The weeks of relentless pounding of Afghanistan by thousands of bombs and missiles have produced the intended result. Villages have been reduced to rubble and then reduced to an even finer rubble, with hospitals destroyed. Critical facilities obliterated, entire families blown to smithereens. “Humanitarian aid,” i.e., peanut butter, is distributed. In the air, the color of cluster bombs, the only purpose of the latter being to randomly maim and slaughter. With the urban virtually unscathed, the seemingly aimless character of the war has sowed disinformation in the ranks of imperialist America’s bloc partners, primarily those in the Arab/Muslim world and in Europe. These are stirred up by any number of ”what if’s.” What if the war destabilizes Pakistan, putting its nuclear capability up for grabs? What if it triggers a further war between India and Pakistan, plunging the region into chaos? What if access to oil is disrupted? What if these powers are inexorably drawn from their current status as cheerleaders into a shooting war in which they have no direct interest? The destruction of the World Trade Center was a criminal act that incinerated thousands of ordinary, innocent people. But it is not the death of ordinary people that moves America’s rulers. After all, bin Laden is a Frankenstein’s monster that turned on his creator, American imperialism. This is the response of American imperialism. This is the response of a swaggering bully America’s rulers seek to assure that their drive for profits, based on the exploitation of the working class here and abroad, will encounter no obstacles.

The jobs that are, in the short run, sometimes available as a result of imperialist ventures and wars are today, in the context of a worldwide depression, not to be found. While many workers from around the country have poured into New York City to donate their time and labor in the aftermath of the WTC disaster, the powers that be are satisfied to allow the small businessmen closed down by the devastations to go under. Over 600,000 jobs have been slashed nationwide just since September, and those unemployed will join the ranks of millions of others in the midst of a deepening recession.

Postal workers are ordered to work, the threat of anachronism notwithstanding, while the Senators, Congressmen and Supreme Court justices are carefully insulated from any possible exposure. On Friday, firemen in New York City fought through police barricades to protest against being pushed off the search for the bodies of their own as well as other victims of the attack. One fireman hit the nail right on the head when he pointed out that the dead were being left as garbage for the power shovels now that the gold caches stored in the subbasement of the WTC had been found and secured.

It has only been a few weeks since the air war against Afghanistan began, and it is becoming increasingly clear to many poor and working people that they have everything to lose by supporting Bush’s crusade for “Enduring Freedom,” including such scant freedoms as are now accessible to them. As we said in our initial statement on the World Trade Center attack (WV No. 764, 14 September): “The ruling parties—Democrats and Republicans—are all too eager to be able to wield the bodies of those who were killed and wounded in order to reinforce capitalism’s class rule. It’s an opportunity for the exploiters to peddle ‘one nation indivisible’ patriotism to try to direct the burgeoning anger at the bottom of this society away from themselves and toward an indefinable foreign ‘enemy,’ as well as immigrants in the U.S., and to reinforce their arsenal of domestic state repression against all the working people.”

Over 1,100 non-citizens have been rounded up and held, most deprived of access to lawyers or their families. The cynically labeled “USA-Patriot Act 2001” authorizes preventive detention of non-citizens for seven days without charges and effectively indefinitely once they are charged, legalizes FBI break-ins and authorizes the CIA to engage in domestic spying. It also defines “terrorist” to include anyone who is deemed an enemy of the government. The indefinable nature of this is already apparent to many black Americans. Reflecting such apprehensions, Chicago-area Congressman Jesse Jackson Jr. pointed out: “The terrorists didn’t attack the Statue of Liberty, the Constitution or the Bill of Rights in the Declaration of Independence. They attacked the symbols of our economic and military power in the world. It’s the supporters of this bill who are really attacking American liberties that are contained in our most sacred historical documents.”

The federal “anti-terror” law is accompanied by a series of other proposed measures targeting port and maritime workers, airline workers and others for increased surveillance and victimization. Lest workers forget that labor militancy is not a right in the eyes of our bourgeois rulers, South Carolina’s attorney general recently issued a chilling reminder. Referring to the Charleston Five, longshoremen who face prison terms for defending their union against the use of scab labor, he intoned, “I’m against forcing people to join unions in order to get a job. And so this whole idea of ending justification the means, as we know these terrorists that killed so many people, that’s exactly their argument.”

“Who is in the middle of the situation?” the Constitution asks. “I’m neither for nor against the terror war,” a wistfully optimistic member of Congress has intoned. “I’m in the middle of the situation.” The “middle” that concerns the U.S. imperialists is any resistance to their pre-rogatives and class rule. The defense of Afghanistan against imperialist attack is integrally linked to the defense of the working masses here against increasing exploitation and oppression, which requires the overturn of the imperialist order through workers revolution. The task is to educate and mobilize the proletariat to that end. And that requires continued on page 9.
Evoked by James P. Cannon, the Trotskyist movement, strengthened by the revolutionary spirit of the peoples, must be won to the program of revolutionary internationalism of the peoples of the world. Not to bind itself to the national state in time of war, to the standpoint of the national honor, the Trotskyist movement has already declared irreconcilable war on the national state in time of peace.

The exposure of the thoroughly reactionary, putrefied and robber nature of modern capitalism, who preaches national defense is a petty-bourgeois reactionary at the service of decaying capitalism. Not to bind itself to the national state in time of war, to the standpoint of the national honor, the Trotskyist movement has already declared irreconcilable war on the national state in time of peace.

The class-conscious worker accords to his union, Lowe was sentenced to nearly 30 years after the 1978 police attack on their Philadelphia home, falsely convicted of killing a police officer. Last year, the PCRA petition to overturn their frame-up was denied.

Jamil Hart, Mumia's son, was sentenced in 1998 to 15 to 30 years on bogus firearm possession charges, targeted for his prominent activism in the campaign to free his father. Although Hart was initially charged under Pennsylvania laws, which would have meant a probationary sentence. Clinton's Justice Department intervened, and Mumia Abu-Jamal was transferred to a New Jersey prison. He is not eligible for parole. Hart is at Fairton, New Jersey.

Jerry Dale Lowe

Contribute Now! All proceeds from the Holiday Appeal will go to the Class-War Prisoners' Support Fund. Send your contributions to: PDC, P.O. Box 99, Canal St. Station, New York, NY; (212) 406-4252.

The PDC is a class-struggle, non-sectarian legal and social defense organization that champions cases and causes in the interests of the whole of the working class. The PDC's work is in accordance with the political views of the Spartacist League.
From an Airline Worker: 
Airline Bosses Get Billions, Workers Get Layoffs

17 October 2001

To the editor:

As a reader of your newspaper, I wanted to add some of my own observations about what’s happening to airline workers in the wake of the September 11 attack on the World Trade Center. The airline bosses seized on the opportunity the tragedy afforded to expedite the restructuring of their companies so as to bust the unions and increase the rate of exploitation of the workforce. Excepting Southwest and Continental, the domestic carriers were projected before September 11 to lose almost $2 billion combined this year, which management largely attributed to rising labor costs. After the hijackings, that projection more than doubled.

All the companies but Southwest in rapid succession announced furloughs of 10-25 percent of the workforce, totalling more than 100,000, both to reduce the payroll and motivate their bailout before Congress. This week, Continental, which led the campaign for federal loan guarantees, announced it is content with the cash handout (and furlough of 12,000 employees) and is unlikely to require the loans and the accompanying financial encumbrances in order to turn a profit by year-end. The prospects for other companies are improved, too. Midway Airlines, which closed its doors on September 12, now expects to again fly by late October, with many of its members of old workforce who do return to do so at loss of seniority.

Meanwhile, the “Airline Labor Dispute Resolution Act,” introduced in the Senate by Sen. McCaun as a result of the July 28 defection by the industry bosses, seeks to eliminate the right of airline workers to strike and vote on their contracts by formalized disputes over “baseball arbitration,” in which a federal arbiter would select and make binding the comprehensive contract of one side. A black Americ­an Airlines ramp worker who’s in the Transport Workers Union told me: “The problem is that there is no ‘league minimum’ with this company.” The International Association of Machinists and TWU are the most vocal unions in opposition, though the strategy is to lobby Congress. The IAM bureaucracy set the servile tone of the union chiefs shortly after the terror attack by announcing to its membership, “Labor, management and the federal government must work together.”

I was told that Continental furloughed close to 3,000 employees at Newark. A mixture of resignation and anxiety marked the days leading up to “Furlough Day.” One Continental ramp worker likened the flow of long, solemn faces in the Terminal Operations hallway to “a funeral procession.” Throughout the air­line industry, co-workers sought out each other, not infrequently across craft lines, to exchange phone numbers, job leads, and relive shared memories. Those with the seniority to survive what was widely viewed as the first round of furloughs did not escape the sting of cutbacks. There is a freeze on overtime, upon which many depended to maintain a decent standard of living, and hundreds were down­graded to part-time status, impelling scores of the still-employed to search for additional jobs.

Individual expressions of protest were evident. The day the New York Times, September 21, ran an article on Continen­tal and the shady financial maneuvering of its CEO, Gordon Bethune, a copy was posted in the Newark Intl Flight Ops hall­way (flight attendants) with the new headline: “Furlough Gordon!” Quickly removed, presumably by management, it was re-posted the next day. When it was removed for a second time, I was told it was replaced by a sign warning against “unapproved postings.” Though the article merely covered the mundane workings of a typical capitalist enterprise, it gave the lie to internal company propaganda of “Working Together”—Gordon placed the company on shaky financial ground, risk­ing the jobs of the workforce, to protect his own job and maximize his personal wealth. Continental workers at Newark told me that all facilities mechanics sur­vived “Furlough Day,” but for eleven new hires it was a short reprise. In a move that caught the shop off guard, manage­ment activated a clause in the contract with the Teamsters that allows it to termi­nate probationary employees, and the union was not consulted. Notification was conveniently timed to coincide with a “diversity” training workshop (the princi­ple message of which was to rat out your co-workers to management) to which the shop was herded, preventing any frater­nization with the work force. Two days later, three of those mechanics were back on the job—in the employ of a non-union contract company—doing the same work for less pay. For the shift bid at the end of the month, management has broken its agree­ment with the union and changed the hours of the shifts so it can grind more on page 11

From a Letter Carrier: 
Postal Bosses, Workers’ Deaths Are “Acceptable Loss”

31 October 2001

Oakland, CA

Dear Editor:

With its usual combination of callous indifference toward the lives and health of postal workers and a truly maniacal drive for speedup and productivity, the U.S. Postal Service has let an unknown num­ber of postal workers become infected with anthrax. Anything to keep the mail moving is a sentiment that National As­sociation of Letter Carriers president Vince Sombrotto was quick to endorse. As BY notes, this does indeed underscore the absolute indifference of the bosses to the lives of working people.

I would make a couple of additional points: 1) as you can see from the newspaper photos, a high percentage of Wash­ington, D.C. (and New York City) postal workers are black—making them doubly expendable in the eyes of the bourgeoisie and 2) unlike Congress which could be disbanded for a long time without much loss, postal workers actually do socially useful work which the bourgeoisie has trouble doing without.

At the medium-sized post office where I work, carriers are not so much fearful as angry and bitter. Another co-worker who is about my age and a Vietnam vet (which said it reminded him of the Vietnam War, where the brass were always throwing around the term “acceptable losses.” A couple of dead postal workers (now on the “front lines”) is just “acceptable loss” to the Postmaster General. Everyone noted the strikingly different response when it was Congressmen who faced the possibility of, contracting anthrax. After anthrax spores were found on the machines in New York City’s Morgan Station and workers were told to stay on the job, sev­eral workers in my post office expressed the hope that New York postal workers would walk out, rather than wait for the union bureaucracy to file a lawsuit(!).

One worker here told me that the day after the two Washington postal workers died, management didn’t have the guts to come out on the shop floor. (These guys are always holding meetings to push speedup and threaten discipline.) Instead, they spoke over the loudspeaker, never mentioning the deaths, but assuring workers that everything was under control and that there were gloves and masks if workers wanted them. Our local union

Dear Editor:

Defend Afghanistan Against Imperialist Attack!

For Class Struggle Against Capitalist Rulers at Home!

Down With Anti-Immigrant Dragont!

Saturday, November 17, 2 p.m.
Boston University
College of Arts and Sciences
685-725 Commonwealth Ave., Rm. 324
For more information: (617) 666-9453

Down With Ottawa’s “Anti-Terror” Law!

Saturday, December 1, 7:30 p.m.
Trinity-St. Paul’s Centre
427 Bloor St. West (Main and Spadina)
For more information: (416) 593-4138
or e-mail spartanian@on.algon.com

Boston

Toronto
form that we received it by e-mail.

To the Editor

In the 12 October issue of Workers Vanguard it is alleged that IBT comrades in Toronto have been pressing Trotskyism [sic] League youth “to agree that all those killed in the attack on the Pentagon ‘deserved to die.’” This is absolutely untrue. We categorically deny making such a statement at any time in Toronto or anywhere else. We are flatly opposed to such views as our 18 September statement makes clear.

On 28 September I had a conversation with young TLeR in front of the building at the University of Toronto where Tariq Ali was speaking. During this discussion the question of the omission of the Pent­agon bombing from your initial statement came up, along with the question of Leb­anon 1983 and other issues. On 19 Octo­ber, after reading the Toronto article, I met this same comrade at a public meet­ing on “globalization” at the University of Toronto and asked him if he had been the source of this misinformation. He agreed that I had made no such statement, nor did he know of any other IBT com­rade making such a statement. He further more denied being the source of the false attribution.

In a subsequent discussion with Com­rade Charles I pointed out that in the present political climate the consequences of such falsehoods could potentially be extremely serious. I told him that I was raising this with him, as a leading mem­ber of the TL, on behalf of the IBT. He indicated that he was not the source of the quotation. He also advised me that Work­ers Vanguard had a policy of correcting “factual errors” and suggested that I write to you on this matter.

We look forward to an appropriate correction in the 26 October issue of Workers Vanguard.

Bolshevik Greetings,
Tom Riley

WV replies: The statement in our article “On the Pentagon Attack” (WV No. 766, 12 October) that the International Bolshevik Tendency (IBT) members argued that “all those killed in the attack on the Pentagon ‘deserved to die’” echoes a distortion of a report from our Canadian comrades, which we retract. What the IBT wrote in its article was that the IBT comrades in Lebanon were of the opinion that the protagonists of the Principe assassination and the personnel in the Pentagon, the com­mand center of the U.S. military, the thousands of victims trapped in the World Trade Center’s twin towers and the hun­dreds of passengers and crew on board the four hijacked airliners were civilians whose deaths we mourn.” The IBT has since posted a 21 October “Reply to Workers Vanguard” on its Web site claiming that our statement that “the IBT amnesties the war is not the answer” reformists in the U.S. is “also a mal­icious invention without any basis in fact.” On the contrary, our characterization is absolutely true. Neither in its 18 September state­ment nor in the 21 October Cyberpace reply (which it noticeably, are the only pieces of propa­ganda the IBT has produced since Sep­tember 11) does the IBT mention, alone criticize, the social-patriotism of the reformist left, whose various “anti­war” coalitions are based on mistrusting the imperialist ruling class for peace. Instead, the IBT aims virtually all its political fire at the Spartacist League, claiming we are social-patriotic because the main enemy of the working people and oppressed of the world. That recognition does not translate this attack into an “anti-imperialist” act, nor do we think the plane-load of innocent pas­sengers which was used as the massive bomb “deserved to die” for the junior and secretaries who were employed at the Pentagon.

In 1983, when we raised the evocative slogan, “Marines out of Lebanon, now, alive!” to intersect widespread outrage among the American population against the Reagan administration, the IBT (then called the International Tendency)—Eber­naus us as social-patriotic and coun­ter-revolutionary with the call, “Marines: live like pigs, die like pigs.” We wrote in “Marx­ism and Bloodthirstiness” (WV No. 345, 6 January 1984):

“From a safe distance, the petty-bourgeois radicals embrace the ‘good’ peo­ple (if necessary first inventing them, as in Lebanon today) and for the ‘bad,’ the imperialists, the main enemy of the working peo­ple and oppressed of the world. That recognition does not translate this attack into an “anti-imperialist” act, nor do we think the plane-load of innocent pas­sengers which was used as the massive bomb “deserved to die” for the junior and secretaries who were employed at the Pentagon.”


The International Bolshevik Tendency—What Is It?
International Communist League pamphlet, August 1993.

The International Bolshevik Tendency—What Is It?


The IBT’s Centrist Phrasemongering

Refused to be used by the “anti-imperialist act” Stück attack on a U.S. Marine barracks in Lebanon as a “present” 18 years ago.

We opposed the presence of U.S. (and United Nations) troops in Lebanon from the outset, unlike sordid Third World nationalists and false friends who sold the lie that the imperialists would be “peacekeepers” in the multi-sided religious/ethnic civil war then wracking that country. We also made clear that “from the standpoint of the struggle of the international proletariat, the Marine HQ in Beirut was an appropriate target” (Young Spartacus No. 114, December 1983/January 1984). However, this did not make its destruction an act of “anti­imperialism.” In fact, no side in the Leb­ansean civil war was fighting imperialism. Those whose cause was clear—the Palestine Liberation Organization—had requested imperialist intervention in the first place. And to this day it is still not clear who blew up the Marine barracks.

Marxists recognize that victorious struggle by the proletariat against the imperialist rulers—and the massive arse­nal of violence in the hands of the capital­ist state—requires the maximum matching of effective force to deter and demoralize the forces of reaction. But the use of terrorism as a strategy by individ­uals or small groups—even against a mil­itary target—is counterproductive to mobiliz­ing the proletariat in class struggle against the imperialist rulers. At the same time, Marxists draw a distinction between attacks on institutions like the Pent­agon and random terror against innocent civil­ians, as in the case of the World Trade Center attack, even if the perpetrators of the September 11 attacks (whenever they were) might not have drawn any such distinc­tion. As we wrote in “On the Pent­agon Attack”:

“The Pentagon is the command and ad­ministrative center of the U.S. imperial military, and rather quintessentially repre­sents the military might of U.S. imper­ialism, the only good one is a dead one. Reactionary in itself, such an attitude—accompanied by its absence—gives way to anti-communist public opinion. Thus we see many of yesterday’s radicals join­ing up ideologically with U.S. imperi­alism over the plight of ‘poor little Afghanistan’ and the crushing of coun­terrevolutionary Polish Solidarnosc.”

This aptly captured the politics animat­ing the ET/IBT, which was founded by people who quit our organization in the early 1980s when they caught the first whiff of the heightened reaction and repression of Cold War II. The renewed imperialist offensive against the Soviet Union was launched after Red Army troops moved into Afghanistan in December 1979 to aid a pro-Moscow, left­nationalist regime besieged by a CIA­backed Islamic insurgency. Noting that what was posed as not only defense of the Soviet degenerated workers state but the possibility of extending the social gains of the October Revolution to the hideously oppressed peoples of Afghan­istan, particularly women, we forth­rightly declared, “Hail Red Army in Afghanistan.”

In an early polemic, we wrote: “If the ET were more honest, they would admit that they hated it when we hailed the Soviet Red Army’s military intervention in Afghanistan” (“The ‘External Tendency’ from Crisis to Posing,” WV No. 349, 2 March 1984). Four years later, they finally owned up to their real position, declaring: “Trotsky­ists never had Stalinist traits or their state.... The slogan ‘Hail Red Army’ is not a Trotskyist slogan, because what it tells workers to trust the Stalinists, put your faith in the Stalinists, hail the Sta­linists” (see “BT Says Don’t Hail Red Army in Afghanistan” WV No. 449, 25 March 1988). This retrospective repudia­tion came even as Soviet troops were being withdrawn, so the ET’s sole pur­pose was to clean up its history to remove any taint of “Spartacism.”

Here was a classic example of the expression of social-patriotism, on what was a defining question of opposition to the imperialist rulers. In the biggest covert CIA opera­tion in history, the U.S. funneled billions of dollars to the Islamic “holy warriors” in Afghanistan, with the objective of using the Afghan conflict as a launching pad for the destruction of the Soviet Union. Albeit in a different context, the ET/IBT also was a workers state based on proletarian prop­erty forms. In its contemptuous dismissal of every act of social-defensist reformism in our organization under the pressures of renewed imperialist Cold War. Indeed, they have been attracted to their ranks some of the most loathsome elements that have ever been supporters of our organization. One is Harold Sieker, who never broke from the Stalinist line of support to the “democratic” imperialist Allies in World War II. Another early adherent was one Gerard Smith, who devoted his energies in the early 1990s to building “Coup­Watch,” a “political reform” outfit in Berke­ley. Then there was Fred Ferguson, the IBT’s chief trade-union supporter, who ran for office in the Bay Area print­ers union just before the 1991 Gulf War on a platform whose sole reference to the impending war was to complain, “It’s our...
president also spoke in the same vein over the loudspeaker. Many workers found this and the speaker was a postal inspector. We universally loathed by postal workers. We incredibly filthy. Mail, like money, is tub or tray. They are used (no matter how won't do any good, anyway.) I think this that require hospitalization and taking the antibiotic Cipro.

The work situation is more terrible than we expected. With the consistent attempt to ratchet up the rate of exploitation. One of the more diabolical of the Post Office is the new scanners that we have been issued. They have also issued us little bar codes on adhesive tape that have to be attached to a number of our customers' mailboxes! We have to scan a bar code before we leave the post office, scan a bar code at the first mailbox on our route, scan the bar code on a mailbox when we stop for lunch, when we return from lunch, when we return to the post office. This is in addition to punching a time clock.

In regards to the war, the sentiment has been more muted than I expected. It is also more muted than around the Persian Gulf War, when there were a lot of anti-war demonstrations. The Post Office handed out flag lapel pins, but only a minority wear them. The ones with the biggest flags always seem to be the union stewards and officials. There are also some who have put up flags on their trucks, but many of these seem to be more for protection than out of commitment. A number of my co-workers are Indian, Pakistani or Sikh, as well as Hispanics and all kinds of Asians. One right-winger put a personal statement along the lines of "America, don't die" in all the desks, but management came around collecting it within the hour because something caught their eye. One of those who have bought tickets to the Partisan Defense Committee's Holiday rally over the years start off defending the U.S.'s need to "do something about the terrorists," but are increasingly uneasy and uncommitted about the U.S. is actually doing. And the Post Office response to anthrax has certainly driven a small wedge into the "united we stand" theme.

At one post office, all the managers were on the back dock, wearing gloves and going through every item of mail. Rumor has it that a guy tried to mail a padded envelope at an L.A. post office, but fled (taking everything) when the window clerk went to call a manager to inspect it. Now post offices around the country are looking for the envelope. Is this for real? Who knows? But it is a measure of the hostility to management that the main reaction of carriers was to pontificate. Not even the largest flags always seem to be the union stewards and officials. There are also some who have put up flags on their trucks, but many of these seem to be more for protection than out of commitment. A number of my co-workers are Indian, Pakistani or Sikh, as well as Hispanics and all kinds of Asians. One right-winger put a personal statement along the lines of "America, don't die."
Recession... (continued from page 12)

trade. But one can expect conflicts over agricultural subsidies to be a bigger issue in the near future. For one thing, there are now strong forces in the U.S. Congress, with farm-state Republicans in the lead, pushing to increase subsidies to American farmers in open violation of WTO-sanctioned treaties. An EU spokesman on agricultural matters, Gerry Kielty, rebuked Washington politics that "U.S. policy is going in the wrong direction, contrary to the interests of European capital." On the other hand, Greece in particular is pushing hard to expand the Eurozone to include West Europe. Hence German imperialism's ambitions to consolidate a sphere of influence in East Europe will almost certainly lead to higher levels of EU agricultural protectionism vis-a-vis the U.S.

"Global Warming" and the Politics of Oil

Two of the most politicized disputes between the Bush administration and West European governments—over the Kyoto treaty and the anti-missile defense system—appear at first glance to have little or nothing to do with economic conflicts of interests. But, in fact, they do. In the game, the core countries of the European Union—Germany and France—are not major producers and distributors of oil. The high level of oil consumption in the U.S. tends to raise the price of oil in the world market. And every additional dollar in the world market price of oil not only enriches an important sector of corporate America at the expense of German and French capitalists but also increases the energy costs of industry and transport in Europe. So the European bourgeoisie have tried to use concern over global warming as a pretext to pressure the U.S. to restrict its consumption and especially importation of oil. In response, George W. Bush, who is closely tied to Texas-based oil interests, fed the Kyoto treaty into the White House shredder.

State that based on the privatized property forms established in the wake of the 1949
Revolution.

The decision to go to China, Pentagon strategists have plans for a possible nuclear war against another major country, namely Russia. Russia inherited from the Soviet Union a large nuclear arsenal which, although it has subsequently dete­riorated, is still the second most powerful in the world after that of the U.S. And Russia's new nationalist leaders have their own imperialist ambitions even if they are not now in a position to realize them. America's rulers, having proclaimed their state to be "the world's only superpower," view Russia as a potential enemy, despite the recent apparent rapprochement over the "war against terrorism." The German ruling class, however, views Russia as a potential ally, a coun­terweight to American global dominance, for example, in the Near East. Even since the USSR collapsed, right-wing Russian nationalists have looked toward an alliance with America against the United States. And Russian president Vladimir Putin has described Germany as "Russia's leading partner in Europe and the world." (New York Times, 31 August.) In terms of current international politics, this is certainly an overstatement. But an alliance of Germany and Russia against the United States is very much a possibil­ity in the not-so-distant future. U.S. imperialism remains the overwhelm­ingly dominant military power on the face of the planet. But as we wrote in the ICL's "Declaration of Principles and Social Elements of Program" (Spring 2006; [English-language Edition] May 2006; Spring 1998): "Rival imperialisms, esp­ecially Germany and Japan, no longer con­front one another as anti-Scarlet devils, but are pur­posefully to share the power of world markets and concomitantly project­ their military power. In the context of rival regional trade blocs today, the outlines of future wars are sharpening. In the face of growing inter-imperialist rivalry, we reassert: "The main enemy is at home!"

The East Asian Economic Collapse

In the 1960s and early 70s, Japan— with an annual growth in national output averaging 10 percent—was generally viewed as the economic superstar of world capitalism. Business schools in the U.S. introduced courses on Japanese managerial techniques to be emulated by corporate America. In the 1980s and 90s, the so-called East Asian "tigers" (South Korea, Taiwan, Singapore) displaced Japan as the "emiric" countries of world capitalism. The political leaders of these countries attributed their economic success to the unique virtues of the "Asian character" with its supposed propensity for hard work and high rates of personal savings rather than profligate consumption.

But today, after a decade of stagnation and recession, Japan is the Japanese economy looks to be in free fall, last week hitting the highest unemploy­ment rate ever recorded in the coun­try's history. In conjunction with the American downturn, the Japanese eco­nomic downside is dragging the rest of countries. Thus at least one Wall Street Business Week (2 April) headline put it: "Asia Is Catching the Japanese Disease." However, if one takes into account that the "Asian region" world capitalism has become the sickly region of world capitalism?... Certainly not least in the context is the radically changed international political context following the destruction of the Soviet Union. During the Cold War, American imperialism was willing to accept large and continuing balance-of­trade deficits with Japan and also South Korea et al. as part of the economic overhead of maintaining the anti-Soviet alliance. But the former CIA director and Cold War imperialist Christopher Wood wrote in his 1994 tract, The End of Japan Inc.: "With the end of the Cold War, the leaders of Wall Street see a reason or need to put diplomatic or strategic interests ahead of its own com­mercial and financial interests. Hence Washington in the past tolerated a high level of import protectionism in South Korea combined with generous govern­ment export subsidies. That is no longer the case.

At the economic level, Japan in the 1950s and 60s and subsequently the East Asian "tigers" benefited from labor costs that were very low relative to those pre­valing in North America and West Europe. Low labor costs, in conjunction with the much-acclaimed Asian market, encouraged extremely high levels of investment—internally gen­erated and then financed from the transfer of capital from Japan and the United States in the cases of Taiwan and South Korea. Hence the Asian economic "miracle" inevitably led to a crisis of overcapitalization in the classic Marxist sense. Japan, South Korea et al. cannot sell on the world market the vast quantity of commodities they are capable of producing—from steel ingots to automobiles to consumer electronics— at a rate of profit high enough to repay the loans that financed their industrial construction.

Post-War World II Japanese capitalism was based on a tightly-knit system of industrial-financial firms, like Mitsu­bishi and Mitsubishi, which were called keiretsu ("corporate groups")— often termed "Japan Inc." by Western journalists—was eroded in the 1980s by the loosening of financial markets, in part under the pressure of Wall Street. Japa­nese corporations were now able to raise large sums of money by selling securities (stocks and bonds), whereas previously they were almost completely dependent on loans from the Big Three banks.

In the late 1980s, Japan experienced the so-called "bubble economy," which inflamed asset prices, the U.S. stock market/high-tech investment boom a decade later. Speculative mania drove corporate stock (and real estate prices) to ridiculous heights. With an already massive industrial base, Japanese manufac­turers were now able to finance the capacity equivalent to the entire existing industrial capacity of France! When the "bubble economy" burst in the early 1990s, many Japa­nese corporations were saddled with tril­lions of dollars worth of industrial plant expansion that was now unprofitably, financed by loans they could not repay. (For an analysis of Japanese imperialism see "The End of the Cold War through the collapse of the "bubble economy" and its aftermath, see CORRECTION

In "U.S. Government's Domestic Terror Machining" (WW, Vol. 76, No. 12, October), we incorrectly stated that Democratic Senator Diane Feinstein had introduced the "Domestic Terrorism Act" in the wake of the 1999 Columbine High School massacre. In fact, the Port and Mari­time Security Act of 2001 was first introduced by House Speaker Dennis Hastert of Illinois and passed by the House on July 25, 2001 by South Carolina Democratic Sen­ator Ernest Hollings.
cases amounted to nothing more than a rip-off of the state treasury by the "Japan once had the highest rate of economic ist the Japanese government has been bailing country Japanese banks are actually insolvent, in the Japanese economy were partly offset economic malaise. lars in investments in America. When in the late gains on their more than U.S. WWII-restrictions which continue to the right-wing nationalist Junichiro Koizumi's needed to deal with the country's long for whom the horrors of war, not least the American A-bombing of Hiroshima and for another respect as 

Japanese capitalism in free fall: homecoming trade in Tokyo in 1998; Tokyo stock prices hit record low of this July. following the implementation of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) in 1994, Mexico's economic growth averaged 4 percent a year. Exports (primarily manufactured products) tripled. Foreign investment, mainly by U.S. multinational corporations, increased at an annual rate of $1 billion. Yet for all that, according to the official 2000 census, 40 million Mexican peasants and urban poor—most of a total population of more than 100 million—have to survive on the equivalent of less than $3 a day. Although millions live in houses with dirt floors, six and a half million in shacks with cardboard roofs; 20 percent of the labor force has no regular full-time employment.

To be sure, workers employed in the profit-making sectors of the Mexican economy were able to take advantage of the economic expansion through strikes and other forms of labor struggle to improve their wages and benefits. In the maquiladora assembly-for-export plants, located along Mexico's northern border, wages last year increased by an estimated 10 percent. But Mexico's chief attraction for American as well as European and Japanese multinational is its cheap labor. To the extent that labor becomes less cheap, Mexico becomes less attractive to foreign investors.

Business Week (6 August) noted: "Rivals fear Mexico's appeal as a manufacturing hub." In particular, multina- tionals now producing consumer elec- tronics in Mexico are considering shifting their operations to Southeast Asia, where wages are as low as 60 cents an hour. Business Week quotes Charles Parks, executive vice president for Latin Amer- ica for SCI Systems, which employs (for now) 140,000 workers in Mexico. "Anything that is really price-sensitive is considering moving lock, stock, and barrel, to Asia."

An important and direct effect of NAFTA has been the devastation of Mexico's smallholding peasantry, which cannot possibly compete with the mechanized and scientifically advanced agriculture of North America. Fox's minister of agriculture, Javier Ufugilhas, has proclaimed an economic death sen- tence for the country's ruraltolers: "A small farmer is not going to be able to make enough money to survive... He is going to have to find another job" (New York Times, 22 July).

Find another job? Even during the relatively good late 1990s, millions of small farmers driven off the land could not find jobs in the urban areas. Mexico is still suffering from the squidal slums around Mexico City or Guadalajara, eking out a bare existence as day laborers, or day laborers. And the number of desperately poor former peasants and landless workers is rapidly multiplied by the world economic slump.

The transformation of a smallholding peasantry into an industrial proletariat is a progressive historical develop- ment in what are now the advanced capitalist countries of West Europe and Japan. But back in Mexico, in countries like Mexico cannot today repli- cate their development into advanced industrial capitalist economies with that of the world's second-largest memory-chip economies with that of the world's second-largest memory-chip producers.

Now, for the first time, with the Mexican peso stabilized at $1.40 to the dollar, the "fixed exchange rate" system is being replaced by a system of "floating freely" against the dollar. The new peso is not going to be able to make enough money to survive... He is going to have to find another job" (New York Times, 22 July).

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international. And a revolution in Mexico would indeed have a powerfully radicalizing effect on the U.S. Over the past few decades, the Mexican proletariat has in a sense extended itself into the territorial boundaries of the United States, mostly in Texas and California, as impoverished Mexican and other Latino workers and peasants have flooded into the U.S. looking for work. These immigrant workers, many of whom retain strong family ties to Mexico, have brought with them the bitter class struggles in their homelands. Thus the Los Angeles area, with its large Mexican and Central American communities, has for several years been a center of labor militancy in the U.S. To release this potential for revolutionary struggle requires an international revolutionary party capable of liberating the Mexican worker from the rule of national and of breaking the hold of the racist, pro-imperialist AFL-CIO bureaucracy and opening the working class to this perspective. This paper underscores the crucial nature of the fight in the U.S. for full citizenship rights for all workers of color.

Wall Street Bleeds South America

If the Mexican bourgeoisie has bound itself ever closer to American imperialism through the U.S., other Latin American countries did so in a different way a few years earlier. As a supposed “cure” for the economic problems that emerged in the 1991 neoliberal regime of Carlos Menem pegged the Argentine peso to the U.S. dollar at a rate of one to one. Furthermore, the expansion of the domestic money supply was now based on the amounts of dollars held by the central bank.

In order to attract more dollars, the financial leaders maintained interest rates higher than those prevailing in other Latin American countries—thereby damping demand in the early 1990s, Argentina did attract a sizable flow of speculative (easy, clean, good) money. But the high rates also discouraged borrowing for long-term productive investment in new plant, equipment and infrastructure.

Because of its peculiar foreign exchange system, the Argentine economy was much more damaged by the U.S.-financial/economic boom in the late 1990s. Huge sums of money from Tokyo, London, Frankfurt and elsewhere aged borrowing for long-term productive investment in new plant, equipment and infrastructure.

The American imperialists are imperialist on the making the working people of Argentina repay with the loans that the Buenos Aires regimes have negotiated with the U.S. Treasury and Wall Street banks. As usual, the IMF “rescue package” contains conditions of austerity: suspension of the social security system, increase in the retirement age for workers from 65 to 65, and cuts in spending by the provincial governments that provide much of the country’s social services.

For almost a year, Argentina has been convulsed by mass labor strikes and popular protests against the Buenos Aires IMF-directed austerity. Commenting on these protests, the Buenos Aires correspondent for the Wall Street Journal (5 August) wrote: “After a decade of free market reforms, many workers, politicians and business leaders are deeply discouraged by the outcome, and doubting the very wisdom of the capitalist model they once embraced.” This analysis, typical of the current thinking in advanced ruling circles, falsely identifies “the capitalist model” with “free market neoliberalism” as explosively false. In fact, the current turmoil in Latin America is much, not less, than the past. The difference is that in the past the prevalent bourgeois ideology was national-populism represented by Peronist and Christian-Democratic parties in Argentina, Brazil and Mexico.

Thus one can speak of a national-populist “model” of capitalism in Latin America. Strategic sectors of the bourgeoisie were state-owned. Domestic industry was protected by high tariffs and import licenses. Foreign-exchange transactions and short-term capital movements were subject to a wide array of controls, while various restrictions were placed on foreign-owned businesses. Despite occasional anti-Yankee democracy, national regimes enjoyed the Peronists in Argentina and the PRI in Mexico in fact functioned as the local political agents of Wall Street, keeping the proletariat in line through their agents in the corporatist labor bureaucracies. These regimes also periodically slashed workers’ wages and won the living standards of the masses to repay their debt to U.S. and other foreign banks, usually through the mechanism of accelerated inflation rather than the deflationary measures now favored by the IMF. That is, money wages continued to rise but the price of food, fuel, clothing and other necessities rose even faster.

The Wall Street Journal correspondent is probably right that the current economic crisis in Latin America, from Argentina to Mexico will produce a shift in the political ideology climate away from “free market” neoliberalism back toward the nationalist populism of yesteryear. However, such a shift in the political climate and balance of forces is not in itself anti-capitalist. In a sense, it would strengthen the forces of capitalism in Latin America by receding the ties of the working class to its own national bourgeoisie, which is well practiced in demagogic denunciations of Wall Street and Washington.

To liberate themselves from Wall Street’s debt peonage, the workers and rural tolers of Latin America must be won to the principles and program of proletarian internationalism as represented by Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky. As the Congress Escriptitatura de Mexico (GEM), section of the Internationale Communist League, wrote follow­ing the Peronists’ election last year (June 12, 2000; translated in WOY No. 14, Autumn-Winter 2000; translated in WOY No. 748, 15 December 2000): “The struggles of the Mexican and American proletariat are politically and economically linked, even more tightly since the imposition of the NAFTA ‘free trade’ rapa of Mexico by American imperialism. The GEM fights for the construction of an international proletarian movement to an international revolutionary perspective joining their struggles with those of our class brothers and sisters in the U.S., through combating the national-populism that chains the proletariat to its bourgeoisie. Conversely, our commitment to the Wall Street League fights to break American workers from the reactionary nationalism and racist black and immigrant that infect the workers movement and serve to tie down the workers.”

Reforge the Fourth International!

Coming amid the slaughter of the first global imperialist conflict, World War I, the October Revolution of 1917 showed the international proletariat a way out of recurrent capitalist crises and of the bureaucratic degeneration under Stalin, the Bolshevik Revolution, by expunging the bourgeois and imperialist strata of the economy, enabled the Soviet Union to become a major industrial and military power. The Russian Revolution of East Europe and the former Soviet Union, falsely labeled communist, collapsed precisely because their nationalized limited program of “building socialism in one country” could not withstand the economic pressures of capitalist imperialism.

Similarly, the nationalistic bureaucratic caste in China daily places the gains of the October Revolution at the mercy of its geopolitical jittery. Even as the capitalist world sinks into economic crisis, the Beijing bureaucracy, in the China's New Economic Reform, seeks to promote greater reliance on imperialist investment. The gains of the October Revolution that Obama’s China seeks to render unimportant. This is the task facing the combative Chinese working class in the fight against capitalist rule in China.

The Chinese proletariat’s triumphalist view of the supposed “death of communism,” the current world economic crisis and the internationalized socialist economy. To achieve this requires workers revolution, from industrialized West European countries like South Korea, South Africa, Brazil and Mexico to the imperialist centers of North America, Europe and Japan. What is needed is an authentic communist internationalist party—a reformed Fourth International—but one that is oriented tow

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Class Struggle... (continued from page 1)

breaking the allegiance of the workers to their class-colaborationist, social­
chauvinist leadership.

Centrists and Renegades
Reformist groups like the Interna­
tional Socialist Organization and Work­
ers World Party, who bury themselves attempting to outdo dissident Democ­
rat Party politicians (currently with scant success) in building “peace” coalitions, of­
fer up the pipe dream of an imperialist state’s assault on social benefits. Simi­
larly in 1999, the COBAS launched a one-day general strike in opposition to the U.S.-led NATO air war against Serbia. Such labor actions against the war in this country would challenge the jingoist

nation’s unity” used to cement the work­
ers behind the war aims of their capitalist exploiters.

Our perspective is based on the experi­
ence of the October Revolution of 1917, which triumphed amid the slaughter of the Bocheviki program of turning the imperialist war into a civil war. Protestant opposition to the imperialist depredations of the exploiters can, in the words of Leon Trotsky, be pursued “only through the revolutionary mobilization of the masses, that is, by widening, deepening, and sharpening those revolutionary methods which constitute the core of class struggle in ‘peacetime’” (“Learn to Think”, May 1938).

This is the understanding we have prop­agated in our sales at work locations, in the ghettoes and in all our interventions at antiwar protests and meetings. Never­
theless, the International Group (IG), a hand­ful of centrist renegades who fled our organization in the mid-1990s, has not taken it too far to think that the jingoist war mongers now rampant in this country. In a letter written days after the September 11th attacks, the IG exorcizes us for our supposed “opposi­
tion to calling for the defeat of ‘our’ bourgeois in an imperialist war.” The IG notion of socialist revolution down to ‘pie in the sky in the sweet bye-and-bye’ if you don’t come out four-square for the defeat of ‘your’ bourgeoisie in an imperialist war.”

At bottom line, the IG deliberately mutes the question of a military defeat in a par­
ticular war with the proletarian defeat of one bourgeoisie against another bourgeoi­


Kabul, October 26: Red Cross facility hit by U.S. air strikes in ten days.

lation. The latter is the program animat­
ing any truly revolutionary party in peacetime as in wartime. The slogans used in the process of mobilizing the working masses from their current level of consciousness to the seizure of state power is the long-term task of the party.

Thus, upon returning to Russia after the overthrow of the tsar in early 1917, Lenin had to fight against those in the Bolshhevik Party who wished to lead support to the bourgeois Provisional Government. On 5 May 1917, the Central Committee passed the follow­ing resolution: “Lenin had to order ‘Get­
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Declaring "Afghanistan has suffered over 20 years of war," the LRCl joint statement lumps together the CIA-backed mujahedin factions and their allies against the Red intervention in Afghanistan with the later war among the rival mujahedeen groups, Talibain and the components of the Northern Alliance. In other words, the LRCl and its current bloc partners are united in hoping that no one will look too closely at where they stood on the U.S. proxy war in Afghanistan at the time! We hailed the Red Army in Afghanistan and fervently desired that Soviet commandos would take out the Islamic fanatics who threw acid in the faces of unveiled women and murdered those who dared teach young girls. Not so Workers Power, which condemned the Soviet presence in Afghanistan in 1986. Indeed, the Afghan conflict in the 1980s was the only war in modern history fought centrally over the status of women.

In reality, the IG has little taste for the proletariats — whether in the U.S. or in the "Third World." Instead the IG peddles its wares to a variety of petty-bourgeois nationalist audiences. In its latest Web posting, the IG sneers that "the SL presents itself as the vanguard fighter against Islamic fundamentalism." Its contempt for our unqualified opposition to Islamic reaction is a tacit rejection of our call for a Red Army victory against the mujaheds in Afghanistan in the 1980s (which the IG feigns to stand on). It is also a professions note to nationalists from those parts of the planet where Islam is dominant, in the name of "a united front against American imperialism, to forewarn the struggle for proletarian power in those countries. It is, in embryo, an abandonment of Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution, which holds that the proletariat in the backward countries will be able to initiate the process of leading the struggle for social and national justice. As Trotsky stressed, only permanent revolution can break the imperialist yoke over such countries and, with its extension to advanced capitalist countries, is the foundation of the New World Revolutionary Order.

The growth of Islamic and other religious fundamentalism in backward countries is a measure of the bankruptcy of the post-independence bourgeois-nationalist regimes, which enforce imperialist starvation dictates while themselves promoting obsequious backwardness. Take, for example, predominantly Hindu India, where the caste system and such hideous practices as sutter (the burning of widows) flourish after more than five decades of "national unity." "Open" India might be an oxymoron: that "open" backwardness is evident in all aspects of the society. Some 70 million Indians are overweight with goiter, 200 million are at risk of iodine deficiency, which is the single most preventable cause of mental retardation. Jodid salt is a cheap, ready means for combating such medical disorders. Yet in the wake of a clamor by small-scale salt producers, Gandhiand and fascist groups tied to the ruling BJP, last year Hindu-chauvinist prime minister Atal Behari Vajpayee overturned a ban on the sale of non-iodized salt.

For Socialist Revolution in the Bastion of World Imperialism!

In Europe no less than in America, the working class has been subjected to a continuous attack on jobs, wages and benefits. In large measure these attacks have been carried out by governments led by socialist-democratic parties. In addition to the COBAS strike called in Italy, there is evidence of popular discontent throughout Europe. At the end of October, the giant IG Metall union in Germany called a half to the bombing, only to be reprimanded by "their" Social Demo­ cratic chancellor, Gerhard Schroder, who lectured:

"Their forces, their concentration camps, theirlynvar, their attack on the World Trade Center, their
crimes of their rulers.
The IG attacks us for focusing on the indis­ crence with the worldview shared by
imperialists and their mass-murdering
mujahedin, from Iran to Pakistan
tries in the area with significant proletar­ ian concentrations, from Iran to Pakistan
tries, including Islamist forces, to repel the
Afghan peoples into the
new society without exploitation. This is
ever. Those who labor must
"socialist
revolutionaries will be there to
fight.

As to the "principle" the British Workers Power group adheres to. In 1997 as well as this year Workers Power voted for "Bombor Blair" and his Labour Party. In the 1999 NATO war against Serbia, the LRCl was marching in demonstra­ tion st through with placards read­ ing "NATO Good Luck," championing the American-led war against the Red Army, which was then a pawn for NATO. Their current posturing over Afghanistan is a facade for the growing isolation­ ularity of the U.S. bombing among Euro­ peans and the peripheral nature of Af­ ghanistan in the unchallenging standpoint of the European imperialists.

As to the post-revolutionary, there is the call for "limited action of all Afghan forces— including Islamic forces—to repel the imperialist assault," a task of interest to those who labor. The LRCl makes no claim that there can be any but the most ephem­ eral unity among the various tribes within Afghanistan when the imperialist yoke is not.

That's why we raise the call, "Extend social gains of the October Revolution throughout Europe. The October Revolution can come to Afghanistan only through socialist overturns in those coun­ tries in the area with significant Afghan con­ centrations, from Iran to Pakistan and India. Central to a revolutionary per­ spective in such countries is the fight against the age-old subjugation of women. imperialists.

Women VANGUARD
In the opinion of the United Arab Emirates, a clear majority of people world-wide share a common guiding principle in their daily lives: the quest for their survival. The peace of their lives are affected by the events in neighboring countries, which determine the price of their staple food and the amount of money they receive in return. Thus, the government of the United Arab Emirates has taken it upon itself to protect its citizens from the possibilities of such an eventuality by implementing a comprehensive project to provide food security. With this in mind, the UAE has invested heavily in agricultural programs, which have enabled the country to meet its food requirements and even export surpluses to other countries.

The government of the United Arab Emirates has also taken steps to ensure that the country is prepared to handle any future crises. It has established emergency reserves of food and other essential supplies, which can be deployed in case of a shortfall in domestic production or imports. Additionally, the UAE has also entered into agreements with other countries to ensure that it has access to food in times of need.

Furthermore, the government has invested in research and development to promote the local food production. It has provided incentives to farmers and producers to adopt modern farming techniques, which have led to an increase in crop yields. The government has also supported the development of small and medium-sized enterprises in the food sector, which has contributed to the growth of the local economy.

In conclusion, the government of the United Arab Emirates has taken a proactive approach to ensure food security for its citizens. It has implemented a comprehensive strategy that includes investments in agriculture, emergency reserves, agreements with other countries, and support for local small and medium-sized enterprises. This approach has enabled the country to meet its food requirements and even export surpluses to other countries. The government continues to monitor the situation closely and take necessary steps to ensure that food security is maintained for the benefit of its citizens.

But despite these efforts, the government of the United Arab Emirates recognizes that food security is a complex issue that requires a multi-faceted approach. It continues to work towards developing a sustainable food system that is resilient to disasters and able to adapt to changes in the global food market. The government is committed to ensuring that its citizens have access to a safe and nutritious diet, and it will continue to invest in the food sector to achieve this goal.
We conclude below an article begun in WV No. 767 (26 October).

NOVEMBER 11—The recession has begun to pressure stock prices for Pittsburgh’s PNC Financial Services Group following yesterday’s announce­ment that the American economy under­went an outright contraction in the last business quarter for the first time in a decade. He added that “the fourth quarter will show an even deeper drop.” President Bush asserted that the economic decline was the result of the terrorist attack on the World Trade Center, an ignorant state­ment belied not least by the fact that the period after September 11 accounted for less than three weeks of the last quarter. For the more than a million manufactur­ing workers who were given their walking papers before the economic fallout from September 11, which led to several hun­dred thousand more layoffs, the “news” of a recession was no news at all.

The deepening economic crisis is certain to exacerbate existing tensions between the U.S. and its rival imperial­ists in West Europe and Japan, as they each scramble to buttress their profits. In the immediate aftermath of Septem­ber 11, the French Le Monde, speaking for the most anti-American bourgeoisie in Europe, proclaimed on its front page, “We Are All Americans!” What this meant was that, like the American capitalist class, the European rulers intend­ed to use the “war on terrorism” to further their own aims internationally and domestically, especially moving to further crack down on immigrants and asylum-seekers and to regiment the pro­letariat “at home” in the face of the bur­geoning economic crisis. Meanwhile, as the U.S./British air war against Afghan­i­stan continues, the cracks in the facade of “anti-terrorism” unity have become ever more visible, with a New York Times headline today warning, “Public Appre­hension Felt, in Europe Over the Goals of Afghanistan Bombings.” Even the most staunchly pro-American of the European Union (EU) countries, Blair’s Britain, has openly opposed White House talk of a new assault on Iraq.

U.S.-Europe Conflicts Escalate

When Bush visited Europe in the spring, Le Monde (12 June) declared more characteristically: “His ambition seems to be to turn the United States into a sort of ne-nation, a country essentially busy, on the international stage, defending national interests defined in the nar­rowest way.” In the first months of his administration, Bush certainly seemed to go out of his way to insult and antag­onize America’s NATO “allies” with his go-it-alone policies and cowboy-style diplomacy. For example, he unilaterally rejected the Kyoto treaty on global warm­ing and declared his intent to scrap the 1972 anti-ballistic missile treaty.

Yet clearly the tensions between Wash­ington and West European capitals did not originate with the inauguration of the new right-wing Republican administra­tion. Economic nationalism has been on the rise on both sides of the Atlantic for several years, especially since the coun­ter-revolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s, which removed the main factor restraining the rivalry between American and European (cen­trally German) imperialism.

At the time of Bush’s European tour, the London Economist (9 June) pointed out that “unilateralist tendencies” within American ruling circles “have long been present, especially in Congress, which had put 70 countries under sanctions by 1999, balked at paying America’s UN dues and thumbed its nose at the Kyoto climate-change treaty long before Mr Bush, too, gave it a Bronx cheer.” To this list one can add the differences between the Clinton administration and the Euro­pean Union over competition, investment and agricultural policies that led to the breakdown of the December 1999 World Trade Organization (WTO) meeting in Seattle. At the political-military level, the Clinton White House consistently torpedoed European initiatives in war­torn ex-Yugoslavia (particularly Bosnia) in the mid-1990s for fear these would undermine the American-dominated NATO alliance.

The visible increase in tensions be­tween Washington and European capitals earlier this year was not mainly due to the change from Clinton to Bush but rather to the changed economic condition in the U.S. and therefore the world. During the 1990s, European industrialists and financiers made a lot of money in the U.S. through increased export earn­ings, increased sales revenue from their American-based operations and capital gains on their holdings of high-tech and other American corporate stocks. But now the situation is just the opposite. European exports (e.g., German indus­trial machinery) are being hurt by the American recession and its impact on East Asia. European-owned factories in the U.S. are operating way below capac­ity. And any European financiers who weren’t smart enough to sell off their American corporate stocks early last year have taken a bath. The conflicts between American and European capital are now over the division of a smaller and shrink­ing total economic pie.

A clear and important case in point is the steel industry. The contraction of the American manufacturing sector dur­ing the last few years has hit the steel industry especially hard. Many compa­nies are losing money and some (the giant LTV and Bethlehem Steel) have even filed for bankruptcy. To protect this core component of the U.S. military-industrial complex (and as a step to the protection­ist demands of the trade-union tops), in June Bush announced broad new restric­tions on steel imports, declaring, “It’s in our nation’s interest that if there are unfair trade practices in the steel industry we address them in a very aggressive way.” In response, EU trade commis­sioner Pascal Lamy lectured the Amer­ican ruling class: “The cost of restructur­ing in the U.S. steel sector should not be shifted to the rest of the world” (New York Times, 7 June). Christian Georges, an economist with the French Crédit Lyonnais Securities, commented, “You can expect that the European Commis­sion will retaliate.” Obviously so.

Some of the sharpest trade battles between the U.S. and EU have been over agriculture—e.g., “the banana wars” over Caribbean fruit exports a few years ago and European restrictions on imports of American genetically engineered beef. To date these disputes have involved a rela­tively small amount of total agricultural trade. In this case, however, the $64,000 question is how far will the Bush administra­tion go in using its power in the WTO to make European farmers change their practices?

A look at the European response suggests a willingness to go all the way to an economic war with the U.S. to protect their own agricultural interests. At the recent WTO meeting of ministers in Seattle, European agriculture ministers even proposed “a new multilateral trading system” that would lock in existing protectionist policies as a starting point for negotiations. In Brussels in September, 13 of the 15 European member states came out for a single unified “agricultural policy” to confront the U.S. on its own terms—“a two-year moratorium on any increase in global wheat exports out of Europe” and “a one-year moratorium on any hardening or extension of EU’s Common Agricultural Policy.”

The results of the WTO talks in Seattle were not published until after the November 11 elections, and it appears that the Europeans have not been moved by the prospect of the “End of History.” On the contrary, the European Union over the last few years has become a deeply divided family of states. Not only will differences such as these continue to strain Europe’s unity, but they also demonstrate the growing depth of division within the American ruling class itself, especially in Congress, which has balked at paying America’s UN dues and thumbed its nose at the Kyoto climate-change treaty long before Mr Bush, too, gave it a Bronx cheer. This list one can add the differences between the Clinton administration and the Euro­pean Union over competition, investment and agricultural policies that led to the breakdown of the December 1999 World Trade Organization (WTO) meeting in Seattle. At the political-military level, the Clinton White House consistently torpedoed European initiatives in war­torn ex-Yugoslavia (particularly Bosnia) in the mid-1990s for fear these would undermine the American-dominated NATO alliance.

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TWO

PART

WORLD

WORKERS VANGUARD

It Didn’t Start on September 11

Behind the Global Capitalist Recession

World recession hit before September 11: Taiwanese jobless demonstrate outside parliament amid record unemployment in summer; French airline workers protest threatened closures and layoffs in June.

Soup kitchen in Buenos Aires. As Argentine government enforces imperialist austerity, one in five workers is jobless.