WV No. 851, 8 July 2005]. Despite our political differences with SAW and the ISO, we call on all students to defend these groups being targeted by [SFSU president] Corrigan's administration, the agents of the capitalist class in the university, just as we have vigorously defended all those who have been victimized by campus administrations and the cops for their actions against military recruiters. **Drop all charges against the anti-military recruitment protesters now! Hands off SAW!**

The SYC opposes any extension of the repressive U.S. imperialist military onto college campuses and high schools. As Marxists, we seek to mobilize students to

protest military recruiters as part of the struggle against the brutal, neocolonial occupation of Iraq and the entire imperialist system. We thus sharply stand out from groups like the ISO, which has acted as an appendage of bourgeois democracy, like when it made common cause with the imperialists in their drive for capitalist counterrevolution in the Soviet Union.

The SYC took part in the protest at SFSU on April 14 against military recruiters, raising calls for "Down With the Colonial Occupation of Iraq!", "Military Recruiters, Cops and Border Patrol Off Campus!" and "Fight for Socialist Revolution!" At the rally, our speaker explained that in order to end imperialist wars you have to get rid of the capitalist system that breeds them. He exposed how the ISO and the Campus Antiwar Network base their program on pressuring the ruling class, and how the ISO's campaign for the capitalist Green Party serves as an obstacle to creating revolutionary consciousness by tying working people to their class enemy.

The administration's attack comes in the context of the bloody imperialist occupation of Iraq and Afghanistan and provocations against Iran internationally, along with the phony "war on terror," which is really a war on blacks, immigrants, leftists and the working class. At SFSU, leftists and minority students have faced a series of attacks and political intimidation by the university, including the racist case against black professor Antwi Akom, who was arrested last October after going into *his own office*. Akom faced criminal charges that were met by campus protest and subsequently dropped, but he still faces possible reprisals by the administration. **Defend Professor Akom!**

The SYC looks to the working class as the only social force with the power and interest to smash the capitalist system of wage slavery once and for all. To accomplish this requires breaking the chains that bind labor to the Democratic Party of war and racism and forging a revolutionary workers party that struggles for socialist revolution. The SYC fights to

win youth to the perspective of building such a party.

The attack on these ten students is meant to intimidate and silence all who oppose and seek to protest against the presence of the American military machine on campus and the colonial occupation of

Iraq and Afghanistan by U.S. imperialism. Students, faculty and campus workers must come to the defense of these protesters. **An injury to one is an injury to all! Down with campus repression! Cops, military recruiters off campus! Drop the charges now! ■**

High School Students Walk Out for Immigrant Rights



Chavez/LA Times

Los Angeles high school students march down Whittier Boulevard in defense of immigrant rights, March 24.

LOS ANGELES—In the lead-up to and following the million-strong March 25 immigrant rights demonstration in Los Angeles, high school and middle school students throughout California and in Arizona, Texas and other states organized walkouts and protests against proposed legislation that would criminalize "illegal" immigrants and extend the wall along the Mexican border. On March 27, over 36,000 students from two dozen school districts walked out in Los Angeles, demonstrating at City Hall and blocking two freeways. Democratic mayor Antonio Villaraigosa spoke at the rally, claiming sympathy while telling students to go back to school. In response, the mostly Latino students booed, sat down and chanted, "Hell no, we won't go!" Villaraigosa then ordered his cops to crack down on subsequent protests, and city officials put all middle and high schools into "lockdown" mode. At an *elementary* school in Inglewood, students were barred from using the restrooms and forced to urinate in buckets in their classrooms.

Across the country, police arrested protesting students, issuing hundreds

of truancy citations with fines of hundreds of dollars. Repression was particularly intense in the San Diego area, where thousands of students marched on successive days. Well over 100 students have been arrested there; some face felony charges. Notably, south of L.A. in Carson, where cops fired pepper balls at students, many black students joined the Latino protesters. One black youth said, "Normally, it's Mexicans vs. the blacks. Today's a different day. We're here to prove a point" (*Daily Breeze*, 27 March). The L.A. Spartacus Youth Club, which has intervened into the walkouts to introduce students to a revolutionary Marxist perspective, demands: Drop all charges against student protesters!

Anthony Soltero, a 14-year-old Latino who helped organize a walkout at a middle school in Ontario, east of L.A., committed suicide after the vice principal told him he would be sent to jail for three years. To honor this youth, a citizen who took up the fight for immigrant rights, L.A. students dedicated an April 15 rally in his honor. **Remember Anthony Soltero! Full citizenship rights for all immigrants!**

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Iran...

(continued from page 1)

socialist federation of the Near East. This is the Trotskyist perspective of permanent revolution, which vitally includes the fight to extend working-class rule to the imperialist centers, not least through the struggle for socialist revolution in the U.S.

Down With U.S. Nuclear Blackmail!

Hersh’s article details that the Bush administration’s quest for “regime change” in Iran is at least partly predicated on a growing acceptance within the Pentagon of using tactical nuclear weapons to achieve its aims. As Hersh puts it, “The lack of reliable intelligence leaves military planners, given the goal of totally destroying the sites, little choice but to consider the use of tactical nuclear weapons.” Iran today has at least nine different nuclear facilities, mainly underground, including the main centrifuge plant at Natanz, nearly 200 miles south of Tehran. The military proposed this winter to use a “bunker-buster” tactical nuclear weapon like the B61-11 against such sites. Hersh quoted one former senior intelligence official:

“Every other option, in the view of the nuclear weaponeers, would leave a gap. ‘Decisive’ is the key word of the Air Force’s planning. It’s a tough decision. But we made it in Japan.... Nuclear planners go through extensive training and learn the technical details of damage and fallout—we’re talking about mushroom clouds, radiation, mass casualties, and contamination over years. This is not an underground nuclear test, where all you see is the earth raised a little bit.”

The U.S. stockpile of some 10,000 nuclear warheads reportedly includes about 50 such B61-11 nuclear weapons, known as earth-penetrating weapons or EPWs. A May 2005 report on EPWs, by Lisbeth Gronlund, David Wright and Robert Nelson of the Union of Concerned Scientists, gave the following as a possible scenario, using a 1.2 megaton thermonuclear warhead (which dwarfs what was dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki): “According to a simulation using software developed for the Pentagon, if one of these weapons were used against the underground nuclear facility in Esfahan, Iran, 3 million people would be killed by radiation within 2 weeks of the explosion, and 35 million people in Afghanistan, Pakistan and India would be exposed to increased levels of cancer-causing radiation.”

But it’s not only Iran that the Dr. Strangelove military planners view as a feasible potential nuclear target. The Bush administration’s January 2002 Nuclear Posture Review (NPR) ordered the Pentagon to draft plans for the use of nuclear weapons against at least seven countries—Iraq, Iran, North Korea, China, Libya, Syria and Russia (which was later struck from the list)—because “all have long-standing hostility towards the United States and its security partners. All sponsor or harbor terrorists, and have active WMD [weapons of mass destruction] and missile programs.” The supposed existence of Iraqi WMDs, of course, has since been proven a lie.

The NPR also called to develop improved “bunker-busting mini-nukes,” as



Tavakolian/Polaris

June 2005: Iranian women demonstrate equality in front of Tehran University.

they were termed in the *Los Angeles Times* (9 March 2002) article that first revealed the NPR. In fact, following the 2001 attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon, calls were made to use tactical nuclear weapons in Afghanistan for the demented purpose of destroying, not even deep underground bunkers, but the caves said to be harboring Al Qaeda operatives.

U.S. imperialist musings over nuclear weapons as a feasible military option have escalated since September 11, which can partly be attributed to the especially deranged nature of the Bush administration. As one House member commented to Hersh, “The most worrisome thing is that this guy has a messianic vision.” Or as *New York Times* (19 April) columnist Thomas Friedman put it, faced with a choice of nuclear-armed Iran or an attack carried out by Bush & Co., “I’d rather live with a nuclear Iran.” As war-crazed as the Bush administration is, sporadic calls by the U.S. ruling class to use its massive nuclear arsenal have occurred as long as these weapons have existed. Among the more recent calls, in 1996 during the Clinton administration, consideration was given to carrying out a tactical nuclear attack on a Libyan chemical weapons facility at Tarhuna.

Defend China!

The U.S. historically amassed its lethal stockpile of nuclear arms—and dropped the bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945—for the primary purpose of threatening and ultimately destroying the Soviet Union. The USSR, the world’s first workers state, was born through the only successful workers revolution, led by Lenin and Trotsky’s Bolshevik Party in October 1917. Although political counterrevolution led by Stalin in 1923-24 resulted in the Soviet Union’s bureaucratic degeneration, the USSR’s existence served to deny a sixth of the globe to capitalist exploitation and acted as an obstacle to the imperialist ambitions of the U.S. and other powers. The Soviets’ development of nuclear weapons and delivery systems in parity with the U.S. stayed the hand of U.S. imperialism. Democrats and Republicans were united in pursuing the Cold War drive against the Soviet Union and gloated over the supposed “death of communism” signaled by capitalist counterrevolution there in 1991-92.

To the end, we called for the unconditional military defense of the Soviet degenerated workers state against imperialism and capitalist counterrevolution, and recognized that its collapse was a

world-historic defeat for the international proletariat and oppressed. We stand for the unconditional military defense of the remaining deformed workers states—China, North Korea, Vietnam and Cuba. China was cited in the 2002 NPR as “a country that could be involved in an immediate or potential [nuclear] contingency.” The report speculated that this could result from a military conflict such as over the status of capitalist Taiwan, while another possible scenario for using nukes would be against North Korea in response to an attack on South Korea.

Indeed, the U.S. saber rattling against

AP



Occupation troops in house-to-house search in Tal Afar, Iraq. U.S. invasion and occupation has devastated the country.

Iran poses a threat to the Chinese deformed workers state, U.S. imperialism’s strategic target in the post-Soviet world. China gets 14 percent of the oil for its growing economy from Iran, and in late 2004 signed a \$70 billion deal with Iran for oil and natural gas for some 30 years. It is vital that China oppose the imperialist drive to disarm Iran. However, the Beijing Stalinists’ policy of “peaceful coexistence” with imperialism undermines China’s own defense. While verbally opposing UN sanctions against Iran, Beijing has collaborated with the imperialists on Iran and recently condemned the Iranian government for successfully enriching uranium. As part of our defense of the Chinese workers state, we fight for workers political revolution to oust the Stalinist bureaucracy and replace it with a regime based on workers democracy and revolutionary internationalism.

Down With U.S. Imperialism!

The London *Independent* (2 April) quoted Professor Zoltan Grossman stating: “After every US military intervention since 1990 the Pentagon has left behind clusters of new bases in areas where it never before had a foothold. The new string of bases stretch from Kosovo and adjacent Balkan states, to Iraq and other Persian Gulf states, into Afghanistan and other central Asian states...The only two obstacles to a geographically contiguous US sphere of influence are Iran and Syria.”

Even as the Bush administration insists that the U.S. occupation of Iraq will end some day, upon the establishment of what the U.S. deems a viable government there, it has been pouring money into military bases that are widely recognized, if not

officially, to be permanent. The U.S. has set up 110 forward operating bases in Iraq, of which only 34 have reportedly been turned over to the puppet government there. According to the *Independent*, occupation forces are spending millions to establish at least six “enduring” bases, at least four of which would continue to be operated by the U.S. indefinitely.

Former Marine Anthony Zinni, head of the U.S. Central Command in the late 1990s, is among those who oppose the building of permanent bases in Iraq, arguing that they further damage the image of the U.S. abroad. He is also one of the half dozen retired generals—war criminals all, half of them with years’ experience in leading the Iraq occupation—who are now loudly calling for Donald Rumsfeld’s resignation. The military doesn’t generally protest when it sees its war is going well. The context for the generals’ rebellion is the fact that Iraq, which was supposed to be a showpiece for American “democracy” in the region, has instead become an inferno. What the generals want is a more effective military.

Polls show that popular opposition to the occupation of Iraq is at an all-time high. That, combined with innumerable domestic scandals and embarrassing leaks, has led to an all-time low in the polls for the Bush administration, which has presumably contributed to the reshuf-

fling of posts in the White House, including the departure of White House spokesman Scott McClellan and the reassignment of Karl Rove.

Break with the Democrats! For a Revolutionary Workers Party!

With the Bush administration in serious political trouble, the organizers of the antiwar protests are working to set the stage for a Democratic Party victory in this year’s Congressional elections and the 2008 presidential election by pushing the Democrats to “really” oppose the occupation of Iraq. That will be the message delivered at the April 29 New York City antiwar protest initiated by United for Peace and Justice. The call for the demonstration declares: “Our message to the White House and to Congress is clear: Either stand with us or stand aside! We are coming together to march, to vote, to speak out and to turn our country around!”

The April 29 demonstration is being built by several pseudo-socialist organizations, such as Workers World Party (WWP) and the International Socialist Organization (ISO). WWP, which initiated the International ANSWER coalition and currently leads the Troops Out Now Coalition, wrote in an editorial that antiwar activists must “make the message ‘Stop War on Iran!’ an inescapable element in this [April 29] and every major demonstration from now on” (*Workers World*, 13 April). The reality is, however, that Workers World has from the beginning of the antiwar protests sought to appeal to Democratic Party liberals, who, if anything, have been even more hawkish on Iran than the Bush administration.

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Immigration...

(continued from page 12)

The bill would double the number of border patrol agents, add 5,000 immigration cops to hunt “illegals” in interior states, create a high-tech “virtual fence” along the Mexican border with new checkpoints and barriers, and authorize police forces to act as immigration agents. It would require Homeland Security to build 20 detention centers capable of holding 10,000 detainees—i.e., concentration camps—and expand its authority to deport alleged terrorists while adding new criminal penalties for evading immigration cops and criminalizing any aid to undocumented immigrants that the government deems is not “purely humanitarian.” A cornerstone of the bill is a “guest worker” program under which hundreds of thousands of immigrants would be assigned to particular employers. This attempt at indentured servitude harks back to the notorious *bracero* program of 1942-64 under which “temporary” Mexican workers, denied elementary rights, were brought in to slave for agribusiness.

Kennedy stresses that the Senate bill

“does not provide undocumented immigrants with amnesty.” Indeed, its much-vaunted “path to citizenship” would be open only to those who pay a \$2,000 penalty as well as back taxes, pass a medical exam and learn English. Ineligible would be anyone ever convicted of offenses as minor as shoplifting or “public nuisance” or deemed to have acted adversely to U.S. foreign policy. In the latest version proposed on April 6, only those who could prove they have lived in the U.S. for five years would be eligible. Those here two to five years would have to leave the country, go to a border station and apply to be readmitted. Those with no proof that they have lived here that long, which includes at least a million people, would be subject to deportation outright.

The Spartacist League/U.S. has intervened into the protests with the call for full citizenship rights for all who have made it into the country. We oppose racist anti-immigrant repression and call on the labor movement to fight deportations through class-struggle means and to organize immigrant workers into the unions with full rights and protections. This requires combating the politics of the labor misleaders, who are opposed to a program of



KHOU-TV

Immigrants seized by Homeland Security in Texas, April 19. Nearly 1,200 immigrant workers were rounded up by Feds that day as part of ongoing government crackdown.

class struggle and look to the capitalist state to defend the rights of working people and immigrants.

Bipartisan War on Immigrants

The precarious situation of immigrants has dramatically worsened as a result of the bipartisan “war on terror.” Stopping “terrorists” from entering the U.S. is one of the pretexts for further militarizing the border. While the U.S. occupiers of Iraq and Afghanistan terrorize those societies, at home immigrants of Arab or Islamic background are portrayed as “internal enemies.” Imperialist war abroad is often accompanied by attacks on immigrants and naturalized citizens originally from the “enemy” countries, as evidenced by the mass incarceration of Japanese Americans during World War II by the Democratic Roosevelt administration. We call for the unconditional withdrawal of the U.S. from Iraq and Afghanistan now and for class struggle at home against the capitalist rulers carrying out these imperialist depredations. The working class must fight tooth and nail against anti-immigrant chauvinism and in defense of civil liberties, which are being shredded under the pretext of the “war on terror.”

One of the main slogans of the April 10 demonstrations was: “Today we march, tomorrow we vote”—a clear attempt to steer anger at Republican-led efforts to further criminalize immigrants toward the Democratic Party. But it was Bill Clinton’s 1996 immigration “reform” that allowed the deportation of even longtime permanent residents for trivial offenses, and his “Anti-Terrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act” enacted the same year, in addition to vastly expanding the use of the racist death penalty, set up immigrants for prosecution in special courts on charges and “evidence” kept secret even from their lawyers. The militarization of San Diego and other border areas was vastly expanded under Clinton’s “Operation Gatekeeper,” resulting each year in the deaths of hundreds of immigrants trying to cross over in remote desert areas.

And the NAFTA agreement that went into effect in 1994, which we called the U.S. “free trade” rape of Mexico, further impoverished millions of Mexican peasants and drove them off their land, spurring on the last decade’s huge increase in immigration.

The current wrangling over immigration “reform” is entirely in the framework of capitalist interests. Representatives of the ruling class are divided on this question. On the one hand are right-wing anti-immigrant ideologues, including those Republicans who hope to ride anti-immigrant chauvinism into the November Congressional elections. On the other hand, there is a wide swath, ranging from the Bush White House and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce to most of the Democratic Party, that speaks for those capitalists who depend on the labor of immigrant workers and is pushing various versions of “guest worker” programs.

In today’s economic conditions, to deport the estimated eleven million “illegals” would wreak havoc. But when the economic and/or political needs and interests of the U.S. ruling class change in this regard, the spigot of immigration can be slowed to a trickle and substantially reversed. During the Great Depression of the 1930s, federal, state and local governments (especially in California) effected the repatriation of almost half a million Mexican immigrants, some of whom were U.S. citizens.

State legislatures have recently been stripping immigrants of the ability to obtain basic benefits, while many state and local police agencies are being trained to pursue “illegals,” as captured in a *New York Times* (14 April) article headlined, “Path to Deportation Can Start With a Traffic Stop.” A new federal law requires a passport, birth certificate or other proof of citizenship in order to receive Medicaid benefits—a requirement that will be a barrier to health care not only for immigrants but also many of the elderly, black people, Native American Indians and the homeless.

By denying immigrants the most basic
continued on page 10



WV Photo

Top: Some one million marched for immigrant rights in L.A. on March 25. Bottom: UNITE HERE hotel workers at Boston mobilization against anti-immigrant bill, April 10.

Indymedia



A 13 April *Workers World* article complains that “to this day the Democratic Party leadership won’t take a clear anti-war stand.”

The dividing line separating us from the reformist leftists like *Workers World* and the ISO is political program. As Marxists, we understand that war, racist oppression and exploitation are inherent to the capitalist system, a system that cannot be reformed to serve the interests of working people and the oppressed. Only socialist revolution, by ripping power from the hands of the capitalists and placing it in the hands of the working class, can end imperialist war.

The reformists, however, spread the illusion that capitalism can be reformed—that we can have an end to imperialist war, racism and exploitation under the present social order. Thus, a common slogan raised by WWP and the ISO is, “Money for jobs and education, not for war,” as though the problem were one of reordering the priorities of the capitalists. The bourgeoisie’s top priority is to maintain and defend its capitalist system of exploitation, which necessarily entails the waging of wars—against both neocolo-

nial countries and their imperialist rivals (as took place in World Wars I and II).

To the reformists, the capitalist system is their system. Very revealing is the slogan commonly promoted by the various antiwar coalitions, “Bring the Troops Home.” This slogan is meant to evoke sympathy for the U.S. armed forces and serves to clean up the tarnished image of U.S. imperialism. Even more explicitly, the call for the April 29 demonstration declares, “End the war in Iraq—Bring all our troops home now!” Meanwhile, a “model resolution” for labor unions on the Web site of “U.S. Labor Against the War,” an outfit largely made up of left-talking union bureaucrats that has endorsed the April 29 demonstration, is titled: “Support Our Troops & Veterans—End the War and Bring Them Home Now!” These are not “our” troops! U.S. troops in Iraq are the enforcers of a vicious occupation that by some estimates has cost the lives of 100,000 Iraqis. The photo of Lynndie England, dog leash in hand abusing a naked Iraqi prisoner, is a graphic reminder of the routine brutality meted out by imperialism’s military enforcers.

The U.S. working class uniquely has the social power to bring down the U.S. imperialist beast. The key to unlocking this power is breaking the class collaborationism pushed by the labor tops and their fake-socialist backers. It is necessary to break the chains forged by the labor tops that bind the proletariat to the capitalist

Democratic Party. If there is to be an end to imperialist war, racist oppression and poverty, the multiracial working class must be won, through Marxist education and its own experience in struggle, to the fight for a revolutionary workers party to defeat U.S. imperialism through socialist revolution. ■

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Espartaco

Left: Mexican steel workers at Mittal steel plant after successful strike, April 11. Right: Striking UFCW grocery workers rally in Los Angeles, December 2003. Bringing with them their history of militancy, immigrant workers can help revitalize U.S. labor movement.



WV Photo

Immigration...

(continued from page 9)

rights, the capitalists seek to keep them in fear and prevent them from challenging their brutal exploitation, the better to drive down the wages and working conditions of the entire working class. The working class, including its diminished unionized sections, has been under the gun for decades, with the capitalists taking the ax to industrial jobs, wages, pensions and health benefits. A class-struggle fight for immigrant rights would not only defend vulnerable immigrant workers but help to revitalize the entire labor movement by bringing in thousands of workers with experience of militant struggle in their countries of origin.

But the labor bureaucracy accepts and defends the capitalist profit system, and therefore offers to “defend” U.S. workers through protectionism and other forms of “America First” chauvinism. Anna Burger, chair of the Change to Win union federation that split from the AFL-CIO last year, grotesquely lauds the proposed Senate Judiciary Committee’s “reform” as a “historic step” that “will improve our national security by strengthening our borders with more personnel and more advanced technology to prevent illegal immigration.” The Teamsters bureaucracy, another component of Change to Win, is notorious for its chauvinist campaign against Mexican truckers using U.S. highways.

While the AFL-CIO under John Sweeney opposes “expanding” guest worker programs beyond those that currently exist for agricultural workers, it refuses to demand citizenship rights for immigrants or to condemn plans to further militarize the border. Its call for permanent residency is limited to those undocumented workers “who have paid taxes and made positive contributions to their communities.”

As the SL/U.S. and the Grupo Espartaquista de México declared in a joint statement printed in WV No. 867 (31 March) and distributed as a special supplement at demonstrations across the country:

“Instead of mobilizing union power in defense of immigrants, the union tops embrace one or another of the capitalists’ anti-immigrant ‘reforms,’ particularly favoring their so-called ‘friends’ in the capitalist Democratic Party. This policy of class collaboration, sacrificing labor’s interests on the altar of capitalist profitability, flows from the labor bureaucracy’s support for the capitalist system and its identification with the ‘national interests’ of U.S. imperialism. This program has led to defeat after defeat, leaving the U.S. labor movement weaker today than at any time since the early 1900s.”

The fight to defend immigrants and to defend the interests of the labor movement as a whole runs straight into the capitalist profit system. To undercut the bosses’ attempt to pit native-born against foreign-born workers, there should be a fight to create *jobs for all* through cutting the workweek at no loss in pay. Against “English-only” chauvinism and restrictions on access to schools and health care, we call for free, quality, integrated education and free medical care for all. What is urgently needed is the forging of a workers party to lead all the exploited and oppressed in the struggle for a workers government that will seize the productive wealth of this society from the profit-gorged capitalists and create a planned,

socialized economy. The fight for international socialist revolution is the only road to the elimination of exploitation, racial oppression, impoverishment and the wars and occupations through which the imperialists seek to secure their domination of economically backward countries.

Break with the Democrats!

The reformist International Socialist Organization (ISO), Workers World Party and Socialist Workers Party (SWP) have signed up as cheerleaders for what is being dubbed a “new civil rights movement.” The reformists disappear the central role played by capitalist politicians and the Catholic church in these protests. All these outfits editorialize against “guest worker” programs but refuse to raise the straightforward call for full citizenship rights. The ISO’s maximum demand is for “Amnesty Now,” while the SWP calls for “permanent residency now.” Both of these demands would keep immigrants in second-class status.

The April 10 demonstrations, which were heavily built by the AFL-CIO, featured a panoply of Democratic politicians. In New York City these included state Attorney General and candidate for governor Eliot Spitzer, who prosecuted the New York City transit unions for going on strike in December (see article, page 3). Under fire from chauvinist yahoos over the waving of Mexican and Central American flags at earlier protests, the April 10 organizers made sure that there would be incessant waving of the U.S. flag—the emblem of the bloodiest government on the planet. Immigrants should have no illusions that waving the American flag will offer them any protection against chauvinist reaction. The Minute-man vigilantes who have staged racist, anti-immigrant provocations along the Mexican border and throughout the U.S. have rallied their fascistic forces behind the same flag, along with the Confederate flag of slavery.

Prominent in the protests in Los Angeles—where on March 25 up to one million turned out in one of the largest demonstrations in the city’s history—have been Democratic mayor Antonio Villaraigosa, various Catholic priests and Maria Elena Durazo of the L.A. UNITE HERE garment and hotel/restaurant workers union, who is interim head of the Los Angeles County Federation of Labor. Durazo was the national director of the 2003 Immigrant Workers Freedom Ride, which served as an electoral vehicle for the Democrats in the 2004 elections.

Durazo’s mentor, and that of her late husband Miguel Contreras, who was also head of the county labor federation, was Cesar Chavez, the leader of the hard-fought battle to build the United Farm Workers (UFW). Chavez is to this day widely revered as a leader of Mexican migrant workers. In fact, Chavez was key in orchestrating the political alliance between the tops of predominately Latino/immigrant unions, the Catholic church and the Democratic Party. In 1974, as agribusiness was using contract labor and undocumented immigrants against the UFW, Chavez fingered the “illegal” farm workers to federal authorities.

Last May, the U.S. Catholic Conference of Bishops initiated a three-year “Justice for Immigrants” campaign. Anyone who believes in the benign role of the church—a force for all-sided social reaction—

should look at its history of “organizing” workers. In 1891, Pope Leo XIII, in his encyclical *Rerum Novarum* (Of New Things), endorsed using Catholic labor groups as a means of undercutting the socialist Second International. One writer described this as the Vatican’s answer to *The Communist Manifesto* and Karl Marx’s *Capital*. It set the stage for decades of reactionary machinations in the working class.

In the U.S., where the Catholic church was historically a key nexus in the lives of immigrants from Ireland, Italy, Poland and elsewhere, the Association of Catholic Trade Unionists (ACTU) was formed in the late 1930s to undercut the growing influence of the Communist Party (CP) and other leftist tendencies in the labor movement. Following World War II, the ACTU played a key role in the purge of Communist unionists and other leftist militants, for example by helping to orchestrate the split of the International Union of Electrical Workers from the CP-influenced United Electrical Workers. In Australia, Europe and elsewhere, Catholic organizations fomented similar anti-Communist splits.

L.A.’s Cardinal Mahony has his own history as a union-buster, including against attempts to organize by immigrant church cemetery workers in the 1980s. Mahony served as the first chairman of the Agricultural Labor Relations Board, a government agency that operates on behalf of agribusiness, and has often served the capitalist rulers of L.A. by helping to scuttle strikes. In 2000 he played a key role in discouraging an L.A. county workers strike, which could have gone a long way toward beating back attempts to close down all or parts of King/Drew Medical Center, which poor blacks and Latinos in the Watts area rely upon.

For United Class Struggle!

The poisonous divisions between native-born and immigrant workers that are fostered by the capitalist rulers are echoed by some black organizations and spokesmen who see in immigrants a threat to the precarious gains made by the specially oppressed black population. A black contractors association in South-Central L.A. recently advocated cracking down on immigrants as a way to provide more jobs for blacks. Najee Ali, a prominent L.A. black activist, was quoted in the *Los Angeles Times* (10 April) as saying in regard to the mammoth March 25 demonstration, “Once I saw the half million, I felt fear, in a sense, that (blacks) might be marginalized in the future when it comes to jobs and political empowerment.”

Black-Latino hostilities in L.A. have exploded recently into nasty fights between high school students and race riots in the prison hellholes, stoked by police authorities. These tensions, which are further inflamed by black and Latino nationalists, have particular usefulness to the rulers of Los Angeles, where key unions that have engaged in class struggle in recent years, such as transit and grocery workers, are predominately Latino and black. In 1994, the passage of California’s anti-immigrant Proposition 187 was the precursor to the passage two years later of Proposition 209, which was designed to outlaw the token affirmative action programs that gave blacks and other minorities limited access to higher education, government jobs and contracts.

It is particularly important to combat anti-immigrant chauvinism in the working class and especially among black workers, while the immigrant-derived proletariat must understand that anti-black racism remains the touchstone of social reaction in this country. While newly arrived plebeian immigrants in their vast majority begin at the bottom of U.S. capitalist society, light-skinned immigrants have historically been able to advance up the economic ladder. The special oppression of black people is of a fundamentally different character, rooted in centuries of chattel slavery and subsequent segregation in this capitalist society.

Whipping up racial and ethnic hatred has long served the U.S. ruling class in furthering the exploitation of all workers. It is through *united class struggle* that the divisions between white and black workers, and between the native-born and immigrants, can be overcome. A model effort in this regard was the November 1982 labor/black mobilization in Washington, D.C., initiated by the Spartacist League, which stopped the race-terrorist KKK from staging an anti-immigrant march. As we note in the SL/U.S. Programmatic Statement:

“There will be no effective resistance to the immiseration of American working people without the unity in struggle between the trade unions and the black and Hispanic poor. Despite the destruction of industrial jobs and erosion of union strength, black workers, who have a significantly higher rate of trade-union membership than do white workers, continue to be integrated into strategic sectors of the industrial proletariat, which alone has the power to shatter this racist, capitalist system.”

The key to unleashing that power is the forging of a multiracial revolutionary workers party, a U.S. section of a reformed Fourth International, world party of socialist revolution. ■

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Mumia...

(continued from page 12)

attorneys, presented a detailed report on the Beverly confession and the other evidence of Mumia’s innocence.

Wolkenstein has also been invited to speak on the Beverly evidence at an April 29 ceremony in the Paris suburb of Saint-Denis to name a street after Mumia leading to the Nelson Mandela Stadium. The ceremony will also feature Mumia’s current attorney Robert Bryan, Pam Africa and Ramona Africa, the sole adult survivor of the government’s 1985 bombing of Philadelphia MOVE. In January, a French coalition including the PCF, CGT and other labor, anti-racist and left groups kicked off a drive to raise 100,000 euros (\$123,000) for Mumia’s defense. Most importantly, that fund drive should aim to spur labor action on Mumia’s behalf, internationally and especially in the U.S.

Mumia Abu-Jamal Is an Innocent Man!

On March 16, the prosecution filed its opening brief, ostensibly to address the relatively technical legal issue of whether the instructions and the verdict form given to the jury at the death sentence hearing were proper. While Mumia is barred from presenting evidence that he had nothing to do with Faulkner’s death, the prosecution’s papers predictably open with a venomous, trumped-up “statement of the facts”—every one of which was long ago refuted—to portray Mumia as a premeditated cop killer. This vicious lying attack is a testament that the racist capitalist state will say and do anything to see Mumia executed.

In reality, a mountain of evidence proves Mumia’s innocence, including Beverly’s confession that he was hired to kill Faulkner because the cop was reportedly interfering with prostitution, gambling, drugs and police payoffs. Beverly’s confession is corroborated by the ballistics and physical evidence and the testimony of many other witnesses, several of whom said the shooter fled the scene. Notably, Beverly was wearing a green army jacket that night, which is what at least *five witnesses* said the shooter wore! Mumia was wearing a red quilted ski jacket with wide vertical blue stripes. There is no green army jacket in the police evidence.

The cops, prosecutors, gutter press and liberals alike have dismissed Beverly’s account of a mob hit as “ridiculous.” But in December 1981, there were at least three ongoing federal probes of the Philly cops, with targets that included the entire chain of command for the “investigation” of Faulkner’s shooting: the head of Homicide, the Central Division commander and the ranking officer at the scene of the shooting, Alfonzo Giordano. Giordano was a longtime henchman of the notoriously racist police chief and later Philly mayor, Frank Rizzo, targeting the Black Panther Party and leftists and overseeing the 1977-78 siege of MOVE’s Powelton Village house. Giordano knew exactly who Mumia was, and had both motive and opportunity to frame him up.

Despite this mountain of evidence, Mumia’s opening brief, due July 13, is limited by the courts to three issues: the D.A.’s racist jury selection which kept black jurors off Mumia’s 1982 trial; the D.A.’s prejudicial closing argument stating that the jury should convict because Mumia would get “appeal after appeal,” and the grossly biased state post-conviction hearings before the notorious hanging judge Albert Sabo, who was overheard at the time of the 1982 trial declaring with regard to Mumia, “I’m going to help ’em fry the n----r.”

The Spectre of Black Revolution

The fight for Mumia’s freedom must be premised on the clear understanding that this is a racist political frame-up of an innocent man. It must be understood that the forces of the capitalist state are unified in their thirst for Mumia’s blood and *why* that is so. Those struggling for Mumia’s life and freedom must have no illusions in the bourgeois courts or the

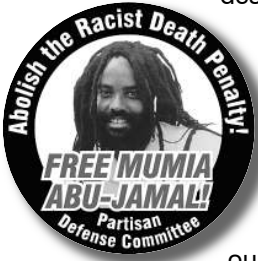
Join the Campaign to Free Mumia Abu-Jamal!

Funds are urgently needed for legal defense!

Make a contribution today, payable to “National Lawyers Guild Foundation” (earmarked for “Mumia”) and mail to: Committee to Save Mumia Abu-Jamal, 130 Morningside Drive, Suite 6C, New York, NY 10027.

Organize protest! Pass motions in your unions, campus, community and religious organizations demanding Mumia’s freedom. Get your union or organization to make a contribution and join rallies and protests for Mumia. Publicize Mumia’s case in your union or organization’s newsletter.

Spread the word! Contact the PDC for copies of our pamphlet, *Mumia Abu-Jamal Is an Innocent Man!* This 32-page pamphlet arms activists in the struggle for Mumia’s freedom with the explosive evidence which completely destroys the more than two-decades-long frame-up of this eloquent fighter for black freedom. It is available for 50 cents. Get the PDC button: “Free Mumia Abu-Jamal! Abolish the Racist Death Penalty!”—\$1 each. Order the PDC video, *From Death Row, This Is Mumia Abu-Jamal*—\$10 for DVD, \$15 for VHS. Bundles of the 4-page brochure, *Mumia Is an Innocent Man: Free Mumia Abu-Jamal!*—\$2 for 25 copies. Order from, make checks payable to Partisan Defense Committee at our New York City address below.



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representatives of the bloody capitalist rulers—whether they be Democrats, Republicans or Greens.

The capitalist rulers want to see Mumia dead because they see in him the spectre of black revolution, defiant opposition to their system of racist oppression. From 1969, when he was a teenaged spokesman for the Black Panther Party, Mumia was a marked man in the eyes of the capitalist state. In 1968, FBI director J. Edgar Hoover vowed, “The Negro youth and moderate[s] must be made to understand that if they succumb to revolutionary teachings, they will be dead revolutionaries.” Because of his political views, because of what he wrote and said, Mumia was targeted by the Feds’ notorious COINTELPRO (Counter-Intelligence Program), under which 38 Panthers were murdered and hundreds more railroaded to prison. On 9 December 1981, the cops saw their chance, shooting Mumia, beating him, and then framing him up for Faulkner’s murder.

Mumia’s frame-up is an object lesson that the capitalist state—centrally, the cops, courts, prisons and military—is an apparatus of organized violence used to preserve capitalist rule through the suppression of the working class and oppressed. At the pinnacle of this system of state terror is the racist death penalty, a barbaric legacy of chattel slavery, the system that laid the basis for the special oppression of black people in the U.S. The “legal” lynching of Stanley Tookie Williams by the state of California in December, despite a worldwide outcry, signaled the American rulers’ determination to fortify their death machine, not least against Mumia.

Mumia’s case is what the death penalty is all about. The impulse behind the death penalty is the impulse to genocide. To see the murderous brutality of the racist capitalist system, you need look no further than New Orleans, where the city’s black and poor were left to die as Hurricane Katrina hit. As an integral part of our fight for Mumia, the Spartacist League and Labor Black Leagues sponsored a Black History month speaking tour with talks on “The Fight to Free Mumia Abu-Jamal” and “Race, Class and Socialist Revolution: Class-Struggle Road to Black Freedom.” These forums underlined our commitment to abolish the death penalty as part of the fight for black equality, just as our fight for Mumia’s freedom is part of our perspective of revolutionary integrationism—that the multiracial working class must combat every instance of discrimination while understanding that

black liberation will be won only through socialist revolution.

For Class-Struggle Defense!

The key to Mumia’s freedom lies in the social power of labor. The proletariat has every interest in fighting against the frame-up of Mumia Abu-Jamal and all instances of racist oppression. It also has the social power to bring production to a halt. The three-day New York City transit strike crippled America’s financial capital, while two months of massive protests and strikes in France this spring forced the government to scrap the hated First Employment Contract. Think if that power were mobilized behind Mumia’s cause!

Mumia’s fight is labor’s fight. Every repressive law and court decision bolstering the capitalist state will ultimately be directed at the working class. The fight against racist discrimination, in defense of immigrant rights and all the oppressed is the fight for the unity of the working class against its common class enemy. Taking up Mumia’s defense helps to promote proletarian class unity by combatting the racial and ethnic divisions fostered by the ruling class to weaken the working class. It strikes a blow at the capitalist rulers, who are shredding civil liberties in the name of the “war on terror” and pursuing imperialist war in Iraq and elsewhere.

To give an idea of what Mumia is up against: judges of the Third Circuit Court of Appeals, in whose hands Mumia’s case now rests, testified en masse for the reactionary Samuel Alito during his January Supreme Court confirmation hearings. Among the members of this court is Marjorie Rendell, wife of Pennsylvania’s Democratic governor Ed Rendell, the former head of the Democratic National Committee and the Philadelphia D.A. during Mumia’s frame-up trial.

A labor-centered campaign on Mumia’s behalf must be built on the principle of political independence of the working class from the capitalist class enemy and its state. Mumia’s freedom will not be won through reliance on the rigged “jus-

Mumia Is an Innocent Man
Free Mumia Abu-Jamal!
Abolish the Racist Death Penalty!

Partisan Defense Committee
September 2001
Mumia Abu-Jamal Is an Innocent Man!
New Evidence Explodes Frame-Up
Affidavit of Rachel Wolkenstein
Affidavit of Arnold R. Beverly
Declaration of Mumia Abu-Jamal
Declaration of William Cook
Affidavit of Donald Herring
Declaration of Linn Washington
Affidavit of Sam Laurei-Carter

Free Mumia Now!

“justice” system or on capitalist politicians. The labor tops’ allegiance to the capitalist system is one of the chief obstacles to unleashing labor’s power in its own defense and in defense of all the oppressed.

Following the stay of Mumia’s execution in 1995, a movement of millions in his defense was systematically *demobilized* by the reformist socialist organizers of protests for Mumia. Groups like Workers World Party and Socialist Action tailored their appeals to what would be “acceptable” to Democratic Party liberals. For years these reformists subordinated any demand to free Mumia to calls for a new “fair” trial, as if Mumia would suddenly receive “justice” from the same courts that have kept him on death row for 24 years! The fruit of the reformists’ liberal program is that the annual demonstrations on Mumia’s birthday on April 24 have dwindled since 1999, with no outdoor demonstrations on that date this year, even as the critical court battle looms.

When the Beverly confession became public in 2001, many of these same supposed socialists assisted the bourgeois media blackout by ignoring or downplaying this explosive evidence. This led Mumia to comment: “Many of you have said that you don’t believe in the system, yet, in your hearts you refuse to let it go.” Liberals fled Mumia’s campaign in droves because they could not stomach that Beverly’s confession exposed the fraud of American “justice” and showed the unity of purpose between the cops, the courts and the capitalist rulers.

As PDC counsel Rachel Wolkenstein stated in her Philly speech: “We need to rebuild a mass movement on the basis that Mumia’s conviction and death sentence were political and that it is in the interest of all working people—black and white, citizens and immigrants—to join together and fight for his freedom.” Raise your voice and join the campaign to free Mumia Abu-Jamal! Organize now in your union, on your campus, in your community to demand: *Freedom now for Mumia Abu-Jamal!* ■

Labor Black League Organizing Meeting and Video

Free Mumia Abu-Jamal Now!

Abolish the Racist Death Penalty!
There Is No Justice in the Capitalist Courts!

Wednesday, May 3, 6 p.m.
YWCA of Brooklyn, Maynard Rm.
30 Third Avenue
(between Atlantic Ave. and State St.)

For more information: (212) 267-1025

NEW YORK CITY

WORKERS VANGUARD

Democrats, Republicans Wage War on Immigrants For a Class-Struggle Fight to Defend Immigrant Rights!

Beginning in March, massive demonstrations totaling millions of mostly Latino participants have put front and center the fight for immigrant rights in the U.S. On April 9 and 10, some two million turned out to protest HR 4437, a bill sponsored by Republican Congressman James Sensenbrenner and passed by the House of Representatives in December that would build a 700-mile wall on the U.S.-Mexican border and turn all “illegal” immigrants, as well as those who provide them assistance, into felons. Demonstrating the growing weight of immigrant workers in the economy, a number of meatpacking plants shut down production as workers flooded into the protests. Some 600 members of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 2 walked off the production line at the Excel meatpacking plant in Dodge City, Kansas, refusing to work if the company carried through with threats to discipline workers who attended the local rally. The company backed down.

Nationally, hundreds of immigrants have been fired from their jobs for missing work to attend demonstrations, while high school students have been met with police-state repression for walking out in support of immigrant rights (see accompanying article). With further



Spartacists at massive immigrant rights demonstration in Los Angeles, March 25.

protests scheduled for May 1, including plans to boycott jobs and schools, the government has stepped up deportations in a clear attempt at intimidation. On April 19,

nearly 1,200 undocumented immigrants employed by the IFCO pallet supply company were rounded up in 26 states by the Department of Homeland Security, which

has already deported 275 of the workers to Mexico. Homeland Security director Michael Chertoff is threatening further crackdowns. The Bush administration had earlier sent agents disguised as OSHA safety inspectors to work sites searching for undocumented immigrants. It is crucially important that the labor movement use its social power in defense of immigrant workers and demand: No deportations! Full citizenship rights for all immigrants!

In a marked change from the past, the outpouring of millions of immigrant protesters, despite their vulnerability to government victimization and in the face of a virulent racist backlash, shows that they are not afraid to stand up for their rights. But the protest leaders—mainly liberal immigrant rights groups, Democratic Party politicians and the Catholic church, along with some trade-union bureaucrats—have channeled anger at HR 4437 into support for alternative legislation that would also augment anti-immigrant repression. The liberals are mainly pushing a version of a bill approved by the Senate Judiciary Committee on March 27 that is based on bipartisan legislation proposed by Ted Kennedy and John McCain.

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Court Puts Mumia's Case on "Fast Track"

Mobilize Labor's Power to Free Mumia Abu-Jamal!

Join the Campaign!

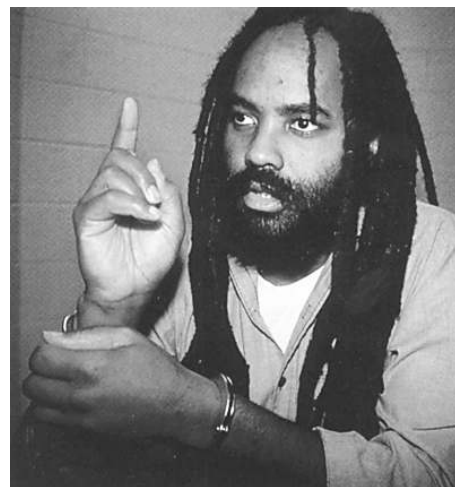
Twenty-four years after Mumia Abu-Jamal was sent to death row, framed up on charges of killing Philadelphia police officer Daniel Faulkner, his case has entered what is likely the final stage of legal proceedings. Last December the Third Circuit federal appeals court put his case on the “fast track.” Before the court are appeals from the December 2001 ruling by federal judge William Yohn that overturned Mumia’s death sentence but overruled every challenge to the frame-up conviction. Mumia appealed, seeking to overturn the conviction, and the Philly district attorney appealed to reinstate the

death sentence. In a matter of months, the court will decide what lies next for this innocent man, former Black Panther Party member, MOVE supporter and renowned journalist: death, life in prison, or more legal proceedings.

Mumia’s life is in grave danger. He is up against the vast resources of the capitalist state and its mouthpieces in the bourgeois press who howl for his blood. The capitalist rulers who vilify striking transit workers as “thugs,” black hurricane victims as “looters” and immigrant workers as “illegal,” seek the legal lynching of the man known as the “voice of the voiceless.”

Shredding their own precedents, court after court has rubber-stamped the wholesale trampling of Mumia’s rights at his 1982 sham trial, and barred proof of Mumia’s innocence, including the *sworn confession* of Arnold Beverly that he, not Mumia, shot and killed Faulkner.

With a death warrant hanging over Jamal’s head, in August 1995 mobilizations of millions around the world stayed the executioner’s hand. “They have tried to break this entire movement up,” Pam Africa of International Concerned Family and Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal told an April 21 meeting in Philadelphia. “But there’s a lot of us that are strong and able to stay here and will keep it going no matter what.” As Mumia’s critical court battle looms, we must mobilize now! As the Spartacist League and Partisan Defense Committee have stated since we first took



Terry/Gamma-Liaison

up Mumia’s defense in 1987: while every legal remedy must be pursued on Mumia’s behalf, what’s needed is a campaign of mass labor-centered united-front actions, uniting a broad spectrum of political views while assuring all the right to have their say. Millions of voices must once again be heard demanding: *Free Mumia Abu-Jamal now! Abolish the racist death penalty!*

The April 21 meeting greeted a French delegation including Marie-George Buffet, National Secretary of the French Communist Party (PCF), and Jacky Hortaut of the CGT trade-union federation. Rachel Wolkenstein, Partisan Defense Committee counsel and formerly one of Mumia’s

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