Record ‘Expansion’ Leaves Wages Behind

The entire fraternity of capitalist defenders—its politicians, economists professors, its self-proclaimed financial experts and particularly its professional economists, media columnists and commentators—could hardly restrain their glee and enthusiasm as they reported that February was the 107th month of the “expansion,” which thereby becomes the longest in capitalism’s history.

During the past five years, the capitalist economy was said to have grown at an annual rate of 4.2 percent. The official unemployment figure was down to 4.1 percent, the lowest rate in 30 years. The high annual growth rate was credited with having raised wages for all workers, although it was granted that when adjusted for inflation those raises did not even bring wages back up to 1970s levels. The real increases during the expansion were said to be in “family income.” That, in turn, was said to be due, in part, to the alleged shortages in the labor market, which induced more family members to seek and get jobs and, in part, to other family members who already had jobs working more hours. As a result, while those two factors admittedly made family life “more stressful,” as some of the media put it, it added an estimated average of $1,760 a year to the median family income in 1998.

However, the following from the San Jose Mercury News Jan. 19 gives a more realistic breakdown of the increased family income gained by workers during the expansion. “Nationwide, the poorest fifth of families posted an average $103, or 0.8 percent, gain in family income, which excluded non-cash subsidies such as food stamps but did include all government grants and the Earned Income Tax Credit. The middle group saw its average household income rise $779, or 1.7 percent, while the top fifth of society saw its average family income rise $17,867, or 14.9 percent.”

Capitalist economists offer a variety of explanations for what The New York Times of Jan. 19 called “the national stagnation of wages at the low and middle-income levels.” Among them are the decline of the unions; the general decline in manufacturing; the insecurity among many workers as a result of widespread downsizing; the rapid development of automated and computerized labor-saving equipment, etc. As the Times editorialized last July 9: “America’s current economic expansion, while broad, has produced inequality not seen since the Depression. From 1980 to 1995, the earnings of those at the bottom fell by more than 25 percent in real terms, and many also worked less and lost benefits such as employer-paid health insurance. Their lot has improved slightly (Continued on page 7).

Booming Prison Building Belies Prosperity Boom

“Where there is no economic freedom, all else is wanting, and men and women, the generators of and birth givers to future generations, will be more and more degraded. Capitalism is just making of this country a penitentiary, and of its people a herd of characterless beings.”

—Daniel De Leon (1895)

By Ken Boettcher

The glowing terms used in most media reports to describe the U.S. economy and its recent rate of growth foster the belief it is dynamic, robust and healthy. The implication is that this economic growth is good for all. Pundits and politicians chime in with ringing endorsements of capitalism as the best of all possible systems.

Many of the social and economic realities of life for the working-class majority under capitalism debunk this view—but perhaps none so chillingly as the latest figures on the phenomenon of the U.S. prison population over the past decade.

Would any sane person describe as healthy a society that has only 5 percent of the world’s population, but fully a quarter of its prison population? The Justice Policy Institute (JPI), a project of the nonprofit Center on Juvenile and Criminal Justice, included those figures—and much more—in a recent report entitled “The Punishing Decade: Prison and Jail Estimates at the Millennium.”

According to the JPI’s estimates, “The U.S. now has the world’s largest incarcerated population, and highest incarceration rate.” The JPI estimates that by the end of this year there will be 2,073,909 prisoners in the United States. Other salient facts highlighted in the JPI’s report:

• “The 688,207 prisoners added to America’s Institutions during the 1990s is 61 percent higher than the number of prisoners added during the 1980s, and is nearly 30 times as many as the average number added during the five decades before 1970 in which the incarcerated population increased.”

• “Our incarceration rate plays such a distorting role in the labor market, one study found that the U.S. unemployment rate would be 2 percent higher if prisoners and jail inmates were counted.”

• “Direct correlation exists between incarceration and crime rates. Some states with higher rates of imprisonment actually had higher rates of crime than other states with lower rates of imprisonment.

• About 1.2 million of the 2 million (Continued on page 7)
In 1995, absorbed 20 other competitors. The Lockheed Corp. and the craft giants. The Lockheed Martin Corp. employs 11,000 workers in Fort Worth alone, but 800 of those jobs are among the latest to be eliminated. For those workers whose jobs have been lost, news of the most unemploy- ment rate in decades now being trumpeted in the media will come as small comfort. A dimished market is cited as justification for the layoffs. Demand for 120 miles an hour "mere inches apart vehicles spaced a car's length from one another" traveling at 60 miles per hour. Large rigs might be the first to be placed in so-called "smart" lanes traveling at speeds of 100 miles an hour. The throughput of the latter would be to constitute private and commercial vehicles in train-like configurations but lacking the efficiency and benefits of passenger or freight trains. One is led to wonder why not to make it more palatable to the American driving public"—meaning, we suppose, the personal automobile, will find its rightful place as a socially beneficial invention restored for the purpose of increasing worker productivity and increasing profits. Hence, a rational society will have its needs range of from 50¢ to $8 for the privilege of moving in the fast lanes. This was the subject of discrimination charges, so the name was changed to "value pricing" ![image](image-url) Another technological move afoot to make the private automobile compatible with its chaotic proliferation and indiscriminate use is the installation of road- way sensors, cameras and computers that report to navigationally equipped cars on the machinery of profitability, federal highways officials plan to have such a system in place by the year 2005. The analogy called forth by one official was that of the "air traffic control" whose traffic volume has increased 20-fold in the past century and is imprisoned as it is within the narrow pre- cincts of the personal automobile, will find its rightful place as a socially beneficial invention of humankind. This is part of the abominable "har- mony" of ruin that pervades the capitalist system and of which Lockheed Martin of- fers an example. The contraption's nor- mal operations generate international conflict. This in turn begets the need for armaments production. Their ensuing usage begets the need for further develop- ment and replacement. One would think this process of offers the perfect job-generating mecha- nism. Think again. Lockheed Martin is not keen on taking advantage of labor-displacing technologies and all of the other- wise capital that employs to elimi- nate labor and increase profits. Hence, the jobs Sen. Hutchinson anticipates be- ing restored for the purpose of increasing the ability to visit mass destruction upon people, places and things are not at all assured. A rational society will have its needs and its work; capitalism has its jobs. Not only are the jobs capitalism offers squar- der value—military hardware being the most prominent example—but the ever receding tide of jobs, the instability of job tenure and diminishing wages make the system more and more untenable. Arms Jobs Unsafe Despite Capitalism's Instability By B.B. In an unending quest for greater prof- its, the Lockheed Martin Corp. has eliminated 7,400 workers from its national payroll since last fall. The company expressed its need for a "merger" in Fort Worth alone, but 800 of those jobs are among the latest to be eliminated. For those workers whose jobs have been lost, news of the most unemploy- ment rate in decades now being trumpeted in the media will come as small comfort. 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P.O. Box 218, Mountain View, CA 94042-0218. Communications: Business end
of publication, four American and six English edi-
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mal University Press published the 20th cen-
tury edition: Mary Wollstonecraft: Rebel
and Reformer.

Mary Wollstonecraft was

FOR INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

Mary Wollstonecraft: Rebel

Mary Wollstonecraft was

in all ages abhor those customs which treat us only as vassals of your sex.

John responded with amused conde-

mation: "As to your extraordinary code of laws, I cannot but laugh. We have been told
that our struggle had loosened the bonds of
government everywhere; that children and apprentices were disobedient; that schools and colleges were grown turbu-

dent; that Indians slighted their guardians, and Negroes grew insolent to their mas-
ters. But your letter was the first intimina-
tion that another tribe, more numerous and
powerful than all the rest, were grown discontented."

Abigail, seeing that her husband, revolu-
tutionary though he might be, had thor-
ously modernized the common views of a
woman's proper place, and not wishing to
alienate him, replied firmly but gently:
"I cannot say that I think you are very gen-
erous to the ladies, for you are proclaiming peace and good will to men, em-
manicipating all nations, you insist upon
restoring the rights which women have won;
but you must remember that arbitrary
power is like most other things which are very hard, very liable to be broken; and
the discontent of women and treating us
only as beasts of burden at your feet—"Charm by accepting, by sub-
mitting away, Yet have our humor most when
we are happy.

The quoted lines are from Alexander
Pope's "Of the Characters of Women," and
were undoubtedly inserted to ap-
peal to and soften the blow of Abi-
gail's radical views. During the period of
Abigail Adams' life, the time was not ripe
for a woman's rights movement. That time
came only later in the 19th century when
women in significant numbers began to partici-
$p$ate in the abolition movement. They then
made the connection between suppression of all sorts, whether chattel slavery or sup-
$\text{press}^*$ of rights on account of gender.

In 1846, at the Seneca Falls Convention,
there was an advanced movement, led by
women and joined by numbers of sym-
pathetic males, that harkened back to
Abigail Adams' plea to "Remember the Lad-
es.

Mary Wollstonecraft was

in women's education was to train women
to household duties and in how to please
their husbands.

An Englishwoman, Mary Macaulay, has
protested against such a frivolous view of
women in her 1790 book, Letters on
Education. Mary Wollstonecraft was
profusely influenced by this book, and
she reviewed it in the November 1790 is-
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During the first hundred years of its publica-
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pathetic males, that harkened back to
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es.
Soon after it was crushed in the waning days of July 1871, Marx forecast the final victory of the Paris Commune as “the harbinger of a new society.” Although Marx’s statement may seem unambiguously optimistic to us looking back over 129 years, no one should dispute that the Commune of 1871 was the last and most-flamboyant of the barricades of the working class and the April revolution of 1848. It was the massacre of the Commune and the events that surrounded it, that were about to unfold.

The Paris Commune has been described as the most tremendous war of modern times—but that terrible conflict pales in comparison to the two colossal world wars that followed.

One of the most ghastly chapters of 30,000 working-class victims during and after the Commune’s two-month struggle was the horror of the Paris Commune’s brutal repression of the Commune of March 1871. The government excommunicated the Commune and the French Civil War, Marx described as “the most tremendous war of modern times” only because the alternative was too horrid to contemplate. Would today’s society tolerate war of such magnitude? A glance at the events of 1871 are a forewarning of what would follow if Marx’s expectation was not met.

A third “abolished what in effect had been restored”— said the Socialist Labor Party. The names of the two writers are not identical, they are merely the product of the same thinking.

The Socialist Labor Party organizations to unite all workers in a class-conscious industrial force and to build Socialist Industrial Unions. In each workplace, the rank and file will elect leaders to govern in the manner that they believe best promotes the interests of those who elected them decide it is necessary.

Socialism is a movement of the working class and the petty bourgeoisie of the time when the working class and the petty bourgeoisie rose against the ruling class and the French and the German middle classes and proletariat. The contrast to the monstrous toll of working-class bodies and the treason of the French capitalist class are more germane than the massacre of the Commune.

Socialism is the collective ownership by all the people of the factories, mills, railways, banks, land and all other instruments of production, the means of production. It requires building Socialist Industrial Unions. In each workplace, the rank and file will elect leaders to govern in the manner that they believe best promotes the interests of those who elected them decide it is necessary.

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Capitalist Gifts

When capitalists give multimillion-dollar gifts to endow universities, establish foundations, assist worthy causes or help the poor, it is not a matter of conscience, but of self-defense.

It is owing to the combination of this transitory feature with the permanent one in one person that the peculiar thing, the “misanthrope,” springs up, and his qualities are developed.

The holding of $1,000 for productive purposes in private hands generates the same effect as having $1,000 in the bank to destroy whatever value there may be in the social order. The instinctive hatred of the working class against the ruling class and the French and the German middle classes and proletariat. The contrast to the monstrous toll of working-class bodies and the treason of the French capitalist class are more germane than the massacre of the Commune.

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The ‘Wall’ of Père-Lachaise

"Saturday morning [May 27, 1871] dawned grey and raining, for the second day running. The fighting was now confined to Belleville. There was little ammunition left... Some of the last fighting this day took place in the Père-Lachaise cemetery, which the 200 National Guards there had foolishly failed to put into a proper state of defense. The army blew open the gate, and there was bitter hand-to-hand fighting among the tombs in the heavy rain and failing light, enemies falling and dying in the same grave. The last of the combatants fell by the barrel. Some were killed in the fighting were lined up against the wall in the eastern necropolis of the cemetery and shot. The killings continued for several days afterwards.

"Nine years later, in 1880, a few days after the first time 14 July [Bastille Day] had been celebrated as a national holiday, and after several previous attempts had failed, a general amnesty was voted. This was the result of Republicanism..."4

The War of Defense

The members of the Thiers government had sequestered of Paris in a fashion more speedy than dignified.5 No sooner were they safe in Versailles than they set to work to organize an army. They were happily ready to shed the last drop of blood, somebody else's blood, and not their own, to teach the revolutionaries what the aid of Bismarck they organized an army and the attack began only a few days after the Commune was ousted. The conduct of the war in its pitiful brusque

(Continued on next page)

4 Adolphe Thiers (1797–1877) was a monarchist who had been premier of France twice during the reign of Louis-Philippe—for eight months in 1836 and again for eight months in 1840. "There was consistent only in his good for wealth and his hatred of the men who produced it," Marx said of him. "Having entered his first ministry under Louis-Philippe as post as Joeh, he left a legacy. His month under the same king, squared to public justs in the in 1871.

5 A minority of the National Assembly were monarchists. According to one source, 220 were "Lavoisier" who wanted to destroy the long line of kings toppled by the French Revolution and were a social worker in the Protestant Church at Waterloo. An equal number were "Orcas" who favored line of claimants to the throne. A few were "Mendes" who wished to war to store to power. These divisions, widespread opposition, was that French workers, by petty bourgeois, and bickering between the two private presidents to the French crown, finally toppled to the monarchy's schemes.

As Britain's home secretary during the general strikes of the late 19th century, a few warships and troops to intimidate the workers and break the strike.

The Aims of the Commune

Thanks to the efforts of the ruling class, who have carefully seen to it that precious little information of the facts should reach the working class, all the unfortunates as those concocted by those own penny-a-liners should be published, the workers of this country know very little of the Commune. The following are a few of the facts.

One of the briefest outlines of the Commune itself is given by Marx. "The Commune was formed of the municipal councils, chosen by universal suffrage in various wards of the town, responsible and revocable at short terms. The majority of its members were not officials, but acknowledged representatives of the working class. The Commune was to be a working, not a parliamentary, body, executive and legislative at the same time. Instead of continuing to be the agent of the central government, the police was at once stripped of its political attributes and turned into the responsible and at all times revocable agent of the Commune. So were the officials of all other branches of the administration. From the members of the Commune downwards, the public service had to be done at workmen's wages." But the Commune, as it was called, Communist, movement was to be no mere local affair. It aimed at the unity of the entire country in district Communes, which, in turn, were to be united in a National Delegation, the delegates to which, as in the local Communes, were to be removable at any time. That Communal Constitution, if it became a fact, clearly meant the destruction of state power. The latter is claimed to be independent of, and above the nation. The Communal Constitution was, in every detail, to be a part of and subject to the elected representatives of the Communes, together with all administrative organs. Even judges were to be stripped of their dictatorial power, to be elected by the people, and removable if they failed to give satisfaction to the workers who elected them.

Though the Constitution did not go beyond the national frontiers, its authors did expect it would go further, and that it would become the basis of that "Universal Republic" they visualized in the future. That Communal Constitution never got beyond the stage of a skeleton draft. From the first the Commune had to fight for its life against the Versaillaise army and lasted but two months.

The War of Defense

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(Continued on next page)
A Lesson of the Commune for Us

Without a doubt there are many lessons to be gleaned from the record of the Commune. There is one we specially would urge on present-day workers: it was stated many years ago in The Socialist and is well worth remembering.

"The fundamental weakness of the Commune lay in the fact that the French working class was not united. There was no unity of word, of idea, and the hero and heroic devoted men were there, and they had arms in their hands; but failing the word and the ideas, and paralyzing the physical force in its service, was the fatal absence of working-class education and organization on an economic field."

"The Commune represented a working class educated only on its negative side of opposition to capital, conscious and active only on its negative side..."

"The absence of working-class economic organization was the characteristic and in the division of the Commune."

"From another side it presents itself glaringly in the obstacle of organization, which, with all the devotion of its best, the Commune could not surmount."

"Enemy of capitalist society, the Commune was at the same time ironed. Prisoner in Paris, and prisoner of its circumstance, the sole policy that was the natural expression of its being was the one policy impossible—to render the instruments of labor to the working class. The working class had no institution—a new economic organization—to accept them. One government can never make another, and a man cannot and must not passively possess itself of public power. But if it does so in the name of the social revolution it compromises and adapts itself to its surroundings, or is fatal; for the institution of a new order of society such as that promised by the Socialist Movement cannot be improvised on the spur of the moment, or brought into being by governmental decrees."

"Before the working class can possess itself of the tools of production it must have its industrial organization fashioned and ready to take them and to operate them. It is the most important lesson of the Commune..."

---from The Socialist, March 1941

SLP National Executive Committee Session

SLP • P.O. BOX 218
MTN. VIEW, V.A. 29402-0218

To all SLP members and friends:

Enclosed is my check/money order in the amount of_________. Please make out the reserving for the SLN's NEC Section Banquet on Saturday, April 1, at the Holiday Inn, 420 Great America Parkway, Santa Clara, Calif., at $12 per adult and $6 for children age 12 & under. Attach the following information:

CITY STATE ZIP
NAME ADDRESSAPT

ADULTS CHILDREN MEALS

Please do not mail cash. Check/money order payable to the Socialist Labor Party. Reservations must be made through the SLP NEC Committee and must be received by Tuesday, March 15.

Mtn. View, CA 94042-0218

Socialist Labor Party, P.O. Box 218
Santa Clara, Calif., at $12 per adult and $6 for children age 12 & under.

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MARCH 2000 THE PEOPLE 7

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...Record 'Expansion'

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deed, this will be the expansion remembered as very slightly since 1965, but they are still worse than at those other 20 years ago.

Money is looking objectively and realistically at the current state of the economy, it becomes quite obvious that there are more than a few serious economic and social problems that persist despite the long period of expansion and its alleged spread of prosperity throughout the nation.

The agriculture industry, for example, is mired in economic misery. The number of farms, which once numbered a quarter billion, is now down to 2.5 million and falling. Net farm income has fallen 38 percent since 1979...The once booming U.S. copper industry is also in deep economic trouble. Last Sept. 11 the Times reported that "Over the last few months, a string of major copper producers has announced layoffs, retirees, and even bankruptcy. The Times noted that similar conditions prevailed in other industries, among them aluminum and paper, and that those conditions were "feasting producers in a variety of basic industries (in) join together to eliminate overcapacity." That, of course, led to closures and layoffs.

In addition, despite all the propaganda about low inflation and keeping the lid on prices, soaring prices of such daily working-class essentials as housing, utilities, health care, transportation, basic foodstuffs, continue to erode the real buying power of millions of workers and their families.

According to a Census Bureau report released last November, 13.7 percent of the American people live below the poverty line. Last month 12 1/4 million people lived below the official poverty line set by government in 1996, nearly double the number from a decade before..." (Feb. 2) Ironic, this decade, when incredible amounts of wealth were produced by the workers and appropriated by the capitalist owners of the means of production, and when the federal government was bragging about its growing accumulation of financial assets, it also made a clear statement in programs intended to ease somewhat the critical food, housing, medical and other primary needs of the poor and deprived.

An item in the San Jose Mercury News of Feb. 1 succinctly summed up the benefits of the expansion that accrued to the workers when it observed: "In-

...Prison Building

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nations' inmates are incarcerated because of nonviolent offenses against property also attests to that relationship.

Unemployment and poverty, the inevitable results of capitalism's ruthless exploitation of the working class breed crime. Exploitation itself is, at the very least, acknowledged as a cause of crime, albeit unrecognized by capitalism's class-based "justice system." Capitalist-class justice really means that the wrong people go to jail. The perpetrators of the biggest crimes against society are not poor, exploited and oppressed workers, who are themselves victims of the exploitation and poverty of capitalism, but are the capitalists themselves who use the state to get away with murder and other sins without being held accountable. 

Some—including the JPL—say that the answer to the growth in the prison population is for the "justic" system to come up with alternative to incarceration for nonviolent 24-hour work time. But to get someone to do the unpaid labor of prison is enough for one to think seriously about the present nation's incarcerated more than any year in the past 20 years. The government's new methods for defining, identifying and counting the nation's working-class crimes. That many of the

A. James Peck
Augusto Pinochet Catches The Entrepreneurial Bug

Eighteen months ago, while on a trip to chilly London, England, Augusto Pinochet, the bloodstained former dictator of Chile, was detained by British authorities. It seems that a judge in Spain had issued a warrant for Pinochet’s arrest to stand trial for crimes against humanity, mainly those perpetrated on Spanish nationals in Chile during his reign. Ever since, Pinochet has been under house arrest in one of London’s finer neighborhoods while the British courts have struggled over what to do with the old repugnant. The Spanish judge wants him extradited, but the British keep dragging their feet and seem more inclined to ship him back to Chile.

The more time passes the less likely it seems that Pinochet will be extending his European visit to the land of his Spanish ancestors. Lawyers in his defense have argue ad infinitum but this does him no good because any accusers could open a Pandora’s box that might subject any head of state, or former head of state, to similar treatment. What they want to know, would prevent some former African or Asian colony from slapping the iron on Queen Elizabeth, Prince Philip or Prince Charles for crimes committed by their predecessors during the days when the sun never set on the lands Britain held and the peoples it oppressed if they should venture to set foot on one of those unavenged countries?

It hardly seems conducive to the cause of “law and order” for courts and governments to sanction the prosecution of state and corporate criminals when their crimes were committed to keep the top on the top and the bottom where they belong. Isn’t that what our ruling-class “law and order” is all about? Furthermore, Spain itself is crawling with enough blood-drenched fascists from the Franco years to fill court docket after court docket for the rest of the millennium. Shouldn’t our Spanish judges be worried about cleaning their own stable before reaching out for Pinochet?

While the legal wrangling continues, it turns out that Pinochet didn’t swap a Chilean summer for an English winter for the sake of the weather. He didn’t fly to Heathrow for political reasons, either. He’s done that. No, Pinochet is a reformed man. He’s got the entrepreneurial bug. He went to London on business, and being at least as smart as the average retired dictator he chose a field of venture with which he was familiar. Pinochet is an arms merchant, a man of business, and we all know that business is a promoter of peace and fellowship in this post-Soviet, post-Cold War world.

Pinochet’s position has also been bolstered by his control of other Chilean companies having trade agreements with Britain. It has been reported that Pinochet and his relatives own “Sequimich, the largest Chilean producer of iodine and nitrate fertilizers,” which “exports goods to Britain.”

Another obstacle to Pinochet facing his “day in court” is the extensive economic and political power of the arms industry in Chile. Thus it may help explain why Ricardo Lagos, Chile’s “Socialist” president-elect, does not support Pinochet’s extradition to Spain and why he has tried to be conciliatory toward the former dictator’s supporters in the military establishment.

On Jan. 17, the Associated Press circulated a report that Lagos “is committed to maintaining the free market economic policies first implemented by Pinochet.” Tempered with “social concerns” to address “inequalities.”

Another report explains how Pinochet’s ill-fated 1998 trip to England was “to finalize the deal for a rocket system called Raya, which was being developed in a joint venture between Royal Ordnance and the independent Chilean armed forces agency Famae.” He reportedly arrived in London with an extensive “shopping list,” including “radar and other sensor equipment...infantry support equipment...pyrotechnics...secure communications...weapon systems and aircraft spares.”

It is believed that he hoped to make major purchases from “QED,” “Hunting and British Aerospace.”

Another account says that Pinochet was also in London “to open a cycle of negotiations for the purchase of three British warships for the Chilean Navy at a price of $277 million,” with a further option on two frigates for $186 million.” British Aerospace,” whose largest shareholder is the British Royal Family...invited Pinochet to London” and is reportedly covering his “hospital and legal charges.”

Pinochet’s dealings with British Aerospace apparently go beyond bilateral British-Chilean agreements, and involve Brit-ish Aerospace and British Royal Ord-

nance’s international marketing strategy. It has been reported that the former di-
tator “acted as advisor [for British Aero-

space]...in the part-purchase of a Swedish company” and was central in the “formation of Famae-Ordnance, a joint venture between the Chilean state-owned army company and the British Royal Ordnance to sell missiles and other arms worldwide.”

Within the ruling classes of Spain, the United States, Britain and Chile, there are, of course, antifascist elements, and Pinochet has his share of enemies even among his former supporters. However, those who are hoping for his extradition to Spain are fighting an uphill battle, given the widespread support that the arms industry has among the British capitalist class. British Aerospace and Royal Ordnance’s cheerleaders are not only found among right-wingers like Margaret Thatcher, but also among the independent Chilean armed forces agency Famae. The expansion of NATO, the power of the British arms industry has increased. Thus Tony Blair’s “Labor” administration may be predisposed to send Pinochet home to Chile for “humanitarian reasons” and to sweep the whole thing under the rug.

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Another report explains how Pinochet put himself in such a position of power. During his regime, he evidently used his “privatization” program of state-owned industries to tighten his control over various sectors of Chile’s economy by awarding
ing enterprises such as Sequimich to rela-
tives and cronies. Most important, he con-
solidated his holdings in Chile’s weapons industry through Famae and other firms. When he left office he brokered a deal with his presidential successor to create “a tri-
partite alliance of the armed forces, pri-

tate enterprise and government authori-
ties for arms purchases, with a central role for himself.” Reportedly, his “authoriza-
tion” is mandatory to finalize “all the ma-

ior purchases involving the Chilean armed forces.”

This “tripartite alliance” is also reflect-
red in reports that Pinochet “chairs the Defense Commission in the Senate, which gives final approval” for arms sales to Chile. Under Pinochet’s leadership, the Chilean military high command chooses what arms to buy, independently of the government, and also negotiates the price and the conditions of sale, including [mul-
timillion-dollar] commissions. This is be-
cause all defense funds in Chile are guar-
anteed by law as a proportion of upper class profits.

It would appear from these and simi-
lar reports that Pinochet has made him-
self indispensable to foreign, capitalists seeking to sell arms to Chile. It is also not too surprising that international arms merchants would value Pinochet’s connections and expertise in chasing after international markets.

This is also why those who long for Pinochet’s extradition to Spain cannot ex-
pect to get much help from the Clinton ad-
mistration. The administration would certainly hesitate to totally alienate a man who is the go-between to selling arms to Chile. According to the Financial Times, “U.S. Defense Department officials” and U.S. arms corporations “such as Boeing and Lockheed Martin have been lob-
ying the Chilean government and air force.” (Nov. 17) In fact, U.S. Secretary of Defense William Cohen made a special trip to Santiago to pressure Chilean pres-
ident Eduardo Frei to buy more “U.S. made F-16 and F-18 fighter jets...as a test case for Latin America.”

At the same time, the fact that Pinochet’s arrest in London has cowed Euro-
pean arms agreements with Chile has given the U.S. arms industry the edge.

It is said of the penal system here in America that it is designed to keep the poor off the streets and turn them into useful and productive citizens. Given the capitalist idea of what is useful and productive we would urge Pinochet’s leadership, “Pino-
chet Ugarte, globe-trotting entrepreneur out to make an “honest” peso, fits the bill—admirably.

Diane Soree contributed to this article.