

Down With the Occupation of Afghanistan!

All U.S. Troops Out of Iraq Now!

As the U.S. rulers prepare to draw down troop levels in Iraq, the brutal, corrupt and devastated society that is their legacy is starting to come apart at the seams. On October 25, a pair of car bombs decimated the Iraqi Ministry of Justice and the office of the governor of Baghdad province, killing 155 people. This came about two months after bombs destroyed the Ministries of Finance and Foreign Affairs, killing about 100 people. Meanwhile, the bombings of residential neighborhoods, assassination of religious pilgrims and other interethnic bloodletting, while down from the gory highs of a few years ago, continue apace. Since June 30, when Washington proclaimed that almost all U.S. troops had withdrawn from urban areas to bases on the outskirts of Baghdad and other cities, almost 400 Iraqi civilians have lost their lives in sectarian violence.

President Barack Obama came to office promising to reduce U.S. troop levels in Iraq in order to ratchet up the U.S./NATO occupation of Afghanistan. Obama's top commander in Afghanistan, General Stanley McChrystal, recently called for as many as 40,000 additional troops, warning that failure to "reverse insurgent momentum" in Afghanistan "risks an outcome where defeating the insurgency is no longer possible" (*New York Times*, 21 September). All this is further complicated for the U.S. by the recent fraudulent elections in Afghanistan and the announcement by opposition candidate Abdullah Abdullah that he will not participate in the runoff election that the U.S. pressured Hamid Karzai into holding.

With administration officials still debating McChrystal's request, Obama, in "an unannounced move" revealed by the *Washington Post* (13 October), authorized the Pentagon to dispatch 13,000 more troops to Afghanistan. Along with the 21,000 troops that Obama sent to Afghanistan in March, this will raise the total number of U.S. forces deployed in Iraq (now 120,000) and Afghanistan (soon to number 68,000) above the peak reached during the Iraq "surge" ordered by President Bush almost three years ago.

Potentially, the most explosive flash point in Iraq is along the so-called "trigger line" of oil-rich and ethnically mixed regions—especially in and around Kirkuk and Mosul—that separate Iraqi Kurdistan in the north from the predominantly Arab areas to its south and west. Under Saddam Hussein, hundreds of thousands of Kurds were forcibly driven from these areas and replaced by Arabs. Following the U.S. occupation, the Kurdish nationalists, who control the semi-autonomous Kurdish region, sought to reverse the process, repatriating hundreds of thousands of Kurds in



AP photos

Above: U.S. troops police streets of Mosul, Iraq, in June. Below: Victim's body carried from scene of October 25 suicide bombing in Baghdad. Two bombings in the city that day killed over 150 people.



and around Kirkuk. Kurdish militias (the *pesh merga*) backed by U.S. troops have attacked Sunni and Shi'ite Arabs as well as the Turkmen and Christian Assyrian minorities, seizing their property and driving them out by the thousands.

In the past year, tensions between Baghdad and Erbil, the capital of Iraqi Kurdistan, have heightened as Iraqi prime minister Nuri al-Maliki has sought to challenge the Kurdish nationalists' territorial ambitions (and oil claims). This included an August 2008 military foray by federal troops under al-Maliki's authority into Khanqin, a town that had been held by Kurdish *pesh merga*. Today, Iraqi politicians, unable to agree on who should be eligible to vote in Kirkuk, are deadlocked over a voting law for presidential elections scheduled for January.

The turmoil in Iraq has U.S. officials backpedaling on Obama's pledge to withdraw 70,000 troops from that country by next August. A top Pentagon official told Congress on October 21 that a postponement of the Iraqi elections "might well have implications" for the planned drawdown of U.S. troops. The *Los Angeles Times* (26 October) observed: "An increase in violence could also force President Obama to reconsider his promises to withdraw U.S. troops."

Such portrayals of the U.S. occupiers as guarantors of peace and stability in Iraq are beyond grotesque. The responsibility for the hell that has come to define life in Iraq today lies squarely with the imperialist powers. By some estimates, more than 1.2 million people have been killed in Iraq since the U.S. invasion—

this on top of the 1.5 million slaughtered in the aftermath of the 1991 Gulf War as a result of the UN-sponsored blockade presided over by the Democratic Clinton administration. The imperialist occupation has unleashed and fostered the growth of all manner of reactionary forces in Iraqi society, from Islamic fundamentalists and rival clan leaders to virulent bourgeois nationalists. With these forces increasingly at each other's throats, the stage is set for civil war within Iraq's borders that would engender significant destabilization beyond.

Once a cultural center of the Near East and a relatively technologically sophisticated society, Iraq now lies in rubble. With the country's infrastructure demolished by the U.S. onslaught and occupation, the desperate population lacks potable water, adequate health care and, for many, sufficient food. Fully 4.7 million people—about one in six Iraqis—have been driven from their homes and are refugees within the country or abroad. Some 50,000 people, routinely denied access to their families or to lawyers, rot in prisons run by the U.S. and its Iraqi puppet regime, where gruesome tortures are routine. We say: From Guantánamo to Iraq, Afghanistan and beyond—free all the detainees!

We demand the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of all U.S. and other imperialist troops from Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan. Just as we took a side in defense of Afghanistan and Iraq against the U.S. invaders while politically opposing the Taliban reactionaries and Saddam Hussein's bloody capitalist regime, we have a side today: against the U.S. occupiers and their allies. Insofar as the forces on the ground in Iraq aim their fire at the occupiers and their lackeys, we call for their military defense against U.S. imperialism. However, we stand in vehement political opposition to the various clerical and nationalist forces, who, in addition to launching insurgent strikes against U.S. forces, often deliberately hit civilians.

Our call for the immediate withdrawal of all U.S. and allied forces is not premised on a belief that all will be right in that region in the aftermath. Nor do we think that imperialist dominance would fail to be exerted through the more normal post-colonial channels: the sway of the major capitalist powers over the national bourgeois and religious leaders in these backward countries, who gain their social power and wealth by maintaining the wretchedness of "their" people. Rather, as the Spartacist League declared in a Political Bureau statement on the eve of the 2003 invasion of Iraq ("Defend Iraq Against U.S./British Attack!" WV No. 800, 28 March 2003): "Every victory for the U.S. imperialists can only encourage further military adventures. In turn, every humiliation, every setback, every defeat they suffer will serve to assist the struggles of working people and the oppressed around the globe."

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TROTSKY

FROM THE ARCHIVES OF MARXISM



LENIN

150th Anniversary of Harpers Ferry Raid Honor John Brown

On the wet, moonless night of 16 October 1859, John Brown led an armed, multiracial band in a daring raid on Harpers Ferry in what was then Virginia. His objective was to procure arms from the federal arsenal there, free slaves in the nearby area, and, like Spartacus and Toussaint L'Ouverture before him, lead his army into the mountains where they could establish a liberated area and, if need be, wage war against the accursed slave masters. On that night, John Brown struck a blow for black freedom, a blow that reverberates even now for all who struggle for that cause.

On the 150th anniversary of the Harpers Ferry raid, comrades and friends of the Spartacist League went to North Elba, New York, where Brown is buried, to pay tribute to this heroic fighter. Our comrades sang "John Brown's Body" and the "Internationale," and laid a wreath at his gravesite, which, in the name of the Spartacist League, declared, "Finish the Civil War! For Black Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!"

Militarily, Brown's mission was a failure. But politically, Brown's raid was, as one comrade stated in a speech in North Elba, a "thunderbolt" that was heard around the country, opening the road for the Civil War that smashed slavery. As black scholar W.E.B. DuBois noted, "From the day John Brown was captured to the day he died, and after, it was the South and slavery that was on trial—not John Brown."

Brown's heroic raid galvanized both sides for the soon-to-come Second American Revolution, the Civil War of 1861-65. His opponents vilified him as a fanatical, vindictive lunatic. One of the few to rush to Brown's defense in the immediate aftermath of the raid was the American transcendentalist Henry David Thoreau. In a 30 October 1859 speech, Thoreau praised those in Brown's small army as men of "principle, of rare courage, and devoted humanity," who "alone were ready to step between the oppressor and the oppressed." Speaking of Brown himself, Thoreau declared, "It was his peculiar doctrine that a man has a perfect right to interfere by force with the slaveholder, in order to rescue the slave. I agree with him."

The Harpers Ferry raid, as much as any single act, helped to precipitate the irrepressible conflict between the industrializing bourgeoisie of the North and the agrarian-based mercantile slavocracy of the South. Karl Marx wrote to his comrade Friedrich Engels in January 1860, "In my view, the most momentous thing happening in the world today is the slave movement—on the one hand, in America,

started by the death of Brown, and in Russia, on the other.... Thus, a 'social' movement has been started both in the West and in the East." Frederick Douglass, Brown's cohort in the radical wing of the abolitionist movement, said after the Civil War:

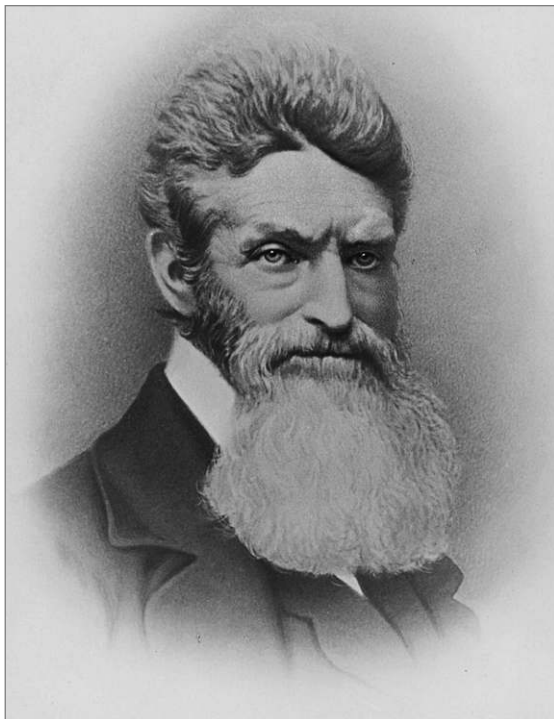
"If John Brown did not end the war that ended slavery, he did, at least, begin the war that ended slavery. If we look over the dates, places, and men for which this honor is claimed, we shall find that not Carolina, but Virginia, not Fort Sumter, but Harpers Ferry and the arsenal, not

tasks of the Civil War, we look to the multi-racial American working class. In this period of imperialist decay, there is no longer a radical or 'progressive' wing of the capitalist ruling class; the whole system stands squarely counterposed to black freedom. Forward to the third American Revolution, a proletarian revolution led by a Trotskyist vanguard party with a strong black leadership component. Finish the Civil War—For black liberation in a workers' America!"

We reprint below an appreciation of John Brown's life by George Novack,

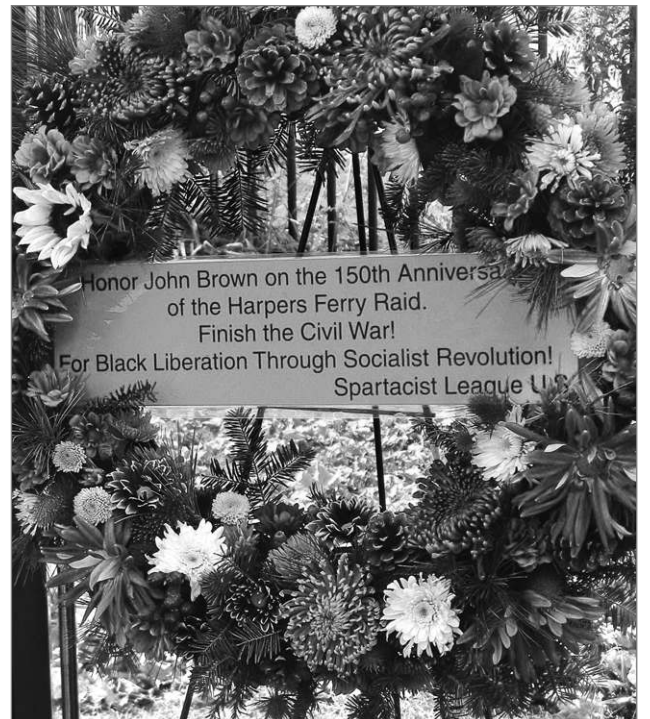
successfully—a shepherd, tanner, farmer, surveyor, cattle-expert, real estate speculator, and wool-merchant. In his restlessness, his constant change of occupation and residence, John Brown was a typical middle-class American citizen of his time.

How did this ordinary farmer and business man, this pious patriarch become transformed into a border chieftain and a revolutionary terrorist? John had inherited his family's love of liberty and his father's abolitionism. At an early age he



Kansas State Historical Society

John Brown in 1859. Spartacist League laid wreath at John Brown's grave, North Elba, NY, October 17.



WV Photo

Major Anderson, but John Brown began the war that ended American slavery."

It took the blood and iron of the Civil War, including the crucial role played by 200,000 black soldiers and sailors, to finally destroy American chattel slavery. But with the final undoing of Radical Reconstruction—a turbulent decade of interracial bourgeois democracy in the South, the most egalitarian experiment in U.S. history—the promise of black equality was betrayed by the Northern bourgeoisie. Racial oppression has always been and remains in the very marrow of American capitalism. It will take a third American revolution to burn this cancer out of the body politic and allow for the first time the full integration of black people into an egalitarian socialist America. As we said in *Black History and the Class Struggle* No. 1 (August 1983):

"We stand in the revolutionary tradition of Frederick Douglass and John Brown. To complete the unfinished democratic

"Homage to John Brown," that appeared in *New International* (January 1938), published by the then-revolutionary Trotskyist Socialist Workers Party.

John Brown was a revolutionary terrorist. There was nothing alien or exotic about him; he was a genuine growth of the American soil. The roots of his family tree on both sides reached back among the first English settlers of Connecticut. The generations of Browns were pious Protestant pioneers, tough and upstanding, and singularly consistent in their ideas, characters, and ways of life. John Brown was the third fighter for freedom of that name in his family and was himself the parent of a fourth. His grandfather died in service as a captain in the Revolutionary war. His father was an active abolitionist, a station-master and conductor on the underground railway.

Born in 1800, the pattern of John Brown's first fifty years reproduced the life of his father. His father has married three times and had sixteen children; John Brown married twice and had twenty children, every living soul among them pledged to hate and fight black bondage. Like his father, John, too, was "very quick on the move," shifting around ten times in the Northeastern states before his call to Kansas. He was successively—but not very

had sworn eternal war against slavery. His barn at Richmond, Pennsylvania, where in 1825 he set up a tannery, the first of his commercial enterprises, was a station on the underground railway. Ten years later he was discussing plans for the establishment of a Negro school. "If once the Christians in the Free States would set to work in earnest in teaching the blacks," he wrote his brother, "the people of the slaveholding States would find themselves constitutionally driven to set about the work of emancipation immediately."

As the slave power tightened its grip upon the government, John Brown's views on emancipation changed radically. "A firm believer in the divine authenticity of the Bible," he drew his inspiration and guidance from the Old Testament rather than the New. He lost sympathy with the abolitionists of the Garrison school who advocated the Christ-like doctrine of non-resistance to force. He identified himself with the shepherd Gideon who led his band against the Midianites and slew them with his own hand.

A project for carrying the war into the enemy's camp had long been germinating in John Brown's mind. By establishing a stronghold in the mountains bordering Southern territory from which his men could raid the plantations, he planned to free the slaves, and run them

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WORKERS VANGUARD

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On Karl Marx, Abraham Lincoln and the Civil War

Massachusetts
30 August 2009

I had a few thoughts on your article “Honor Abraham Lincoln” (*Workers Vanguard*, No. 938). I just finished Eric Foner’s *Reconstruction: America’s Unfinished Revolution, 1863-1877* and reread some articles by Marx on the US Civil War. One of the things that’s striking is that Marx gave what is basically (critical) political support to a capitalist party, by congratulating Lincoln on re-election (see *Karl Marx on Lincoln Re-Election*, supra). Fake socialists have a long history of looking to some supposedly progressive wing of the bourgeoisie, so it’s striking when Marx himself seems to support that view, and it needs to be put in perspective.

It was essential to give military support to the North, but political support presumes that a class is performing a historically progressive role that could not be performed by a more progressive class, the proletariat. This is actually a time when the concept of a “two stage revolution” makes sense, even though the term was not used at that time. The US working class was small, unorganized and without the social weight it would possess a generation or more later. Chattel slavery was heinous in itself, but beyond that, as Marx said, “Labor cannot emancipate itself in its white skin, wherein its black it is branded.” It was inconceivable that there would be an advance in the class struggle, in terms of unions, never mind socialist revolution, while slavery existed. The aftermath of the Civil War, in particular Radical Reconstruction, gave birth to labor struggles and a modest rise in socialist consciousness in the US. Reconstruction’s defeat, symbolized by the withdrawal of federal troops to crush the rail strike of 1877, ended capitalism’s progressive role.

Marx was also writing about the US before the experience of the Paris Commune. (I cannot find any writings by Marx or Engels dealing with Reconstruction.) Marx’s writings on the US Civil War, along with radical abolitionists like Frederick Douglass and the whole thrust of Radical Reconstruction, presumed that one could use the capitalist state for progressive ends. The Paris Commune proved that false, or at least put that historical era clearly at an end. That task today can be fulfilled only by the proletariat.

Joel

WV replies:

The Civil War—the Second American Revolution—was the greatest event in U.S. history. By defeating the South, the industrialized system in the North uprooted the nearly 250-year-old institution of chattel slavery and paved the way for the expansion of capitalist property relations from one end of North America to the other.

Joel rightly emphasizes that the Northern ruling class in the Civil War era played a historically progressive role at a time when the small and unorganized working class lacked the social weight to supplant bourgeois rule. He concludes correctly that the class struggle, unionization and the prospect of socialist revolution could not advance as long as slavery existed.

However, Joel intimates that there is a common thread between Karl Marx’s congratulations to Abraham Lincoln for

his re-election to the presidency in 1864 and the reformists’ political support for “liberal” bourgeois forces today: “Fake socialists have a long history of looking to some supposedly progressive wing of the bourgeoisie, so it’s striking when Marx himself seems to support that view, and it needs to be put in perspective.”

Marx supported Lincoln because he

black rights during Reconstruction, it was quickly becoming the party of the big capitalists, who had little interest in the rights and advancement of black people. The years of the Grant administration saw the creation of new corporations that were, as described by Henry Adams at the time, “more powerful than a sovereign State” (quoted in “On Henry Adams and

saw menacingly confronting it the proletariat and all sections of the middle class whose interests and ideas were related to those of the proletariat” (“The Bourgeoisie and the Counter-Revolution” [1848]).

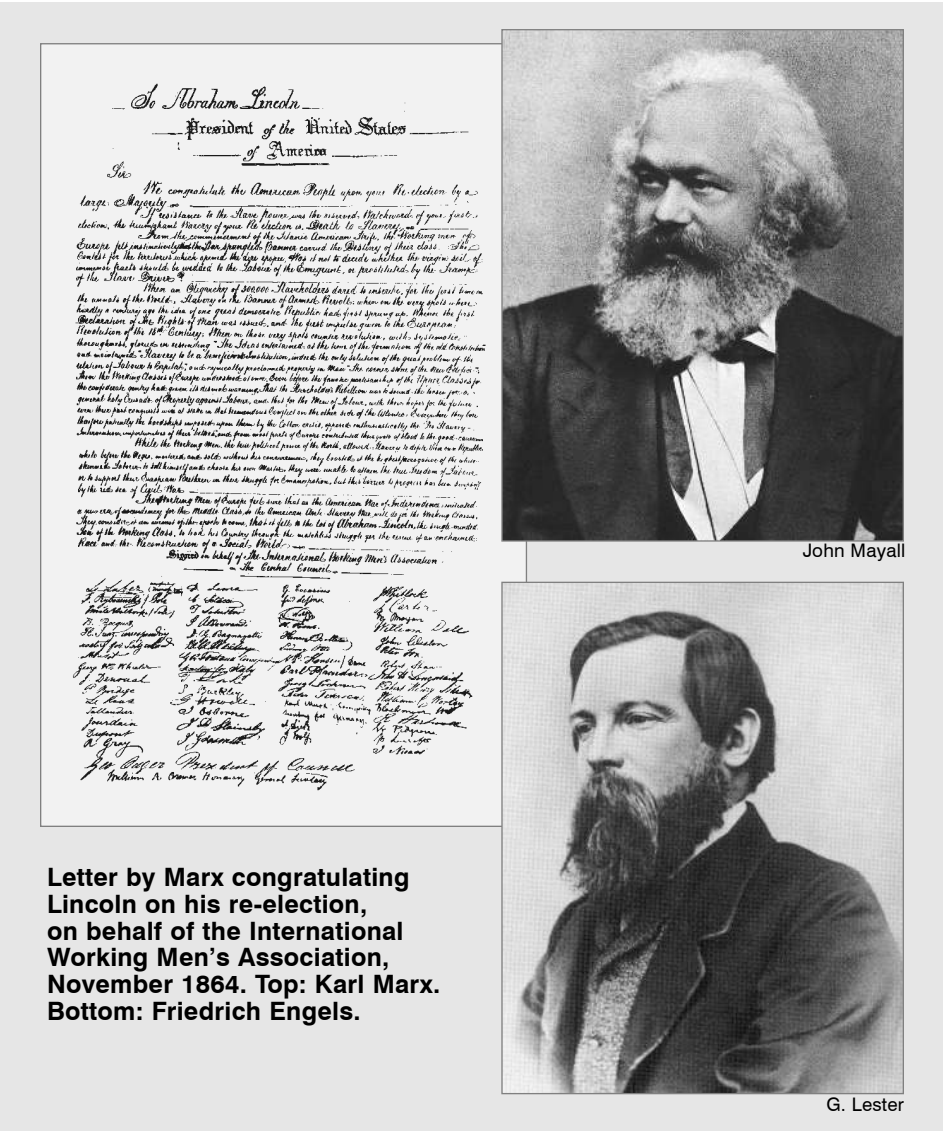
The 1848 revolutions marked the period when the European bourgeoisies ceased to play a historically progressive role. Indeed, they feared the prospect of revolutionary upheaval more than the dominance of the landed nobility, and allied themselves with the aristocracy against the working and artisan masses in revolt. At the same time, the proletariat was still too weak to immediately vie for power. It was the experience of the betrayals by the bourgeoisies in the 1848 revolutions that led Marx to emphasize the necessity of organizing the proletariat in a party independent of all other classes.

In the case of the U.S., as Joel himself notes, the working class could not play an independent role so long as the institution of slavery continued to exist. The North’s momentous suppression of the slaveholders’ rebellion gave great impetus to the industrialization of the country and fostered the development of the proletariat—capitalism’s gravedigger. The Civil War and Reconstruction represented the last progressive acts of the U.S. bourgeoisie.

Joel asserts that the period of the Civil War—including Marx’s support to Lincoln—“is actually a time when the concept of a ‘two stage revolution’ makes sense, even though the term was not used at that time.” However, this poses the question in an ahistorical manner. Marx was not working within the framework of “two stage revolution.” To the contrary, for Marx, the Civil War was not the first stage of a revolution whose sequel would bring the working class to power but the culmination of the bourgeois revolution. The dogma of “two stage revolution,” as originally developed for tsarist Russia, held that because Russia was a backward country that had not yet undergone a bourgeois-democratic revolution, a bourgeois republic was necessary to achieve modernization and prepare the proletariat for taking power. But by the time the two-stage conception appeared on the scene, capitalism was no longer capable of playing a historically progressive role.

Discussing this stagist strategy, Russian revolutionary Leon Trotsky remarked: “The Menshevik idea of the alliance of the proletariat with the bourgeoisie actually signified the subjection to the liberals of both the workers and the peasants” (“Three Conceptions of the Russian Revolution” [1939]). All manner of Stalinists and fake socialists have sought to justify their “two stage” betrayals of the proletariat by pointing to Marx’s support to Lincoln and other similar instances. From the Mensheviks’ support to bourgeois liberalism during the 1917 Russian Revolution to the defeats of the Second Chinese Revolution in the late 1920s and the Spanish Civil War in the 1930s, the two-stage framework has always been a strait-jacket for the working class and a program for bloody counterrevolution.

Everything depends on time, place and circumstance, as Engels was fond of saying. In contrast to the Republican Party of the early 1860s, which fought to uproot black chattel slavery, the capitalist Republican and Democratic Parties today are the gendarmes of world reaction. Imperialism can be put out of business only by a series of working-class revolutions that overthrow capitalism, expropriate the bourgeoisie and prepare the way for a communist future for all of humanity. We struggle to build internationalist revolutionary parties dedicated to that goal. ■



Letter by Marx congratulating Lincoln on his re-election, on behalf of the International Working Men's Association, November 1864. Top: Karl Marx. Bottom: Friedrich Engels.

was a bourgeois revolutionary in a period when, as Joel himself notes, the U.S. bourgeoisie was playing “a historically progressive role that could not be performed by a more progressive class, the proletariat.” Thus, this support has *nothing* whatsoever in common with the politics of today’s fake socialists, whose pro-Democratic Party program helps chain workers and the oppressed to their capitalist class enemies.

Joel correctly notes that the defeat of Reconstruction “ended capitalism’s progressive role.” Following the Civil War, the U.S. began to play an increasingly bellicose role abroad, waging war against Korea and clashing with its European competitors over Asia, the South Pacific and the Western Hemisphere. While the Republican Party had championed the emancipation of the slaves during the Civil War and supported the great expansion of

Democracy,” *New York Review of Books*, 27 March 2003). Moreover, as we noted in Part One of “The Grant Administration (1869-1877) and the Rise of U.S. Imperialism” (WV No. 938, 5 June), we see in this period “shades of the imperial presidency to come.” By the late 19th century, the U.S. had become an imperialist power, bringing death and destruction to subject countries such as the Philippines.

Joel suggests that the Paris Commune of 1871, the first instance of the dictatorship of the proletariat in history, showed that one could no longer use the capitalist state for progressive ends. Actually, what the Paris Commune confirmed was that the proletariat, *victorious in its social revolution*, “cannot simply lay hold of the ready-made state machinery and wield it for its own purposes,” as Marx underlined in *The Civil War in France* (1871). What the Paris Commune showed was that the working class must smash the existing capitalist state apparatus and replace it with its own state, the dictatorship of the proletariat.

The real issue at hand, in the case of the U.S. Civil War, is the question of when the bourgeoisie as a class ceases to play a historically progressive role. For various historical reasons, that question played out differently in Europe and the U.S. In fact, as early as 1848, amid the European revolutions of that year, Marx skewered the conservatism of the German bourgeoisie, writing, “The German bourgeoisie developed so sluggishly, timidly and slowly that at the moment when it menacingly confronted feudalism and absolutism, it

CORRECTION

A photo used in the article “Down With the Clerical Regime! No Support to ‘Reform’ Mullahs!” (WV No. 939, 3 July) was incorrectly identified as an “Iranian woman being prepared for execution by stoning, 2004.” While the image illustrates the horror often visited upon women in Iran by the theocratic regime, it has been brought to our attention by a subscriber that the picture, which we also incorrectly credited to Amnesty International, was

a still from the 1994 Dutch film *De Steen* (*The Stone*).

In investigating how we ended up violating our stringent standards on photo verification and fact-checking in running this image, we learned that it had been used in 2007 by right-wing ideologue David Horowitz. As someone commented at the time on the liberal blog “Sadly, No!”: “Doesn’t anyone on the right source check? I said it before and now I’ll say it again... Sweet Zombie Jesus, that just DUMB!!” Us, too. We apologize to our readers for the error.

On August 1, the Philippines woke to the news that former president Corazon “Cory” C. Aquino succumbed to colon cancer. Aquino, who was catapulted to the presidency of this Far Eastern U.S. neocolony by “peaceful revolution,” is deeply revered in bourgeois circles that have elevated her to near cult status as an icon of “democracy and freedom.”

The late Cory Aquino was a member of the old landed aristocracy which has dominated Filipinos for centuries, both under Spanish and American colonial rule and following independence in July 1946. She assumed office in February 1986 during the so-called “People Power Revolution,” a misnomer for the combination of a U.S.-engineered military revolt and massive street demonstrations encouraged by the Roman Catholic hierarchy and big business to send the hated dictator Ferdinand Marcos packing.

It is hardly surprising that Aquino’s supposedly nonviolent “People Power” movement serves as a blueprint for the “color-coded revolutions” spawned by Washington from the Ukraine to Lebanon. When the U.S. pulled the plug on Marcos, who had become a liability to stability in the country, we said “Beware of coups ‘Made in U.S.A.’” (“Reagan Pulls Plug on Marcos,” WV No. 398, 28 February 1986).

Cory Aquino’s “revolution” did not bring the Philippine working masses any closer to power. Instead, it was, as described by *Der Spiegel* (7 July 1986) journalist Tiziano Terzani, “the reinstatement of the old aristocratic oligarchy of Spanish descent, with which Marcos clashed and which he partly replaced by his own clique of relatives and hangers-on.” For example, when the wealthy and powerful Lopez family dynasty fell out of Marcos’s favor, it was stripped of most of its political and economic assets. Following Aquino’s rise to power, it got back its television stations and ownership stake in the country’s largest power utility.

A devout Catholic, Aquino promulgated the 1987 Constitution, which includes one of the most severe anti-abortion laws in the world. A hard anti-communist, Aquino was a staunch supporter of a strong American imperialist military presence in the Philippines. In the face of domestic political opposition, she unsuccessfully tried at the end of her presidency to maintain U.S. operation of the huge Subic Bay naval base. But the American military remains a potent combat force and continuous presence in the Philippines through rotating military exercises. All U.S. troops out of the Philippines!

The Philippines was seen by imperialist planners as an unsinkable aircraft carrier in the Cold War offensive against the former Soviet Union and in the hot war against the Vietnamese Revolution, as it is in a strategic location to serve as a military staging ground and supply base as well as to guard the sea lanes along the western Pacific Rim. It still serves a similar purpose today, with the current U.S. military encirclement and provocations aimed chiefly at China and North Korea. As part of our struggle against imperialism and in defense of working people and the oppressed around the globe, we stand for the unconditional military defense of the Chinese, North Korean, Vietnamese and Cuban bureaucratically deformed workers states against imperialist attack and capitalist counterrevolution. At the same time, we fight for proletarian political revolutions to oust the Stalinist bureaucracies and establish regimes based on workers democracy and revolutionary internationalist policies.

The Persistence of “Yellow Fever”

According to bourgeois observers in the Philippines, Cory Aquino’s death could not have been more timely. The former president, a vocal opponent of the current regime, passed away while the highly unpopular right-wing president Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo was in Washington to curry favor from President Barack Obama. The highly publicized refusal by the Aquino family of a state-sponsored funeral and the cold reception given President Arroyo during the wake laid

Philippines

Aquino Funeral and the Left



Manila, August 5: Funeral procession of former Philippine president Corazon Aquino. Philippine reformist left obscenely mourned “Tita Cory.”

Reuters

No Illusions in Bourgeois Liberals—For Workers Revolution!

bare to the population the deep factional divisions within the Filipino bourgeoisie, as the country prepares for national elections in May 2010. Arroyo, the daughter of a former Philippine president, has been suspected of rigging the 2004 election in her favor. Her husband Mike, a member of the oligarchy, has been accused of amassing kickbacks for state-sponsored projects and showering cronies with perks, much to the displeasure of the Makati-centered bourgeoisie, sections of the clergy and the general population.

As Cory Aquino lay in the hospital, the powerful Roman Catholic church and Aquino supporters in the media were exhorting Filipinos to join in prayers for her recovery while yellow ribbons—the symbol of Cory’s “People Power” movement—festooned the major avenues and buildings around the capital, Manila. From her sickbed, Aquino gave a final statement in support of thousands of demonstrators gathered in the nearby Makati Central Business District, many of them mobilized by the Philippine left, to protest Arroyo’s attempts to get the Philippine Congress to rubber-stamp her proposed changes in the constitution that would consolidate her hold on political power.

The announcement of Aquino’s death touched off a massive emotional outpouring, even among the plebeian masses of Manila and key cities around the country. Business ground to a halt as the capitalist bosses joined white-collar employees in the Makati financial district to salute the funeral cortege in a blizzard of yellow confetti streaming down from surrounding high rises. A quarter million Filipinos waving yellow flowers, chanting “Cory” and flashing the thumb and index finger “L” sign (for “Laban,” meaning “Fight”) came out for the funeral procession,

which took nine hours to wind through the storm-drenched streets of Manila. These televised scenes, exclusively carried by the Lopez-owned ABS-CBN network, were eerily reminiscent of the funeral march for Cory Aquino’s husband, Benigno “Ninoy” Jr., a millionaire bourgeois politician with close ties to the CIA, who was assassinated by agents of the Marcos regime in August 1983. That event sparked the bourgeois-led “People Power” movement that brought Cory Aquino to power a few years later with U.S. backing.

Acid Test for the Philippine Left

Like the first Aquino funeral over 25 years ago, the second Aquino funeral graphically displayed the Philippine reformist left in the political tow of the bourgeoisie. Obscenely, the Philippine

left in general has lined up behind the ghost of “Tita (Auntie) Cory.”

The social-democratic Akbayan party, which includes numerous ex-Stalinists, is the most prominent in the yellow-shirted political milieu. Its political predecessors cheered Cory Aquino’s rise to power in 1986. Today, they are loyal drumbeaters for the Liberal Party of Senator Benigno “Noynoy” Aquino III, who has emerged as Liberal presidential standard-bearer in the wake of the massive turnout and media hype during his mother’s funeral. Akbayan has since formed a bloc with smaller bourgeois opposition parties and so-called “civil society” organizations to support “Noynoy,” whom these reformists describe as “a symbol to a nation yearning for unity and greatness.”

The Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP)—through the National Democratic Front (NDF)—eulogized Aquino as “an outstanding and inspiring figure in the anti-fascist alliance” who was “willing to join up with the patriotic and progressive forces of the people in mass protest actions.” The CPP-led guerrilla insurgency by the New People’s Army (NPA) is in its 40th year. Ever since Aquino became president, the NDF umbrella political arm has been engaged in on-and-off peace negotiations with the government.

Born to the Cojuangco clan, Cory Aquino promised to make the family-owned Hacienda Luisita sugar estate a model of land reform, but she later reneged. Upon taking power, Aquino responded to popular expectations and enormous social turmoil with bloody repression. She presided over the military’s mass killing of peasants in Lupao in Nueva Ecija province and outside the Malacañang presidential palace itself. She then unleashed rural death squads like the Alsa Masa (Mass Uprising) in a “total war” against the CPP and other leftists. In November 2004, Hacienda Luisita again captured headlines when heavily armed police and soldiers, backed by armored personnel carriers, attacked strikers affiliated with the Kilusang Mayo Uno (KMU), a labor federation aligned with the reformist left Bayan Muna (Nation First) party, killing seven, including a child, and wounding hundreds.

Despite having borne the brunt of repression, the CPP has absolved Aquino of the string of atrocities committed against the working people during her six-year term in office. The bloodiest of these attacks was the suppression of the 22 January 1987 demonstration for land reform, when Filipino cops and Marines fired pointblank into the march, killing 18 peasant protesters and their leftist supporters and wounding nearly a hundred, just outside the presidential palace. The CPP and its allies in the leftist umbrella group Bayan initially denounced Aquino. But in their pursuit of class collaboration, they soon began to alibi her. Bayan declared she was not “directly” responsible for this massacre by the military and police.

For the likes of Satur Ocampo, a Representative in the Philippine Congress who was once a senior cadre of the NDF, it’s all just comrades’ blood under the

continued on page 10

Manila, January 1987: Peasants demanding land were massacred by Aquino government’s troops.



UAW Tops Roll Over as Bosses Ax NUMMI Auto Plant

Oakland
26 August 2009

Dear *Workers Vanguard*,

On August 20, I went with another member of the Labor Black League for Social Defense to a rally at the UAW [United Auto Workers] Local 2244 union hall in Fremont, California, called to save jobs at the NUMMI auto plant that GM and Toyota are shutting down. At the rally start time, the crowd was mainly retirees and a handful of union officials and their families. By about 1:30 p.m., people began marching in a picket line demonstration in front of the union hall, which we joined in order to distribute *Workers Vanguard* and talk with protesters. Day-shift workers were still on the job while we were there, but after a while some UAW swing-shift workers joined the rally, as did a handful of low-level bureaucrats from the SEIU health care union.

With everyone marching in the street and rally organizers working from the retirees' office, the main union hall was eerily vacant. Not even chairs or a podium were set up. I had gone into the hall to revisit the site of mass meetings in 1981-1982 of my old union, UAW Local 1364. Back then, the UAW Militant Caucus was arguing for a sit-down strike to save our jobs when GM, then the plant's owner, planned to close it and shift production to plants in the East. As we said at the time, a sit-down strike at Fremont could have sparked an industry-wide struggle, including similar actions across the country, and pointed the way for millions of desperate workers fed up with layoffs and concessions.

Since the Militant Caucus (originally named the Committee for a Militant UAW) was formed in 1973, we had fought to build a class-struggle leadership of the union and to mobilize the union economically and politically against our class enemies, the auto companies and their political parties, the Democrats and Republicans. We demanded jobs for all through a shorter workweek with no loss in pay to combat layoffs and unemployment, as a part of a broader struggle to do

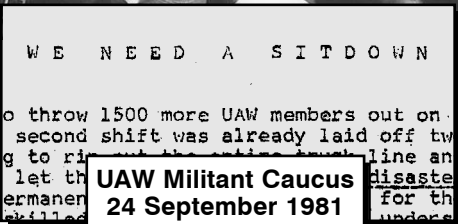
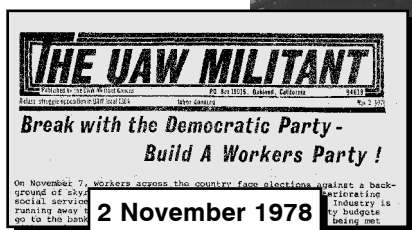
From a Former Fremont Auto Worker

away with the boom-and-bust cycle by expropriating the capitalists and bringing the working class to power. We took on the pro-capitalist labor bureaucracy, whose ties to the Democratic Party subordinate the union to the capitalists.

In a leaflet we put out before the plant finally closed in 1982, we pointed out

chord, especially among a small number of very experienced workers who took up the call and fought for it. Local 1364's union bureaucrats countered with the argument that these tactics were OK in the 1930s but were now illegal, and union members needed instead to get out the vote for the Democrats. Unfortunately,

August 1983:
Union members protest dissolving of UAW Local 1364 in Fremont, California. UAW Militant Caucus argued for sit-down strikes to spark industry-wide struggle.



that, in contrast to the worthless con game of appeals to the company, Congressmen and mayors, "There is only one real answer to GM and that is to use the power of the union before that power is taken away by putting us out on the street. GM cares a lot more about their machinery than about us and our families." By occupying the capitalists' factories, auto workers nationally could have forced concessions from the capitalists instead.

As I stood alone now in the cavernous hall, I remembered speaking for our caucus at a contentious meeting of hundreds of union members in late 1981. When we called for a sit-down strike, it struck a real

the bureaucracy's fearmongering and defeatism prevailed. In all, close to 6,000 auto workers from the Fremont plant were laid off and thrown onto the streets of Reagan's America.

The UAW International had negotiated an agreement with GM that high seniority laid-off Fremont auto workers would be offered assembly-line work in GM plants around the country if positions became vacant (which was unlikely during a recession). But if these older family men couldn't leave the state, all their separation benefits were cut off. In the immediate aftermath of the plant closure about a dozen older union brothers died, some from heart attacks, some by suicide.

Victory Over "War on Terror" Frame-Up on the Docks

The working class won a small, but important, victory on October 28 when Bay Area longshoreman Jason Ruffin won a resounding "not guilty" verdict after a three-day trial on trumped-up charges of resisting arrest. In August 2007, Ruffin and fellow Bay Area longshoreman Aaron Harrison, both black, were returning to work at the Port of Sacramento after lunch when they were stopped by security guards who demanded to search their car, citing the maritime security regulations that are part of the government's "war on terror." While the two longshoremen were phoning their International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) Local 10 business agent for advice, the guards called in the notoriously racist West Sacramento police. The police pepper-sprayed Harrison, forced the two from their car, and then handcuffed and threw them in jail on charges of resisting arrest, obstructing a police officer and trespassing (the latter charge was dropped).

For over two years, the vindictive Yolo County district attorney has been dragging Ruffin and Harrison through the

courts, determined to uphold the cops' prerogatives under draconian "war on terror" security regulations. A nine-day trial of both longshoremen ended in a hung jury in January and Ruffin and Harrison's cases were subsequently separated. During jury selection for Ruffin's trial, the judge and the D.A. tried to screen out any jurors with pro-union sympathies while dismissing others who spoke of their own negative experiences with the West Sacramento cops. But even after this selection process (out of a jury pool that included only *one* black person!), the frame-up of Ruffin was so blatant that the jury acquitted him.

Aaron Harrison's trial is scheduled to begin November 12. The ILWU and other supporters of the two victimized longshoremen should not be lulled into thinking that Ruffin's victory guarantees a similar outcome for Harrison. As the driver of the car, he was especially targeted by the cops, who reached in and pepper-sprayed him in the face while he was still behind the wheel! Harrison faces a maximum sentence of one year in the county jail. Harrison, like Ruffin, has stood firm in defense of union rights

and against the court's campaign to brand him a criminal.

At court hearings for the two in 2007 and 2008, Local 10 organized rallies at the Yolo County Courthouse that included other unionists from the Bay Area and the Sacramento area. In June, the ILWU's coastwide Longshore Division Caucus voted to contribute \$100,000 toward Harrison and Ruffin's defense. Now the union needs to mobilize a strong show of support for Harrison on the opening day of his trial.

As the Partisan Defense Committee—a class-struggle, non-sectarian legal and social defense organization associated with the Spartacist League—wrote in a July 16 protest letter to the Yolo County D.A.:

"The persecution of these two union members places them on the front line of the defense of labor and immigrant workers against the government's attacks under the so-called 'port security' laws. The Transportation Worker Identification Credential (TWIC), implemented at West Coast ports this past spring as part of a 'national security' program, vastly increases the government's ability to ride roughshod over workers on the docks. It is in the direct interest of dockworkers and the labor movement to defend Harrison and Ruffin as part of the defense of the entire working class."

Mobilize to ensure that Harrison, like Ruffin, beats back this racist, anti-union frame-up! Drop the charges against Aaron Harrison!

It certainly struck me that now, in 2009, there was no debate in the union hall over the strategy of fighting against the plant closure by mobilizing the power of labor independently from the capitalists. When GM and Toyota opened NUMMI in 1984, the UAW dissolved Local 1364, which had earned a reputation for militancy over the years. Hiring at NUMMI was not done according to Local 1364 seniority. Instead a new union, Local 2244, was formed. Individuals who had been part of Local 1364's bureaucracy initially worked in NUMMI's personnel office to assist management with the hiring/screening process of former GM workers. (I always suspected that they were screening out the militants.) The UAW bureaucracy's line since 1984 that NUMMI represented a new partnership between labor and capital—"team spirit"—has now borne rotten fruit during an economic recession far worse than when the Fremont GM plant closed in 1982.

I left the empty union hall to talk with demonstrators outside. Many agreed with the view in WV that labor should not have to pay for the financial crisis of capitalism and were also interested in WV's call to break with the Democrats and build a workers party. But the only strategy the bureaucracy offered was class collaboration: expressing the union's loyalty to NUMMI and appealing to the Democratic Party state legislators to give NUMMI incentives to remain open. A union statement pleaded: "This membership has brought the efficiency of the Toyota Production System, a model of lean manufacturing and unique Labor and Management relations to the U.S.A." It went on to declare the need to "reach out" to "local, state, and federal legislators and lawmakers."

The union protesters were doing their best to put a militant face on what was offered by the bureaucracy, chanting and marching in the hot sun. The bureaucrats corrupted a popular union chant, "Everywhere we go, people want to know, who we are—We are the union, the mighty, mighty union!" to say: "We are NUMMI, mighty, mighty NUMMI!" The union flyer for the rally shared its masthead with NUMMI's logo. It explicitly stated, "Thursday's Rally is NOT about the UAW or the current contract negotiations" and called for "Union or Management, Contractor or Supplier" to participate and "join together to continue building on our 25-year legacy of quality at NUMMI." The union T-shirt read: "Toyotas sold here should be made here."

As the demonstration got larger, the marching stopped and everyone gathered up in order to become an audience for union bureaucrats, Democratic Party

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A Spartacist Pamphlet

Karl Marx Was Right

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and the

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John Brown...

(continued from page 2)

off to Canada. On a tour to Europe in 1851 he inspected fortifications with an eye to future use; he carefully studied military tactics, especially of guerrilla warfare in mountainous territory. Note-books on his reading are still extant.

However, his first assaults upon the slave power were to be made, not from the mountains of Maryland and West Virginia, but on the plains of Kansas. In the spring of 1855 his four eldest sons had emigrated to Kansas to settle there and help win the territory for the free-soil party. In May John Brown, Jr., sent the following urgent appeal to his father. "While the interest of despotism has secured to its cause hundreds and thousands of the meanest and most desperate of men, armed to the teeth...thoroughly organized...under pay from Slave-holders,—the friends of freedom are *not one fourth* of them *half armed*, and as to *Military Organization* among them it *no where exists in the territory*..." with the result "that the people here exhibit the most abject and cowardly spirit.... We propose...that the anti-slavery portion of the inhabitants should *immediately, thoroughly* arm, and *organize themselves in military companies*. In order to effect this, some persons must begin and lead in the matter. Here are 5 men of us who are not only anxious to fully prepare, but are thoroughly determined to fight. We can see no other way to meet the case. 'It is no longer a question of negro slavery, but it is the enslavement of our-



John Brown with his dying sons as Robert E. Lee's troops break into his stronghold at Harpers Ferry, 1859.

Brown became the captain of the local militia company and led it in the bloodless "Wakarusa War." Then he plunged into the thick of the struggle for the possession of the territory that gave it the name of "Bleeding Kansas." In retaliation for the sacking of Lawrence by the Border Ruffians, Brown's men, including four of his sons, slaughtered five pro-slavery sympathizers in a night raid near Pottawatomie Creek. Brown took full responsibility for these killings; he fought according to the scriptural injunction: "An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth."

Reprisals on one side bred reprisals on the other. The settlement at Ossawatimie was pillaged and burned; Brown's son, Frederick, killed; his forces beaten and scattered. Thereafter John Brown and his band were outlaws, living on the run, giv-

contest on the soil of that territory engendered," wrote J.S. Pike, the Washington correspondent of the *New York Tribune* after the Harper's Ferry raid. "Before the day of Kansas outrages and oppression no such person as Ossawatimie Brown existed. No such person could have existed. He was born of rapine and cruelty and murder.... Kansas deeds, Kansas experiences, Kansas discipline created John Brown as entirely and completely as the French Revolution created Napoleon Bonaparte. He is as much the fruit of Kansas as Washington was the fruit of our own Revolution."

* * *

Between 1856 and 1858, John Brown shuttled back and forth between Kansas and the East seeking support for the struggle against the Border Ruffians. He received supplies, arms, and moral encouragement from many noted abolitionists, such as Gerrit Smith, the New York philanthropist, and numerous members of the Massachusetts State Kansas Committee, T.W. Higginson, Theodore Parker, etc. But there was no place for John Brown in the condition of armed neutrality that reigned in Kansas after 1856.

No longer needed in Kansas, John Brown reverted to his long cherished scheme of mountain warfare. To prepare for his enterprise he called a convention of his followers and free Negroes at Chatham in Canada and outlined his plans to them. One of the members of the convention reported that, after invoking the example of Spartacus, of Toussaint L'Ouverture, and other historical heroes who had fled with their followers into the mountains and there defied and defeated the expeditions of their adversaries, Brown said that "upon the first intimation of a plan formed for the liberation of the slaves, they would immediately rise all over the Southern States. He supposed they would come into the mountains to join him...and that we should be able to establish ourselves in the fastnesses, and if any hostile action (as would be) were taken against us, either by the militia of the separate states or by the armies of the United States, we purposed to defeat first the militia, and next, if it was possible, the troops of the United States, and then organize the freed blacks under the provisional constitution, which would carve out for the locality of its jurisdiction all that mountainous region in which the blacks were to be established and in which they were to be taught the useful and mechanical arts, and to be instructed in all the business of life.... The Negroes were to constitute the soldiers."

The revolutionary spirit of the constitution adopted by the convention for this projected Free State can be judged from this preamble: "Whereas, Slavery, throughout its entire existence in the United States is none other than a most barbarous, unprovoked, and unjustifiable War of one portion of its citizens upon another portion; the only conditions of which are perpetual imprisonment, and hopeless servitude or absolute extermination; in utter disregard and violation of the eternal and self-evident truths set forth in our Declaration of Independence: *Therefore*, we citizens of the United States, and the oppressed people, who, by a recent decision of the Supreme Court are declared to have no rights which the White Man is bound to respect;

together with all other people degraded by the laws thereof, do, for the time being, ordain and establish for ourselves the following provisional Constitution and ordinances, the better to protect our persons, property, lives, and liberties; and to govern our actions." John Brown was elected Commander-in-Chief under this Constitution.

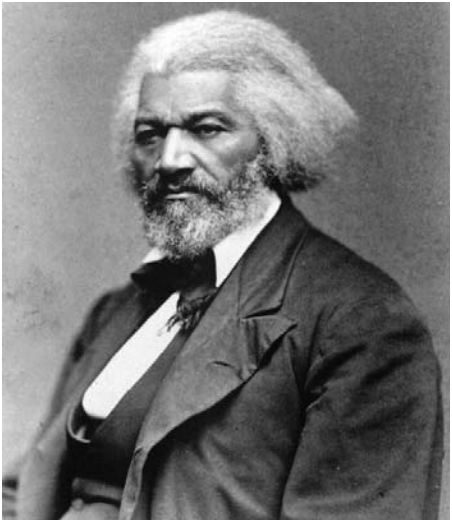
For all its daring, John Brown's scheme was hopeless from every point of view and predestined to fail. Its principal flaws were pointed out beforehand by Hugh Forbes, one of his critical adherents. In the first place, "no preparatory notice having been given to the slaves...the invitation to rise might, unless they were already in a state of agitation, meet with no response, or a feeble one." Second, even if successful such a sally "would at most be a mere local explosion...and would assuredly be suppressed." Finally, John Brown's dream of a Northern Convention of his New England partisans which would restore tranquility and overthrow the pro-slavery administration was "a settled fallacy. Brown's New England friends would not have the courage to show themselves so long as the issue was doubtful." Forbes' predictions were fulfilled to the letter.

Convinced that "God had created him to be the deliverer of slaves the same as Moses had delivered the children of Israel," Brown overrode these objections and proceeded to mobilize his forces. Before he could put his plan into operation, however, he was compelled to return to Kansas for the last time, where, under the *nom de guerre* of Shubel Morgan, he led a raid upon some plantations across the Missouri border, killing a planter and setting eleven slaves at liberty. Both the Governor of Kansas and the President of the United States offered rewards for his arrest. With a price of \$3,000 on his head, John Brown fled to Canada with the freedmen.

Early in the summer of 1859 a farm was rented about five miles from Harper's Ferry. There John Brown collected his men and prepared for his coup. On the night of October 16 they descended upon Harper's Ferry; took possession of the United States armories; imprisoned a number of the inhabitants; and persuaded a few slaves to join them. By noon militia companies arrived from nearby Charlestown and blocked his only road to escape. The next night a company of United States marines commanded by Col. Robert E. Lee appeared, and, at dawn, when Brown refused to surrender, stormed the engine-house in which Brown, his surviving men, and his prisoners were barricaded. Fighting with matchless coolness and courage over the body of his dying son, he was overpowered and arrested.

Ten men had been killed or mortally wounded, among them two of Brown's own sons, and eleven captured in the assault.

The reporter of the *New York Herald* describes the scene during his cross-examination: "In the midst of enemies, whose home he had invaded; wounded, a prisoner, surrounded by a small army of officials, and a more desperate army of angry men; with the gallows staring him full in the face, he lay on the floor, and, in reply to every question, gave answers that betokened the spirit that animated him." John Brown steadfastly insisted that a sin-



Frederick Douglass House
Frederick Douglass, revolutionary abolitionist.



Kansas State Historical Society
Kansas Free State battery poised for battle, 1856. John Brown and sons joined fight against extension of slavery to Kansas.

selves.' We want you to get for us these arms. We need them more than we do bread...."

Having already resolved to join his children in Kansas, John Brown needed no second summons. In the next few months he collected considerable supplies of arms and sums of money from various sympathetic sources, including several cases of guns belonging to the state of Ohio, which were "spirited away" for his use. In August he set out for Kansas from Chicago in a one-horse wagon loaded with guns and ammunition.

Upon arriving in Ossawatimie, John

ing the slip to government troops, launching sudden raids upon the pro-slavery forces. John Brown became a power in Kansas. His name equaled "an army with banners" in the eyes of the militant Free-Soil colonists; the whisper of his presence sufficed to break up pro-slavery gatherings. He continued his guerrilla warfare throughout 1856 until Kansas was pacified by the Federal troops.

His experiences in Kansas completed the transformation of John Brown into a revolutionist. "John Brown is a natural production, born on the soil of Kansas, out of the germinating heats the great

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gle purpose was behind all his actions: to free the Negroes, “the greatest service a man can render to God.” A bystander interrogated: “Do you consider yourself an instrument in the hands of Providence?”—“I do.”—“Upon what principle do you justify your acts?”—“Upon the golden rule. I pity the poor in bondage that have none to help them; that is why I am here; not to gratify my personal animosity, revenge, or vindictive spirit. It is my sympathy with the oppressed and the wronged, that are as good as you and as precious in the sight of God.”

Indicted for “treason to the Commonwealth” and “conspiring with slaves to commit treason and murder,” John Brown was promptly tried by a state court and sentenced to death.

During his stay in prison John Brown rose to the most heroic heights. His dignified bearing, his kindliness won his jailors, his captors, and his judges. His letters from the prison where he awaited execution were imbued with the same resolute determination and calm, conscious acceptance of his sacrifice in the cause of freedom, as the letters of Bartholomeo Vanzetti, his fellow revolutionist. To friends who contemplated his rescue, he answered: “I am worth infinitely more to die than to live.” To another he wrote: “I do not feel conscious of guilt in taking up arms; and had it been in behalf of the rich and powerful, the intelligent, the great—as men count greatness—of those who form enactments to suit themselves and corrupt others, or some of their friends, that I interfered, suffered, sacrificed and fell, it would have been doing very well.... These light afflict-



Bethmann

Left: Scarred back of slave. Nearly 200,000 blacks volunteered for Union Army and Navy, helping to turn tide in Civil War and defeat Southern slavocracy. Right: 4th U.S. Colored Infantry at Fort Lincoln.



Library of Congress

them he should seize upon Senators Mason and Hunter of Virginia, as accessories. Let him follow up by apprehending every supporter of the Nebraska Bill, and when he shall have brought them all to condign punishment, he will have discharged his duty, but not till then....

“Old Brown is simply a spark of a great fire kindled by shortsighted mortals.... There is no just responsibility resting anywhere, no just attribution of causes anywhere, for this violent attempt that does not fall directly upon the South itself. It has deliberately challenged and wantonly provoked the elements that have concentrated and exploded.” So wrote the same journalist whose characterization of John Brown we have already quoted.

Little needs to be added to this historical judgment made in the midst of the events. The Compromisers who attempted

war entered into the nerves of the people many months before it was exhibited in their ideas and actions.

The South took alarm. The “acts of the assassin” confirmed their fears of slave-insurrection provoked by the Northern abolitionists and Black Republicans. Brown’s personal connections with many prominent abolitionists were undeniable, and their disclaimers of connivance and their disapprobation of his actions did not make them any less guilty in the slaveowner’s eyes, but only more cowardly and hypocritical. The slaveholders were convinced that their enemies were now taking the offensive in a direct armed attack upon their lives, their homes, their property. “The conviction became common in the South,” says Frederic Bancroft, the biographer of Seward, “that John Brown differed from the majority of the Northerners merely in the boldness and desperateness of his methods.”

The majority of official opinion in the North condemned John Brown’s “criminal enterprise” and justified his execution. Big Unionist meetings exploited the incident for the benefit of the Democratic Party. The *Richmond Enquirer* of October 25, 1859, noted with satisfaction that the conservative pro-slavery press of the North “evinces a determination to make the moral of the Harper’s invasion an effective weapon to rally all men not fanatics against the party whose leaders have been implicated directly with the midnight murder of Virginia citizens and the destruction of government property.” The Republican leaders, a little less directly but no less decisively, hastened to denounce the deed and throw holy water over the execution. Said Lincoln: “We cannot object to the execution,” and Seward echoed, “it was necessary and just.”

But many thousands rallied to John Brown’s side, hailing him as a martyr in the cause of emancipation. The radical abolitionists spoke up most boldly in his behalf and most correctly assayed the significance of his life and death. At John Brown’s funeral service, Wendell Phillips spoke these words: “Marvelous old man!... He has abolished slavery in Virginia.... True, the slave is still there. So, when the tempest uproots a pine on your hills, it looks green for months—a year or two. Still, it is timber, not a tree. John Brown has loosened the roots of the slave system; it only breathes—it does not live—hereafter.” Longfellow wrote in his diary on the day of the hanging: “This

will be a great day in our history; the date of a new Revolution—quite as much needed as the old one. Even now as I write, they are leading old John Brown to execution in Virginia for attempting to rescue slaves! This is sowing the wind to reap the whirlwind, which will come soon.”

Finally, Frank P. Stearns, a Boston merchant who had contributed generously to John Brown’s Kansas campaign, declared before the Senatorial Investigating Committee: “I should have disapproved of it [the raid] if I had known of it; but I have since changed my opinion; I believe John Brown to be the representative man of the century, as Washington was of the last—the Harper’s Ferry affair, and the capacity shown by the Italians for self-government, the great events of this age. One will free Europe and the other America.”

On his way to the scaffold John Brown handed this last testament to a friend. “I John Brown am now quite *certain* that the crimes of this *guilty land*: will never be purged *away*; but with blood. I had as *I now think*: vainly flattered myself that without *very much* bloodshed: it might be done.” His prophetic previsions were soon to be realized.

A year and a half after his execution, John Brown’s revolutionary spirit was resurrected in the Massachusetts volunteers, who marched through the streets of Boston, singing the battle hymn that four of them had just improvised: “John Brown’s body.” Their movements were open and legal; John Brown’s actions had been hidden and treasonable. Yet the marching men proudly acknowledged their communion with him, as they left for Virginia.

There the recent defenders of the Union had become disrupters of the Union; the punishers of treason themselves traitors; the hangmen of rebels themselves in open rebellion. John Brown’s captor, Robert E. Lee, had already joined the Confederate army he was to command. Ex-Governor Wise, who had authorized Brown’s hanging, was conspiring, like him, to seize Harper’s Ferry arsenal, and, as a crowning irony, exhorted his neighbors at Richmond to emulate John Brown. “Take a lesson from John Brown, manufacture your blades from old iron, even though it be the ties of your cart-wheels.”

Thus the opposing forces in the historical process, that John Brown called God, each in their own way, paid homage to the father of the Second American Revolution. ■



Labor Black League banner at thousands-strong demonstration to stop the Klan in New York City, October 1999. Labor’s power must be mobilized in struggle for black freedom.

tions which endure for a moment shall work out for me *a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory*.... God will surely attend to his own cause in the best possible way and time, and he will not forget the work of his own hands.”

On December 2, 1859, a month after his sentence, fifteen hundred soldiers escorted John Brown to the scaffold in the shadow of the Blue Ridge Mountains which had for so many years held out to him the promise of freedom for the slaves. With a single blow of the sheriff’s hatchet, he “hung between heaven and earth,” the first American executed for treason. The silence was shattered by the speech of the commander in charge. “So perish all such enemies of Virginia! All such enemies of the Union. All such foes of the human race!”

* * *

“Let those...who have reproaches to heap upon the authors of the Harper’s Ferry bloody tumult and general Southern fright, go back to the true cause of it all. Let them not blame blind and inevitable instruments in the work, nor falsely malign those who are in nowise implicated, directly or indirectly; but let them patiently investigate the true source whence this demonstration arose, and then bestow their curses and anathemas accordingly. It is childish and absurd for Governor Wise to seize and sit astride the wounded panting body of Old Brown, and think he has got the villain who set this mischief on foot. By no means. The head conspirators against the peace of Virginia are ex-President Franklin Pierce and Senator Douglas. These are the parties he should apprehend, confine, and try for causing this insurrection. Next to

to fasten slavery forever upon the American people against their will, and the representatives of slaveholders who prompted them were, in the last analysis, responsible for the raid upon Harper’s Ferry.

John Brown expected the shock of his assault to electrify the slaves and frighten the slaveholders into freeing their chattels. His experiment in emancipation ended in complete catastrophe. Instead of weakening slavery, his raid temporarily fortified the pro-slavery forces by consolidating their ranks, intensifying their repression, and stiffening their resistance.

John Brown was misled by the apparent effectiveness of his terrorist activities in Kansas. He did not understand that there his raids and reprisals were an integral part of the open struggle of the Free-Soil settlers against the invasion of the slaveholder’s Hessians, and were accessory and subordinate factors in deciding that protracted contest. That violence alone was impotent to determine its outcome was demonstrated by the failure of the Border Ruffians to impose slavery upon the territory.

John Brown’s attempt to impose emancipation upon the South by an exclusive reliance upon terrorist methods met with equal failure. Other ways and means were necessary to release, amplify, and control the revolutionary forces capable of overthrowing the slave power and abolishing slavery.

Yet John Brown’s raid was not wholly reactionary in its effects. His blow against slavery reverberated throughout the land and inspired those who were to follow him. The news of his bold deed rang like a fire-bell in the night, arousing the nation and setting its nerves on edge. Through John Brown the coming civil

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Steroids...

(continued from page 12)

the names of four of the 104 baseball players whose samples came up positive in “anonymous” testing in 2003—leading to calls to reveal the other 100. And Bonds’ perjury charge is a page straight from the McCarthyite witchhunting textbook. Professional athletes are hauled before Congressional committees and grand juries and asked to confess to using PEDs, likely ruining the careers for which they have worked their entire youth. Yesterday you were an admired sports star, today you are a convicted felon—for “cheating” at sports—facing time in prison, especially if they don’t like your attitude or deem it time to make an example of you to “save the children.”

Whether an individual uses recreational drugs or steroids for bodybuilding or perceived enhancement of athletic ability is a personal choice. Hands off Barry Bonds! Government out of the locker room! We call for the decriminalization of drugs, which would also take the huge profits and consequently much of the violence out of the trade. For those whose addiction to drugs impairs their ability to function or who just decide it’s time to quit, what is posed is a medical question, just as with smoking or alcohol. Under socialism, drug treatment and prescriptions would be easily accessible to those who need them as part of a broader program of free, quality medical care for all.

The Racist “War on Drugs”

The Congressional witchhunters and Justice Department lawyers have also caught in their web a few white players like Roger Clemens and Mark McGwire. During his 2005 testimony, McGwire admirably refused to name names: “I do not sit in judgment of other players, whether it deals with their sexual preference, their marital problems or their personal habits—including whether or not they used chemical substances.” But the hysteria about PEDs is part and parcel of the broader “war on drugs,” which is racist to its core.

Over the past 30 years or so the prison population has grown by over 500 percent, with nearly one million black people behind bars—destroying the lives not only of those in prison but inflicting incalculable damage on families and entire neighborhoods. Nationally, 2 percent of the population cannot vote as a result of felony convictions, with some 13 percent of black males disenfranchised. According to a 2007 Justice Policy Institute report, black men are sent to prison on drug charges at 10 times the rate of white men, even though their drug use is approximately the same. Only 12 percent of the U.S. population, blacks make up over 40 percent of prison inmates, six times the rate of imprisonment for whites.

In a society that has few jobs for young black men, this mass incarceration has been buttressed by a racist ideological onslaught depicting an entire generation of black youth as inveterate criminals—“superpredators.” Under “anti-gang” and post-9/11 “anti-terror” laws, black youths are routinely rounded up and thrown in jail for nothing more than wearing baggy jeans, hoodies and colored bandannas while congregating in groups of three or more. Many black professional athletes are just months removed from those same street corners and, no matter how many hundreds of thousands or millions of dollars they may make, are constantly reminded that one false move and they, too, could be packed off to jail.

The depiction of young black athletes as “thugs” was given further fuel in 2004 when Ron Artest, then a member of the Indiana Pacers, attacked a Detroit Pistons fan who had showered him with beer and a racist tirade. Artest was suspended for the season and forced to forfeit his salary. Compare this to the treatment of hockey player Terry O’Reilly, who, joined by



California Department of Corrections
Overcrowded California State prison in Los Angeles County. Racist “war on drugs” has meant mass incarceration of black and Latino youth.

all of his Boston Bruins teammates, left the ice during a 1979 game at Madison Square Garden to viciously hammer a New York Rangers fan. Suspended for only eight games, O’Reilly went on to become a coach for the Bruins, and his jersey hangs in tribute from the rafters of the Boston Garden alongside those of other Bruins stars. That their status as professional athletes provides little protection from the racist cops who routinely terrorize the ghettos and barrios was brought home to black players for the Cincinnati Bengals, who suffered more than ten arrests, many on charges related to drug use or alcohol, during the 2006-07 seasons.

In this racist society, Bonds’ defiant attitude and refusal to bow down to the owners or ingratiate himself with the racist press corps marked him as an “uppity” black man and made him a target. ESPN writer Jeff Pearlman calls Bonds “a truly evil man” who “has deprived the game of integrity and turned its record books into mush.” “Is steroids cheating?” Bonds declared with his classic flair. “You want to define cheating in America? When they make a shirt in Korea for \$1.50 and sell it here for 500 bucks. And you ask me what cheating means?” (cited in “The Juice and the Moose,” *International Socialist Review*, November-December 2006).

In racist America it is seen as obscene that some black sports stars get to be multimillionaires. Writing of his stature as baseball’s highest-paid player in the early 1970s, Hank Aaron recalled, “The Atlanta fans weren’t shy about letting me know what they thought of a \$200,000 n----r striking out with men on base.” Shortly after pitching ace Dwight Gooden led the New York Mets to the 1986 World Series championship, he made the mistake of thinking he could return to his Tampa, Florida, hometown in a silver Mercedes. Gooden was pulled over by 22 white Tampa cops for an alleged traffic violation and then beaten and bloodied. The uniformed thugs went for his pitching arm, yelling, “Hit his arm, hurt it, end his career!” Hoping to dispel rumors that he was on drugs, Gooden requested a drug test, which turned up positive for traces of cocaine, leading to his suspension by the Mets. Gooden was hounded throughout the rest of his career and ultimately thrown in the slammer on drug charges in 2005.

Raging About “Roid Rage”

From the “reefer madness” of the 1930s to the crack cocaine scare of the 1980s-90s, the anti-steroids crusade is replete with phony science—both falsifying the health risks and grossly inflating the abilities of performance enhancing drugs. Of course, this is all accompanied by what one could call “hypocrisy on steroids.” We can only wonder how many members of Congress and medical “experts” condemning sports “cheaters” had some unlawful chemical assistance to get them through their bar exams and medical boards.

In 2004, tennis great John McEnroe announced that he had “unknowingly” used a steroid for six years during his career—nobody called for him to return

his trophies or step down from his lucrative career as a sportscaster. Arnold Schwarzenegger parlayed the physique he attributed in part to performance enhancers into a movie career and ultimately the governorship of California.

Congressmen rant against steroids as a “national public health crisis” while the media peddles tales of “roid rage,” suicides and pituitary tumors. This is as specious as the mythical “crack baby” hysteria of the mid 1980s (see “Crack Babies’ Furor Was Big Lie: Down With Racist ‘War on Drugs’!” WV No. 933, 27 March). Even the Partnership for a Drug-Free America concedes that most health hazards are short-term and reversible and the “long-term, high-dose effects of steroid use are largely unknown.”

For the high school, college and professional athletes exploited for school, nation and the bottom line, there are very real documented health hazards having nothing to do with PEDs. The athlete forced to take the “needle” to play while hurt, jeopardizing his future, is a sports ritual. Repeated concussions to football players have caused extensive brain damage and related chronic depression and dementia that have led to at least two suicides. The National Football League’s response has been to deny the overwhelming medical proof and instead propose generating more revenue by making the season longer—ensuring even greater damage to players’ health. The life expectancy of Canadian Football League players is 20 years less than that of the general population. Many colleges fail to even provide medical insurance for their athletes, who are often left to foot the bill for disabling injuries. High school football players dying of heat prostration during midsummer twice-a-day workouts in full uniform (pads and helmet) is an annual occurrence. And the whole purpose of boxing is for impoverished fighters, predominantly black and Latino, to scramble each others’ brains.

Anabolic steroids have been used medically for 70 years, and the doses used by athletes are often comparable to those prescribed for men needing replacement testosterone due to testicular cancer. While there have been exceptionally rare cases of liver tumors related to oral ingestion of steroids, most steroids in use today are administered topically or by injection. The known side effects—acne, increase in blood pressure and cholesterol and shrinking of testicles over time, are all reversible within weeks of stopping use. In an interview in *Scientific American* online (11 February), Jay Hoffman, a professor of health and exercise science, described his use of anabolic steroids as a college and professional football player in the 1980s, when they were legal. Back then, team physicians “monitored our health. I had constant exams to make sure my liver enzymes were functioning properly and my heart was doing well, and that all the blood lipids were fine.” Hoffman added, “I don’t regret at all what I did, because I did it with care.... I would do it again. There are no long-term effects—I have three healthy, beautiful children. I didn’t grow a third leg or

become impotent or any of that BS you see on TV.”

Anabolic steroids are a class of steroid hormones related to the hormone testosterone that stimulate protein synthesis within cells. They affect muscle mass by increasing the production of proteins and reducing physical recovery time by blocking the effects of the stress hormone cortisol on muscle tissue. They also decrease fat. They increase strength over time by allowing an athlete to *train harder* with quicker recovery—which then allows him to train more. While anabolic steroids *may* give a quick fix of limited muscle strength and size without exercise, they will not turn a Woody Allen into an Albert Pujols. And the main attribute of HGH appears to be cosmetic. A study published in 2008 revealed that HGH “may alter body composition” but “has minimal effect on key athletic performance outcomes and may, in fact, be associated with worsened exercise capacity.” Over the course of a season, steroids may allow athletes to recover from minor injuries, muscle and ligament strains more rapidly.

While some athletes may get a benefit from PEDs—or at least believe they do—there is no conclusive evidence that steroids or other PEDs actually enhance performance. Of the 23 pitchers named in the 2007 Mitchell Commission report on steroids in baseball, 16 performed worse after their steroid use supposedly began. For the 48 hitters, their overall home runs and batting averages dropped.

The anecdotal “evidence” commonly cited is willfully ignorant. During his rant at the 2005 Congressional hearings about “cheating” in baseball, Kentucky Senator Jim Bunning, a Hall of Fame pitcher with a reputation for cheating by scuffing the ball with his belt buckle, retailed the most



Getty
Cap Anson, manager and star of the Chicago White Stockings, refused to play against integrated Newark team in 1887, ushering in 60 years of Jim Crow baseball.

common claim: “When I played ball with Hank Aaron, Willie Mays, and Ted Williams they didn’t put on forty pounds of bulk in their careers, and they didn’t hit more homers in their late thirties than they did in their late twenties.” In fact, Aaron’s best span of home runs came from the ages of 35 to 39 (exactly the same as Bonds), and at 37 he had his best year for home runs. (Bonds was 37 when he set the single-season home run record.) Ted Williams had more home runs per at bat in his late 30s than in his late 20s and batted .388 at the age of 38. Warren Spahn, career leader for most wins by a left-handed pitcher, had his second-best season at the age of 42, and Bunning himself had his best ERA (earned run average) at the age of 35.

With an increase in life expectancy, scientific training techniques, better playing conditions and better pay, there are many reasons why athletes as a whole play longer at a higher level today than did past generations. In other venues, Bunning expects capitalism’s wage slaves to work longer and harder. Earlier this year he called for raising the Social Security retirement age from 67 to 70.

Because they have been prohibited by organized sports and are now illegal, there has been no study of the long-term effects of prolonged massive usage of PEDs, as no subjects are willing to undergo such examination. Even anti-steroid campaigner Linn Goldberg conceded that without people willing to be tested, “you can’t draw much of a conclusion.” Just like the insipid “Just Say No” campaign, the prohibition on steroids actually increases the potential dangers. As Julian Savulescu, professor of practical ethics at Oxford, pointed out in “Ethics of Performance Enhancement in Sports: Drugs and Gene Doping” (printed in *Principles of Health Care Ethics* [2007]):

“Because doping is illegal, the pressure is to make performance enhancers undetectable, rather than safe. Performance enhancers are produced or bought on the black market and administered in a clandestine, uncontrolled way with no monitoring of the athlete’s health. Allowing the use of performance enhancers would make sport safer as there would be less pressure on athletes to take unsafe enhancers and would generate pressure to develop new safe performance enhancers and to make existing enhancers more effective at safe dosages.”

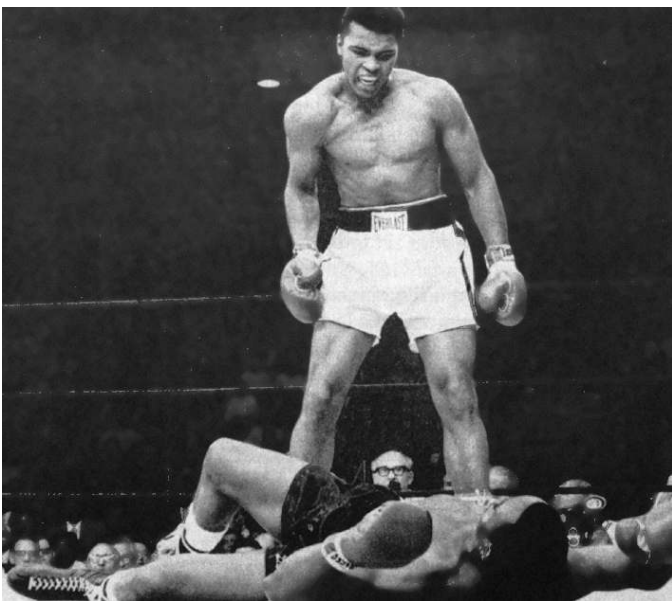
A rational society would both embrace the potentialities of improving human athletic performance, particularly the broader uses of anabolic steroids in muscle and tendon repair that would benefit a broad range of society, while at the same time conducting an objective scientific study of the potential medical dangers. But capitalism is not rational, and American capitalism, maintained on a bedrock of black oppression with all its commensurate racist ideology, is even less so.

**Level Playing Field—
Social Reaction on Steroids**

The use of performance enhancers is as old as competitive sports itself, with natural steroidal substances used to enhance androgenic and anabolic growth in the body by athletes in ancient Greece. In the 1904 Olympics, American Thomas Hicks won the marathon after being given a dose of strychnine and brandy to help him get through the race. This particular PED didn’t catch on. Internationally, controversy over anabolic steroids arose in the 1960s and ’70s as athletes from the Soviet Union, a bureaucratically degenerated workers state, and the deformed workers states of East and Central Europe caught up to and in many sports surpassed the U.S. in international competitions. At the same time that steroids and amphetamines were not only commonplace but encouraged in the locker rooms of professional teams in the U.S., accusations flew that the success of Soviet and East European weightlifters, wrestlers and shot putters, and East German women runners and swimmers, could only be attributed to increased strength gained through steroid use, rather than the enormous advantages of the planned economies of these countries where capitalism was overthrown. Of course, artificially increasing body mass and strength could not explain the grace and skill of Romanian gymnast Nadia Comaneci, Soviet high jumper Valery Brumel or East German figure skater Katarina Witt.

Domestically, the condemnation of PEDs in sports fits like a glove with the dismantling of social programs that benefit blacks and other minorities and echoes the rationale for eliminating affirmative action in education in order to provide a “level playing field.” In his 2004 State of the Union address, President George W. Bush denounced the use of PEDs as sending “the wrong message—that there are shortcuts to accomplishment.” Echoing his right-wing predecessor, President Barack Obama, responding to the February admission of steroid use by Yankees third baseman Alex Rodriguez, stated: “I think it tarnishes an entire era to some degree. It’s unfortunate because I think there are a lot of ball players who played it straight.”

The flap over steroids in sports became white-hot as Bonds approached and smashed Babe Ruth’s milestones and Hank Aaron’s career home run record.



Muhammad Ali in 1965 rematch with Sonny Liston. Ali was stripped of his heavyweight title for refusing to be drafted at height of Vietnam War.

Bonds was deluged with racist hate mail as well as death threats. Predictably, the sports press corps—who sup on the steaks and single-malt scotches paid for by the multimillionaire team owners—disingenuously claimed it was steroid use and not racism that was behind the hostility to Bonds. But, as revealed in a CBS News/*New York Times* poll published in 2007, 57 percent of blacks—compared to 29 percent of whites—were rooting for Bonds to break the home run record, while 62 percent of black baseball fans believed race was a factor in the steroid charges against Bonds, as against 14 percent of whites.

Why baseball is ground zero for the steroids witchhunt is alluded to by Zev Chafets in his 2009 book *Cooperstown Confidential*: “Its statistical obsessions, antique uniforms, and ancestor worship all look back to an idealized version of America that did not include blacks and that many blacks simply don’t share.” Unlike other professional sports, baseball uniquely hasn’t changed in any significant way in over 90 years, and the statistical measures of excellence for hitters and pitchers have remained constant. Nobody—in their right mind—would argue that Bob Cousy and George Mikan were better basketball players than Kobe Bryant and Shaquille O’Neal, or that Bronco Nagurski and Elroy Hirsch were better football players than Emmitt Smith and Jerry Rice. But pointing to their statistics, it is still common for Ty Cobb, Walter Johnson and especially Babe Ruth to be named as baseball’s greatest players, and their era—one in which blacks were banned from the sport—to be considered not only the high-water mark of American professional sports, but an ideal for the country as a whole.

This is so embedded in American culture that in the 1989 movie *Field of Dreams*, James Earl Jones declares, “baseball has marked the time. This field, this game—it’s a part of our past. It reminds us of all that once was good and it could be again.” According to Jayson Stark, ESPN senior writer, “Once, the numbers of baseball used to mean something special and magical. And the men who compiled those numbers were transcendent figures in American life.” Calling steroids use the worst scandal in American sports, surpassing the fixing of the 1919 World Series and college basketball betting scandals of the 1950s, Stark laments that baseball “as a unique paragon of American culture is devastated” (ESPN.com, 8 February).

This “paragon” harkens back to the era of segregation, and these “transcendent figures” are the racist Ansons, Cobbs, Speakers and Hornsbys. Attributing the success of Bonds, A-Rod, Sosa, Jones and others to chemical enhancement is the latest incarnation of the bogus biological rationales that have long flourished to demean increasing black athletic achievement in some sports. When Jesse Owens won four gold medals at the 1936 Berlin Olympics, Avery Brundage, head of the U.S. Olympic Committee, declared, “one could see, particularly with Jesse Owens, how the Negroes could excel in athletics. Their muscle structure lends itself to this sort of competition.” Dean Cromwell,

track coach for the University of Southern California, wrote in 1941, “The Negro excels in the events he does because he is closer to the primitive than the white man.” In 1971, *Sports Illustrated* ran an article, “Black is Best,” stating that black athletes had an advantage in “double-jointedness and general looseness of joints.”

This racist trash is not a relic of a bygone era. Esteemed former NBC anchorman Tom Brokaw gave it his imprimatur when he joined with Jon Entine in making the 1989 documentary *Black Athletes: Fact and Fiction*. Entine expanded on the subject in his 2000 book *Taboo: Why Black Athletes Dominate Sports and Why We Are Afraid to Talk About It*. Entine claims that blacks of West African ancestry, who make up most of the U.S. black population, have proportionately more lean body and muscle mass, broader shoulders, larger quadriceps and bigger musculature in general. Regarding jumping ability and sprinting success, he attributes to blacks “a higher percentage of fast-twitch muscles and more anaerobic enzymes, which can translate into more explosive energy.” Adding a point that would be endorsed by any plantation overseer who demanded that a just-whipped slave return to the cotton field, Entine claims that blacks have “the ability to perform at a higher level of intensity with quicker recovery.”

Despite protestations that his work has nothing in common with the racist tract *The Bell Curve*, Entine is a visiting “scholar” for the American Enterprise Institute, a right-wing think tank whose

other “scholars” include *Bell Curve* co-author Charles Murray, Newt Gingrich and John Yoo, architect of the Bush administration’s infamous torture memos.

Boston Celtics great Bill Russell exposed this garbage back in the 1970s: “It’s okay to be racist as long as you try to sound like a doctor.” Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, the National Basketball Association’s career scoring leader, defined the real reason for black stardom in sports: “Yes, I was just like the rest of those black athletes you’ve read about, the ones that put all their waking energies into learning the moves. That might be a sad commentary on America in general, but that’s the way it’s going to be until black people can flow without prejudice into any occupation they can master. For now it’s still pretty much music and sports for us.”

Today, little has changed, and even that window of opportunity is narrowing. U.S. blacks are now only 8 percent of major league baseball players, though there is an increasing number of black players from Latin America. They, too, have come under attack, as in the cases of David Ortiz and Manny Ramirez. A *New York Times* (25 October) article accusing Dominican “handlers” of providing PEDs to young athletes quoted a Dominican coach who admitted to providing vitamin shots to his players because “I can’t afford to give them meat.” Meanwhile, the predominance of blacks in professional basketball has declined with the influx of European stars, satisfying the call by Larry Bird in 2004 for more white stars in the NBA. And increasingly stringent NCAA standards have made it even more difficult for blacks from the ghetto prisons, euphemistically called schools, to gain athletic scholarships. As we wrote in “Racism in Sports” (WV No. 426, 17 April 1987):

“For a minuscule number of blacks, sports can be a way out of the grinding poverty of America’s hellish ghettos. But if Dwight Gooden, a hero, superstar and millionaire, is not safe from cop brutality, what black is? Certainly not the millions of unemployed black youth whose ‘future’ under capitalism is imperialist war or the scrap heap. For them, life is only injustice with no rewards. But capitalism has not simply spawned victims, it has created its own gravediggers. Black workers, strategically organized at the point of production, are potentially the most combative section of the working class. United in a multiracial Trotskyist vanguard party along with their white brothers and sisters, they can lead all the oppressed in a class-struggle fight against the rotting capitalist system.”■

Spartacus Youth Club Events

BAY AREA

Thursday, November 19, 6:30 p.m.

**The Struggle Against
Class Collaboration in the
Vietnam Antiwar Movement**

San Francisco State University
Cesar Chavez Student Center
Rosa Parks E

Information and readings: (510) 839-0851
sycbayarea@sbcglobal.net

CHICAGO

Saturday, November 7, 2 p.m.

**Marx Was Right! Marxist
Materialism and Economics**

Saturday, November 21, 2 p.m.

**The Capitalist State—
An Instrument of
Bourgeois Terror Against
Workers and the Oppressed**

Spartacist Public Office
222 S. Morgan St.
(between Jackson and Adams, Buzzer 23)
Information and readings: (312) 563-0441
chicagosyc@sbcglobal.net

NEW YORK CITY

Thursday, November 19, 7:30 p.m.

**The Lessons of the
1917 Bolshevik Revolution**

Hunter College, Room TBA
Information and readings: (212) 267-1025
nysl@tiac.net

LOS ANGELES

Sunday, November 22, 12 noon

**Latin America:
Populist Nationalism vs.
Workers Revolution**

3806 Beverly Blvd., Room 215
Information and readings: (213) 380-8239
slsycla@sbcglobal.net

TORONTO

Wednesday, November 18, 6 p.m.
**Revolutionary Internationalism
vs. NDP Anglo-Chauvinism**

University of Toronto
Sidney Smith Hall
Room 1080
100 St. George Street
Information and readings: (416) 593-4138
spartcan@on.aibn.com

VANCOUVER

Thursday, November 19, 6:30 p.m.

**The Russian Revolution:
How the Bolsheviks
Took State Power**

University of British Columbia
SUB Room 42T
Information and readings: (604) 687-0353
trotskyist_vancouver@shawcable.com

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Philippines...
(continued from page 4)

bridge. In 2001, Ocampo’s Bayan Muna party mobilized the warm bodies for the military-backed “People Power II” coup. They supported President Arroyo’s “People Power Coalition” senatorial slate, even while the blood of ousted populist president Joseph Estrada’s plebeian supporters, gunned down at the gates of Malacañang, had barely dried. More recently, the “Honorable” Congressman Ocampo, a cothinker of exiled CPP founder and NDF political consultant Jose Maria Sison, was prominently flashing the “Laban” sign at Aquino’s funeral procession. He is now reportedly being considered for a guest senatorial slot on the ticket of multimillionaire Manny Villar’s Nacionalista Party.

For their part, the ex-Stalinist splinters from the CPP, like Sanlakas, Alab Katipunan and the newly formed “socialist” Partido Lakas ng Masa (PLM—Masses Power Party), were among the left groups with banners held high at the funeral procession. Associated with Australia’s thoroughly reformist Democratic Socialist Perspective (DSP), the PLM is headed by Sonny Melencio, who has emerged over the years variously as head political operator of the Liga Sosyalista, the Sosyalistang Partido ng Paggawa (Socialist Party of Labor) and the multitendency Laban ng Masa bloc.

While the PLM postures to the left of the CPP and is highly critical of Cory Aquino, its purpose remains to reinforce illusions in “People Power” among the working class. And though PLM leaders keep their distance from the Cory crowd, PLM supporters on the ground joined in the mourning for Aquino. The Melencioites are so enamored with “People Power” that they have been advocates of a broad, multi-class (i.e., capitalist) “transitional revolutionary government” in the same spirit as Cory’s “revolutionary” government.

Loyalty to the strategy of “People Power” coupled with the appetite for pursuing “progressive” friends in the bourgeois military officer caste is a common thread that runs through Melencio’s various “left” outfits. The Melencioites are the local cheering squad for “Third World” bourgeois nationalist leaders like Venezuelan president Hugo Chávez and



AP photos

Above: Imperialist top cop Obama meets right-wing Philippine president Arroyo in Oval Office in July. Right: Demonstrators outside U.S. embassy in Manila protest Obama’s meeting with Arroyo, July 30.



Evo Morales in Bolivia. Closer to home, they confer with shadowy opposition groups inside the bourgeois armed forces, like the Young Officers Union and the Young Officers Union of the New Generation. The PLM admits that its political program is inspired by the platform of these bourgeois military opposition groups.

Far from posing an independent proletarian political alternative, the Philippine left has repeatedly exhibited shameless subordination to the bourgeoisie—from the two “People Power” movements, through the string of botched anti-Arroyo coup attempts, to the maneuverings for the 2010 elections under cover of the recent Aquino funeral. By chaining the working class and the oppressed masses to one or another wing of the Philippine bourgeoisie, these reformist leftists will not and cannot lead the masses to break free from imperialist enslavement and capitalist exploitation.

Basing itself on the Menshevik/Stalinist schema of two-stage revolution—which amounts to mobilizing the workers to bring bourgeois “progressives” and nationalists to power in the first “stage” and ends in the massacre of workers and communists—the Philippine left opposes the fight for proletarian revolution. Whether in the bourgeois Congress, in the “parliament of the streets” or fighting in the hills as guerrillas, the reformist left is deeply wedded to the politics of alliances with a mythical “progressive” bourgeoisie—the “popular front.” And while the Philippine left courageously defies murderous repres-

sion, the purpose of its struggles is simply to pressure the capitalist class for concessions. Nevertheless, we defend the leftist guerrillas against the violence of the bourgeoisie and its blood-drenched state.

For Proletarian Class Independence

As Bolshevik leader Leon Trotsky outlined in the theory of permanent revolution, the bourgeoisies in countries of belated capitalist development are more fearful of the superexploited masses than they are of the imperialists, on whom they depend to secure their class rule. The chief condition for any real struggle by the toiling masses against imperialist subjugation and capitalist exploitation and oppression is the class independence of the proletariat.

With its large peasant population, the Philippines also needs an agrarian revolution, in which the poor peasants and agricultural workers seize the land. But defeating the bloodsucking landlords, with their private armies as well as government death squads, requires a revolution in which the urban proletariat places itself at the head of the insurgent peasant masses to smash the whole framework of capitalist/landlord rule. Underscoring the potential for revolutionary working-class struggle is the growth of a young, militant proletariat due to industrial investment in the Philippines by the U.S., Japan and other countries. The Philippine proletariat must lead the terribly exploited and oppressed masses of peasants, urban

poor, women and minorities in a struggle for socialist revolution against all wings of the capitalist class, crowning its victory with the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Socialist revolution in the economically backward Philippines would necessarily have to link up with the struggles of the working people in Indonesia, South Korea and, in particular, the more economically advanced countries. It would act as a powerful impetus for proletarian political revolution in China and for socialist revolution in Japan, Asia’s economic powerhouse. The millions-strong diaspora of Filipino workers throughout the Near East, North America and elsewhere can serve as a living link uniting the workers of the semicolonial countries and the imperialist centers.

The key to victory lies in forging an internationalist Leninist-Trotskyist party against all variants of nationalism and class collaboration. Defense of those subjugated by the imperialists around the globe demands the pursuit of class struggle in the U.S. and other imperialist centers. Here in the U.S., we seek to build a revolutionary workers party which champions the rights of blacks, women, immigrants and all the oppressed as part of the fight for proletarian revolution to smash racist American imperialism. The International Communist League fights to reforge the Fourth International of Leon Trotsky as the indispensable instrument for leading new October Revolutions around the world.■

NUMMI...
(continued from page 5)

politicians and businessmen speaking from a stage set up in the union hall parking lot. The audience cheered for three bills designed to create tax incentives to keep NUMMI open that have been introduced by Democrats in the California State Legislature. Union members were urged to “call your state legislators today!” The featured rally speaker was Lt. Governor John Garamendi, who passionately urged union members to send a message to Toyota that “we know that you’ve got a very tough, a very difficult divorce with old, bankrupt General Motors, but...come out of that divorce, and you’ll have a new lover right here in Fremont.” He called the proposed incentives a “wedding ring.” He was hugged by UAW bureaucrats on the stage and loudly cheered by the audience.

Meanwhile, according to the union Website, the UAW has negotiated an agreement with NUMMI that allows either

party to terminate the existing Collective Bargaining Agreement with only five days’ notice. A week after the rally, NUMMI managers held an assembly of employees to announce the planned closure of the plant in March 2010. A few days later, the UAW’s “Friends of NUMMI” rally task force held another rally of about 100 (including kids and retirees) at Senator Dianne Feinstein’s office in San Francisco to plead for tax incentives for management. Protesters held a banner reading: “There is still hope.”

The UAW bureaucracy has offered every sort of concession short of dissolving the union as a sign of loyalty to American capitalism. Today, as they have for decades, UAW bureaucrats trade jobs for union stock shares and seats on the U.S. automakers’ boards, as tens of thousands of auto workers are put out on the street. Gettelfinger denounced Toyota as ungrateful, but the New York Times noted that he made no mention of GM, which pulled out of the joint venture as a result of the union-supported bankruptcy deal. It was the pullout of GM

that precipitated this plant closure.

The UAW bureaucracy’s chauvinist protectionism is all too familiar. I remember the last meeting before the plant closure in February 1982, where we argued against this same racist poison. Speaking from the floor, I denounced the anti-Japanese statements made by the officials. I argued that our union should have no part of such a policy, as it was the opposite of everything we stood for. I pointed out that trade wars historically lead to shooting wars, and that such racist crap is also the program of the KKK race terrorists. Further, the answer to worries about plants moving to Mexico was for the UAW to help organize Mexican auto workers.

For all the protestations of Toyota executives today that they are not closing the plant to rid themselves of the union,

Fremont NUMMI was Toyota’s only unionized U.S. plant. Toyota has five other plants in the U.S., all non-union—four in the South and one in Indiana (with the opening of a brand-new plant in Mississippi delayed by the recession). The UAW tops do nothing to organize the non-union plants and have nothing bad to say against GM, but complain about Toyota, playing up anti-Japanese nationalism. So now as in 1982, in this and many other ways, poisonous protectionism is cranked up to cover for the bureaucrats’ opposition to any struggle.

The UAW membership has suffered this new defeat not in struggle, but as in 1982 by the hand of the UAW’s pro-capitalist leadership, from the International to the local level.

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Iraq...

(continued from page 1)

The Iraqi working class has been devastated by the U.S. imperialist occupation, but the proletariat in the region remains a powerful force, such as in Iran, Egypt and Turkey. Freedom from grinding imperialist exploitation and the achievement of democratic rights for all people in the area cannot be achieved under capitalism. They require the overthrow of bourgeois rule, leading to the establishment of a socialist federation of the Near East and linked to the fight for workers revolution in the advanced capitalist countries.

Iraq 1958: The Proletariat Betrayed

Iraq is not a nation but a patchwork of different peoples and ethnicities carved by the British imperialists out of the old Turkish Ottoman Empire at the end of the First World War as a client state to oversee their oil interests. The country thus fabricated was a myriad of rival ethnic, religious and national groupings governed by feudal and tribal leaders, through which the British pursued their imperial policy of “divide and rule.” In such a society, the exertion of secular rule under capitalism is possible only under something like the late Saddam Hussein’s Ba’athist dictatorship.

At the same time, the development of an oil industry in Iraq and elsewhere in the region led to the creation of a proletariat, in whose hands lay the power to lead all the oppressed against imperialist subjugation. In the 1950s, the Near East became a hotbed of revolutionary working-class struggles. In particular, the experience of the Iraqi Communist Party (ICP) in that period provides rich confirmation of our perspective of united class struggle by the multinational proletariat of the Near East as the means to ending imperialist subjugation, social reaction and brutal exploitation (see “Near East, 1950s: Permanent Revolution vs. Bourgeois Nationalism,” WV Nos. 740 and 741, 25 August and 8 September 2000).

Not only was the early ICP the most proletarian Communist Party in the Near East but it had a large component from oppressed national, religious and ethnic groups. A majority of the ICP’s early leaders were Christians and Shi’ites; it recruited a significant number of Jews; and in the early 1950s one-third of the party’s leadership was Kurdish. The 2002 documentary *Forget Baghdad*, focusing on four Iraqi-Jewish Communists who were eventually forced to flee to Israel, gives a sense of the power and influence that the ICP once had in Iraqi society.

From its inception, the ICP called for the right of Kurdish independence. But this principled position was abandoned in the mid 1950s. Pressured by the Krem-



British troops enter Baghdad, March 1917. Iraq’s borders were arbitrarily drawn by colonial occupiers.

lin bureaucracy, Stalinists throughout the Near East courted Arab nationalist regimes like Nasser’s in Egypt. The ICP criticized its previous stance “that there exist two main national groups in Iraq,” declaring that “the fraternal Kurdish people has no interests which are incompatible with the interests of any of the Arab countries” (see “The Kurdish People and the U.S. Occupation of Iraq,” WV Nos. 804 and 805, 23 May and 6 June 2003).

The most powerful demonstration yet of the revolutionary capacity of the working class in the Near East came in 1958 as the fall of the Iraqi monarchy touched off a huge proletarian upsurge. Armed, highly organized and led by the ICP, the proletariat literally had power in its grasp. The U.S. made contingency plans for a counterrevolutionary invasion, and U.S. troops landed in Lebanon while British forces entered Jordan. However, the Stalinist ICP leadership betrayed the uprising by subordinating the proletariat to the bourgeois-nationalist regime of General Abd al-Karim Qassim (Kassem). This betrayal was carried out under orders from Moscow with the aim of facilitating Soviet premier Nikita Khrushchev’s upcoming parley with U.S. president Eisenhower in a futile quest for “peaceful coexistence” with imperialism.

The defeat of the revolutionary wave prepared the way for a counterrevolutionary bloodbath in 1963, when the Ba’athist party (and its torturers, such as Saddam Hussein) briefly came to power for the first time and rounded up and murdered some 5,000 leftists and trade unionists on the basis of lists supplied by the CIA. Deposed shortly thereafter, the Ba’athists staged another coup in 1968 with CIA backing, which soon placed Hussein at the pinnacle of power.

For years, the U.S. and other imperialists supported the murderous dictatorship of the Ba’athist regime of Saddam Hussein. As we wrote after Hussein was

captured by U.S. forces (WV No. 816, 26 December 2003):

“Saddam Hussein was Washington’s bloody bastard. He was Washington’s close ally and client while he massacred tens of thousands of Kurdish people. He was a mainstay of U.S. imperialist policy in the Near East while he arrested, tortured and executed thousands of Iraqi Communists, workers’ leaders, leftists, ethnic minorities and religious opponents, and waged eight years of bloody war with predominantly Shi’ite Iran. But when Hussein slipped his leash and made a grab for Kuwait in 1990, this former ally and flunkey for U.S. imperialism in the Near East became Washington’s all-purpose bogeyman.”

Hussein was executed on 30 December 2006 after a show trial presided over by an Iraqi regime whose police and military



Iraqi CP leaders head 1959 May Day march. Four years later, one-third of CP’s Central Committee was murdered by nationalist Ba’ath regime.

run death squads that terrorize the population. The execution was, as we wrote at the time, “nothing more than barbaric ‘victor’s justice’” that “had the markings of a lynch mob” (WV No. 883, 5 January 2007).

Only Socialist Revolution Can End Imperialist War

A workers revolution in Iraq in 1958-59 would have had a profound impact throughout the Near East, inspiring revolutionary upheavals in other countries and helping to shatter the chauvinist consensus binding the Hebrew-speaking proletariat to the Israeli capitalist rulers. The beheading of the Iraqi proletariat had an equally profound effect in the opposite direction, allowing the imperialists to tighten their grip on the region. It also paved the way for the rise of Islamic fundamentalism, which today falsely postures as the defender of the besieged Palestinians and the only alternative to corrupt nationalist regimes and their Western patrons. In fact, notwithstanding U.S. imperialism’s “war on terror” crusade against political Islam, the U.S. has historically fostered the growth of Islamic fundamentalism. In 1950 Cold Warrior John Foster Dulles—who at the time of the 1958 Iraqi revolution was U.S. secretary of state—declared: “The religions of the East are deeply rooted and have many precious values. Their spiritual beliefs cannot be reconciled with Communist atheism and materialism. That creates a common bond between us, and our task is to find it and develop it” (cited in Paul A. Baran, *The Political Economy of Growth* [1957]).

When the Iraqi proletariat raises its head again, it will come up against not only the imperialist forces but the domestic forces of reaction. In Iraq and throughout the Near East, Marxist workers parties must be forged in combat against imperialism and in opposition to all manner of nationalism and religious reaction. We fight for workers revolutions to overthrow all the bourgeois regimes of the region, including the Zionist state of Israel.

Essential to this perspective is the understanding of the necessity of socialist revolution in the imperialist centers. A central obstacle to winning U.S. workers to that understanding is widespread illusions in Democratic Party “lesser evilism.” Those illusions are assiduously propagated by the pro-capitalist trade-union bureaucracy, which chains the working class to its capitalist class enemy.

Those illusions are also propagated by reformist “socialist” groups like the International Socialist Organization (ISO) and Workers World Party (WWP). Through various coalitions, the reformist left built an antiwar movement (now defunct) that sought to lead protesters into unity with anything that passed for an “antiwar” Democrat. Thus all these coalitions refused to raise the elementary call for military defense of Afghanistan and Iraq against the U.S., which would have repelled Democratic Party politicians. While today they complain about some of Obama’s policies, these fake “socialists” celebrated his election: WWP called it “a triumph for the Black masses and all the oppressed” (*Workers World*, 20 November 2008), while the ISO wrote an editorial the day after Obama’s inauguration titled “Look-



Baghdad, 1958: Mass demonstration after officers’ coup toppled British-imposed monarchy. Opportunity for proletarian revolution in Iraq was derailed by Soviet Stalinist bureaucracy and Iraqi Communist leadership.

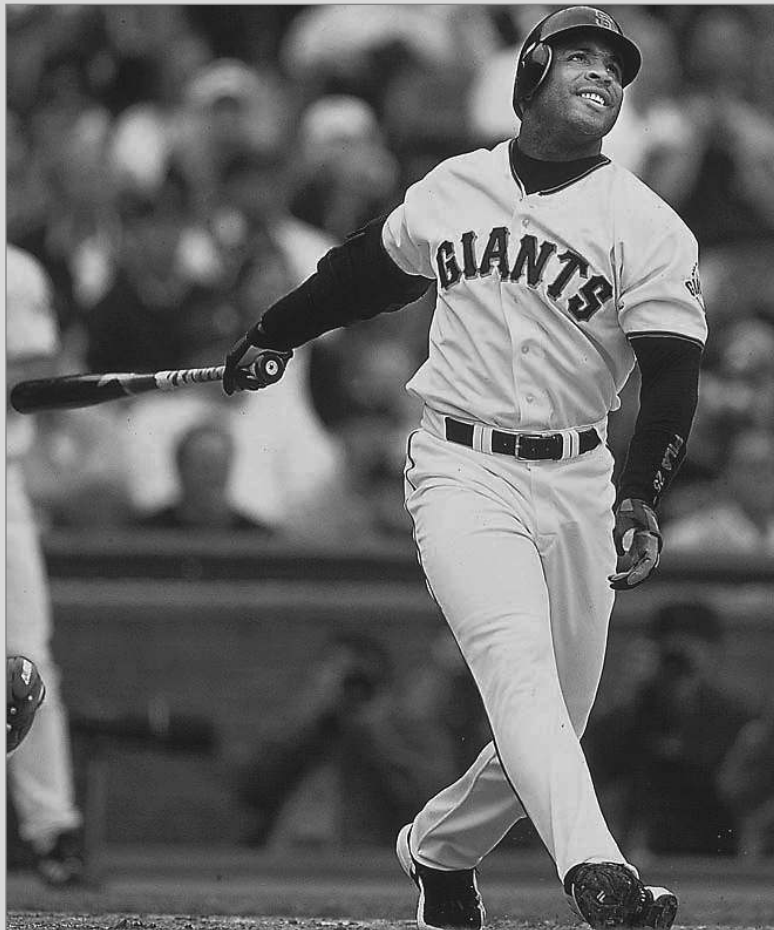
WORKERS VANGUARD

Baseball, Racism and Steroids

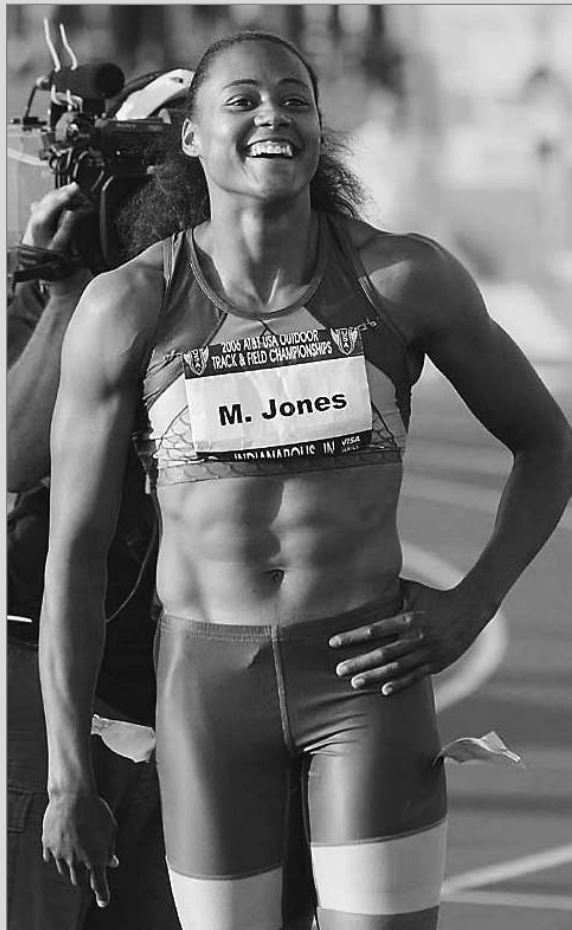
It was a quintessential America's national pastime moment. Following a series against the St. Louis Cardinals, on 18 August 1908 the New York Giants took a day off from a grueling pennant race to play an exhibition game against a local team in Springfield, Illinois. For three days before the Giants came to town, white mobs laid waste to the city's black business district and then destroyed the impoverished black Badlands neighborhood. Two black men, Scott Burton and 84-year-old William Donnegan, were lynched, and just about every black person was forced to flee the city. Immediately before the game, with embers from the Badlands still smoldering, Giants manager John McGraw was presented with a piece of one of the lynch ropes as a souvenir. McGraw promised he would keep it for good luck.

The Giants failed to make the World Series, but McGraw went on to become one of the first dozen admitted into baseball's hallowed Hall of Fame. Though not part of his exhibit at the Hall, McGraw's "good luck charm" could have easily found a home there. Enshrined with him are Ku Klux Klan members Tris Speaker and Rogers Hornsby; Ty Cobb, a racist sociopath who once beat a black chambermaid; and Cap Anson, manager and star of the Chicago White Stockings, whose refusal to play against an integrated Newark team in 1887 ushered in 60 years of Jim Crow baseball. Eddie Collins, Tom Yawkey and Larry MacPhail, who all labored long and hard to keep blacks out of the major leagues, are honored there as well.

It is this American sports temple that Barry Bonds, one of baseball's all-time greats—a seven-time Most Valuable Player who holds both the single-season and career home run records—along with a growing roster of predominantly black and Latino superstars, such as Alex Rodriguez, Manny Ramirez, Gary Sheffield and Sammy Sosa, are denounced as "morally unfit" to join. This is because of their purported use of performance enhancing drugs (PEDs)—anabolic steroids and human growth hormones (HGH). What could await Bonds instead is another venerable American institution far more receptive to black men and women—prison. Blacklisted out of baseball while he remained one of its most productive offensive players, Bonds was indicted in November 2007 on charges of perjury and obstruction of justice for telling a



Sports Illustrated



AP

Barry Bonds and Marion Jones, two stellar black athletes whose careers were destroyed by the racist morality police under the pretext of the "war on drugs."

Down With the Witchhunt! Decriminalize Drugs!

witchhunting federal grand jury he did not knowingly use PEDs—*before they were made illegal*. He faces up to 30 years in prison.

Bonds isn't the first black athlete dragged through the mud and deprived of his livelihood—nor would he be the first sent to prison—by the racist morality police under the "war on drugs." A number of black track and field stars have had their medals stripped and been banned for life at the whim of the sports czars. One of the most vicious campaigns has

been the persecution of Marion Jones, the black sprinter who won five medals at the 2000 Olympics and whose picture graced advertisements, magazines and posters. In October 2007, Jones was forced to plead guilty to lying to the Feds about using PEDs and sentenced to six months in jail, with two years' probation. The Judge "spared" Jones more jail time, instead tacking on 800 hours of "community service" in order to "educate children and school-age athletes about the importance of competing without cheating." Although she has a few productive years left, Jones was forced to retire from the sport.

In the 1980s, black baseball star Willie Wilson and football great Mercury Morris were sent to the slammer for cocaine use, while Mitchell Wiggins and Lewis Lloyd, Houston Rockets stars, were banished for life. Black Canadian sprinter Ben Johnson, who set a world record for the 100-meter dash at the 1988 Olympics, was stripped of his gold medal for "cheating" after testing positive for a steroid. White U.S. swimmer Janet Evans also set a world record at the 1988 Olympics, which she attributed to the special fabric of her swimsuit—without any retribution.

According to Dr. Linn Goldberg, co-director of the Adolescents Training and Learning to Avoid Steroids program, "Our research showed that steroid use is linked to other drugs and alcohol abuse. You can't just look at steroid use in isolation." Behind every attack on drug use in this country has been the capitalist rulers' efforts to enforce social conformity

and concomitantly bolster the repressive apparatus aimed at the working class and oppressed minorities. Democratic president Lyndon Johnson's 1968 "Safe Streets Act" and Republican Richard Nixon's 1970 "Drug Abuse Prevention and Control Act" were designed to clamp down on the ghettos that had exploded in rage against poverty, dilapidated housing and cop terror in the mid to late 1960s. The 1980s "war on drugs," launched by conservative president Ronald Reagan, was a central part of the bourgeois rulers' efforts to morally regiment the population during Cold War II against the "godless" Soviet Union. We said at the time that the "war on drugs" was a war against black people. For their part, black Democrats like Al Sharpton and Jesse Jackson were the most enthusiastic champions of Reagan's anti-drug witchhunt, which ushered in a broad-ranging attack on fundamental rights—from the right to privacy in your own home to the right not to have the cops beat a confession out of you.

Today, the government's steroids witchhunt against Bonds and other high-profile athletes sets a dangerous precedent for further attacks on the rights of us all, not least the right to confidentiality in medical and legal matters. The government raids on the BALCO lab and the home of Bonds' trainer, Greg Anderson, in order to obtain records of Bonds' urine tests are replicated in the escalating seizure of medical records by anti-abortion prosecutors. Federal agents unlawfully "leaked"

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Dodgers pitcher Sandy Koufax, 1961. Unnatural motion required to throw 95-mile-an-hour fastball forced 30-year-old Koufax to retire after 1966 season.