

Clinton/Dole Kill Arabs and Kurds as Election Stunt

U.S. Imperialist Butchers Hands Off Iraq!



AFP photos

Clinton's terror bombing of Iraq: cynical election year ploy and a message in blood that U.S. imperialism is top cop of the world.

In a vile display of imperial arrogance, President Bill Clinton ordered death and destruction to be rained down on the Iraqi people to garner a few more votes in the November presidential elections. As dozens of U.S. cruise missiles were fired at Iraq in the early morning hours of September 3 and again the following day, Clinton ranted against the Baghdad regime of Saddam Hussein for its "violence and aggression" and "disdain for civilized behavior." The massive U.S. expeditionary force in the Persian Gulf region was augmented by B-52 bombers flown in from as far away as Guam. At least five people were reported dead and 19 more injured.

Not content with this murderous military assault, Washington got the United Nations to tighten the screws on the economic embargo which has strangled Iraq for six years. The UN has now reversed even a token measure allowing Iraq to sell some of its oil on the world market to enable it to buy a trickle of food and medical supplies. Some 600,000 Iraqi children have already died as a result of imperialist sanctions imposed in the buildup to the 1991 Persian Gulf onslaught. We say: *U.S. hands off Iraq! U.S./UN/ATO out of the Persian Gulf now! Down with the starvation blockade!*

The pretext for the terror bombing ordered by Clinton and applauded by Republican candidate Bob Dole was the movement of Iraqi troops into the city of

Erbil in the UN-"protected" Kurdish area of Iraq north of the 36th parallel. In fact, Iraqi forces had been invited in by the bourgeois-nationalist Kurdistan Democratic Party and had already *withdrawn* from Erbil before the U.S. missile assault was launched. Washington's supposed "concern" for the Kurds is no less a lie than its "humanitarian" war propaganda for its invasion of Somalia, for its attacks on the Bosnian Serbs, for its invasions of one Latin American country after another throughout this century. Alongside Germany, the U.S. is one of the main arms suppliers to Turkey, which has been waging a genocidal war against the Kurdish people there for years and has repeatedly invaded the "safe haven" in northern Iraq to round up and kill supporters of the Kurdish Workers Party (PKK). And days after the U.S. bombing, Secretary of State Warren Christopher gave Turkey a green light to carve out a "security cordon" twelve

miles deep into Iraqi Kurdistan.

The International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist) immediately mobilized its forces to protest the assault on Iraq (see "ICL Protests Bombing of Iraq," page 9). In the U.S., a September 3 Spartacist League leaflet drew the link between imperialist terror abroad and the capitalist rulers' war on workers and minorities at home: "The same racist rulers, the Democrats and Republicans, who have condemned millions of welfare mothers and their children to death by 'abolishing welfare as we know it,' bomb Iraq and have starved hundreds of thousands of Iraqis. We say: For class struggle at home against racist U.S. imperialism!"

As revolutionary internationalists, we stand with the people of Iraq against imperialist aggression. But workers and the oppressed must have no illusions about the bourgeois-nationalist Baghdad regime. As the SL leaflet said: "Saddam

Hussein should be dealt with by his own working people for his crimes against them." While the U.S. rulers now hypocritically denounce the Iraqi strongman as a "tyrant," Washington backed him for years as he cracked down on Iraqi working people and the Kurds and other minorities (see "Saddam Hussein's War on Kurds, Leftists," WV No. 517, 4 January 1991). Meanwhile, the U.S. funnels \$3 billion in aid every year to Israel to bolster its position as regional gendarme for American imperialism and to fund the Zionist rulers' subjugation of the Palestinian masses. We fight for workers revolution to sweep away all the sheiks, colonels and Zionist butchers in the region. Israel out of the Occupied Territories! For a socialist federation of the Near East!

Defeat U.S. Imperialism: The Main Enemy Is at Home!

There was nothing subtle about what motivated Clinton's bombing of Iraq. A Washington "insider" was blunt: "Whacking everyone's favorite enemy is a no-brainer" (*Wall Street Journal*, 6 September). With Dole screaming about Clinton's "weakness" in the face of "Iraqi terror," the Democrat in the White House responded by ordering a bloody attack. Three years ago, Clinton sent cruise missiles crashing into a residential area of Baghdad, killing eight civilians including a baby and noted artist Layla al-Attar, in order to boost his "popularity" in the opinion polls. But the U.S. bombing of Iraq was not only a cynical maneuver in the run-up to the presidential elections. It was also an act of arrogant big-power bullying, laying down the law to the U.S.

continued on page 5

NEW CRASH
NON-STOP
PLEASE
BOYCOTT!

Interview with Union Summer Activist

Students and the Labor Movement

SEE PAGE 8



Drop All Charges Now!

Chicago Anti-Klan Defendants Continue Fight

CHICAGO, September 9—Trade unionists, anti-racist activists and socialists turned out this morning in Cook County Circuit Court to support eight anti-Klan protesters who could face up to a year in jail on trumped-up charges. The eight were arrested on June 29 in Daley Plaza by police protecting a nest of Ku Klux Klansmen who had tried to march into a group of 100 anti-racist protesters and were then trounced. Organized in less than 24 hours by the Partisan Defense Committee and the Labor Black Struggle League, the protest gave notice that the KKK terrorists will not ride unopposed through labor/black/Hispanic Chicago.

In court today, Chicago prosecutors made clear their intentions to continue their attempt to victimize the anti-Klan activists. In what Partisan Defense Committee attorney Jonathan Piper called "a provocation and an affront," prosecutors again successfully argued before the court to consolidate the eight cases with that of the one Klansman arrested on June 29. All of the anti-Klan defendants have demanded a jury trial. Their next court date is scheduled for September 23. The PDC again calls on all opponents of Klan terror to fill the

courtroom in their support.

As one of the defendants, PDC labor coordinator Gene Herson, said: "When we stopped the race-terrorist Klansmen as they strutted in Daley Plaza toward us wielding their studded shields and flagpoles like clubs, we were not only defending the anti-Klan protesters. We were also defending blacks, Hispanics, other minorities, immigrants, gays and the entire labor movement. It is by mobilizing the power of the integrated unions in the forefront of struggle against racist terror that the Klan, Nazis and all other fascists will be stopped."

Fill the courtroom on September 23, 9:30 a.m., Branch 46 of the Circuit Court, 1340 S. Michigan Ave. Send protest statements to: Jack O'Malley, State's Attorney of Cook County, 55 W. Randolph St., Chicago, IL 60602. Send copies of protest statements and urgently needed donations for legal defense (earmarked "Anti-Klan Protesters") to the Partisan Defense Committee, Box 802867, Chicago, IL 60680-2867, phone (312) 454-4931. Or contact the PDC in New York at P.O. Box 99, Canal St. Station, New York, NY 10013-0099, phone (212) 406-4252. Drop all charges against the anti-Klan protesters! ■



TROTSKY

Bourgeois Reaction and the Fight for Marxism

In the wake of the collapse of the Soviet Union, much of the left has moved sharply to the right, adopting to the bourgeois lie that "communism is dead." While the 1930s were a time of bitter class struggles, such as the strike waves that engulfed France in 1936, they were also marked by an ideological offensive by the bourgeoisie and its reformist labor lieutenants against revolutionary Marxism. The utter capitulation of

the Stalinized Communist International in the face of Hitler's march to power in 1933 led Russian revolutionary leader Leon Trotsky to raise the call for a new, Fourth International forged in political combat against both Social Democracy and Stalinism. In the preface to his 1936 pamphlet, Whither France?, Trotsky underscored the need to swim against the stream of this ideological reaction in order to achieve new revolutionary parties of the working class.

We live in an epoch of the universal liquidation of Marxism in the ruling summits of the labor movement. The most vulgar prejudices now serve as the official doctrines for the political and trade union leaders of the French working class. Contrariwise, the voice of revolutionary realism rings against this artificial sounding board like the voice of "sectarianism." It is all the more insistently necessary to repeat over and over again the fundamental truths of Marxist policies before audiences of advanced workers....

The days of the great strike will undoubtedly also have the merit of airing out the musty, still atmosphere of the workers' organizations, clearing it of the miasmas of reformism and patriotism, of the "Socialist," "Communist," and "trade union" varieties. Assuredly, this will not take place at once, nor by itself. Ahead lies a stubborn ideological struggle on the basis of harsh class struggle. But the subsequent course of the crisis will show that only Marxism provides a timely analysis of the interlocking of events and a timely forecast of their further development.

—Leon Trotsky on France (1979)



LENIN

Jimmy Smyth Extradited to H-Block Hell



Maggiora SF Chronicle

Jimmy Smyth outside San Francisco courthouse before extradition to Northern Ireland.

SAN FRANCISCO—Despite an outcry of protest, on August 17 the Clinton administration removed Irish nationalist political prisoner Jimmy Smyth from a federal prison outside San Francisco and handed him over to his British tormentors. He was immediately flown to Northern Ireland and returned to the infamous H-Blocks at Long Kesh prison from which he escaped in 1983. Along with Kevin Barry Art, Terence Kirby and Pol Brennan, Smyth was one of the "H-Block Four" who sought refuge in the U.S. The other three were likewise imprisoned by U.S. authorities and, though currently out on bail, also face extradition. As the Partisan Defense Committee noted in a protest letter demanding asylum, their "only 'crime' was to be born poor and members of an oppressed Catholic minority in a country occupied by the British imperialist army" (WV No. 649, 2 August).

Clinton's vicious act is aimed at furthering U.S. imperialism's attempt to broker a British-dominated "peace" in Northern Ireland in league with Protestant "Loyalist" reactionaries. Referring to the Bush administration's 1992 extradition of Irish nationalist

Joe Doherty, Smyth declared:

"President Clinton once promised Irish-America that there would be no more Joe Dohertys. The plane which takes me back to a British prison is evidence of the value of that promise. 'I am returning to a country I left unwillingly twelve years ago. Unfortunately, little has changed. A foreign army is still on the streets. Loyalist gunmen still dictate British policy and hack it up with British bullets. Justice is still just a dream. I am under no illusions about what I face. There are many who will seek revenge against me because I spoke the truth about Ireland.'"

Smyth has every reason to fear for his life. In recent months, Northern Ireland has seen an ugly upsurge of anti-Catholic terror by the "Loyalist" Orange Order and the brutal suppression of Catholic protests by the British Army and Royal Ulster Constabulary. Our comrades of the Dublin Spartacist Group and the Spartacist League/Britain call for the immediate unconditional withdrawal of British troops as part of the fight for an Irish workers republic in a socialist federation of the British Isles. Free Jimmy Smyth! Asylum for Art, Kirby, Brennan and all victims of British imperialist repression!

Spartacist Forums

Down With Racist War on Immigrants and Blacks!

NEW YORK CITY

Friday, September 13, 7:30 p.m.

Brecht Forum
122 W. 27th Street, 10th Floor

For more information: (212) 267-1025

TORONTO

Trotskyist League/Spartacus Youth Club Forum

Thursday, September 19, 7 p.m.

International Student Centre
33 St. George St. (north of College)

For more information: (416) 593-4138

BOSTON

Thursday, September 26, 7 p.m.

Boston University
College of Arts and Sciences, Rm. 214
725 Commonwealth Avenue

For more information: (617) 666-9453

VANCOUVER

Trotskyist League/Spartacus Youth Club Forum

Friday, October 4, 7:30 p.m.

Britannia Community Centre, Room L4
1661 Napier Street (at Commercial)

For more information: (604) 687-0353

BAY AREA

Thursday, September 19, 7 p.m.

Barrows Hall
University of California at Berkeley

For more information: (510) 839-0851
or (415) 777-9367

CHICAGO

Saturday, September 21, 7 p.m.

Regency Room
Blackstone Hotel

For more information: (312) 454-4930

WASHINGTON, D.C.

Spartacus Youth Club Forum

Saturday, September 28, 2 p.m.

University of Maryland, College Park
Reckord Armory Building, Rm. 0116

For more information: (202) 872-8240

LOS ANGELES

Saturday, October 12, 4 p.m.

Hollywood United Methodist Church
6817 Franklin Avenue
(Highland exit off 101 Frwy)

For more information: (213) 380-8239

WORKERS VANGUARD



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No. 651

13 September 1996

California: Racist Terrorist Invited to Campus "Debate"

David Duke, Klan in a Suit, Still a Fascist Killer!

Workers Vanguard reprints below the leaflet issued on September 8 by the Spartacist League/Spartacus Youth Club in Los Angeles.

"Klan in a suit" David Duke is planning to waltz into Cal State Northridge (CSUN) on September 25 to push racist terror under the cover of a debate with pro-affirmative action spokesman Joe Hicks. Invited by the Associated Students, the former "Grand Wizard" Duke will be paid \$4,000 from student fees—while the black civil rights leader Hicks is offered only \$1,000!

The driving force behind bringing Duke to campus is not the far right but liberal student bureaucrats—including blacks and Latinos who are at the top of the KKK's hit list. They apparently hope that Duke's defense of the anti-affirmative action "California Civil Rights Initiative" (CCRI—Proposition 209 on November's ballot) will paint the entire pro-CCRI movement with the brush of Duke's right-wing extremism. But what they're calling a "smart tactic" is of immense value to Duke in consolidating a fascist organization in this state. This deadly threat stands higher than any supposed electoral payoff. If CCRI passes, those who gave Duke a platform are going to have egg all over their faces; and even if it doesn't, we are left with a newly strengthened fascist movement in the state of California.

The recent epidemic of black church burnings across the South is a reminder of the Klan's despicable purpose—to organize racist terror! The fascists have stepped up their activities everywhere, feeling increasingly self-confident in the face of bipartisan attacks on blacks and other minorities—not least the assault on affirmative action programs in hiring and college admissions. In Southern California this July, black teenager Marcus Cotton was attacked by two skinheads in Lancaster who yelled "white power" as they slashed him with a machete. In February, a Native American was stabbed 27 times in a ferocious attack by skinheads in Huntington Beach. There have been a whole series of fascist anti-immigrant mobilizations in San Diego to "light up the border" with Mexico.

Duke and his fascist stormtroopers are not about academic debate. They are vicious killers and a mortal threat to blacks, immigrants, Jews, homosexuals and anyone else who doesn't fit their idea of "Aryan America." At the

September 3 meeting of the CSUN Student Senate where the payment to Duke was approved, the Los Angeles Spartacus Youth Club intervened against Duke's appearance:

"Since its formation in the reaction in the South following the defeat of the slavocracy in the Civil War, the KKK has spearheaded the attempt to reverse the outcome of that war—to return blacks to a position of chattel slavery. Their meth-

congruence of their current war on blacks and immigrants with the political program of Duke and other fascists.

Despite not wanting to now he too closely associated, the ruling class actually needs to keep the fascists around. If there were a serious challenge to capitalist class rule, the bourgeoisie would seek to unleash them against the working class. For now, it's enough for the bour-

Many opponents of Klan terror look to the government and cops to protect us from the fascists. But the capitalist state exists to protect private property and those who own it, not to protect the intended victims of the KKK. Laws against the fascists are used primarily against the left. Chicago cops arrested nine anti-Klan demonstrators in Chicago while forming a barricade to protect the racists, and



Left: Fascist Duke organized anti-immigrant vigilantes on Mexican border. Right: 1,500-strong protest initiated by Partisan Defense Committee against Duke race-hate provocation in Boston, March 1991.



ods of "debate" are the lynch rope and the burning cross.... The fascists are a paramilitary action group whose public rallies are used to incite racist violence and to recruit to their ranks."

Duke is portrayed as an "ex-Klansman, but he has not changed his aims; he simply moved on from the Klan to the Republican Party keeping his program intact. By putting his white sheets and swastikas in the closet, Duke is attempting to make himself respectable to mainstream bourgeois society and thereby gain access to a larger audience from which to recruit to his program of racist murder.

Rightist Republicans and CCRI supporters have been trying to distance themselves from Duke. Racist Republican Pat Buchanan ostentatiously fired a Duke supporter from running his presidential primary campaign in the Tampa area. University of California Regent Ward Connerly, godfather of the CCRI, has characterized Duke as "despicable." Their real motivation is to downplay the

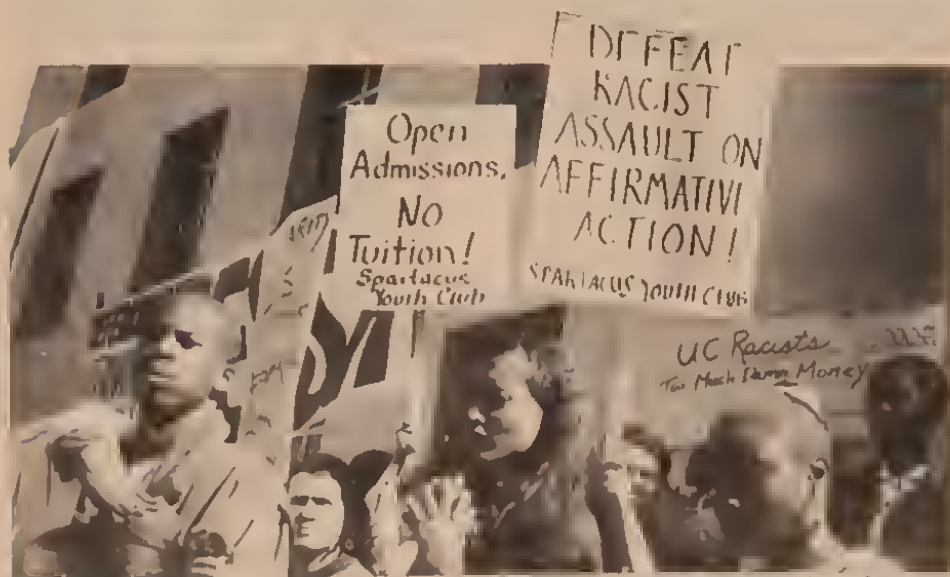
geoisie to use the cop terror which is daily meted out to black and Hispanic youth and workers—from the videotaped beatings of Rodney King in 1991 and of Mexican immigrants in Riverside last April, to the brutal cop attacks on those protesting anti-immigrant Prop. 187 in Van Nuys in 1994.

Before 1933, many people in Germany felt that Hitler was just a semi-comical weirdo and that the Nazis were an insignificant fringe group which could be ignored. The German Communist Party went a step further and argued that Hitler's ascension to power would spark a massive wave of revulsion which the Communists would be able to ride to power, insisting "After Hitler, Us!" As history proved, this was a disastrous perspective! Among Hitler's first acts after seizing power were the arrests and murder of thousands of Communists, followed by the complete destruction of the organizations of the working class and the massacre of 6 million Jews as well as millions of Slavs, homosexuals and Gypsies. To ignore the fascists or to attempt to use them as pawns will only allow them to grow more powerful.

The sort of response with which the KKK should be met was shown by the hot reception given the Arkansas-based "Knights of the Ku Klux Klan" when they tried to rally in downtown Chicago on June 29. Like Duke, the Klan in Chicago insisted that they didn't hate blacks, they just wanted to defend "white culture." But they were prevented from carrying out their provocation. On 24 hours' notice, the Partisan Defense Committee mobilized nearly 100 union members, leftists and youth against the Klan. When the fascist nightriders marched on us with bolt-studded shields, brandishing flagpoles as spears, they found themselves sprawled on the ground, then flag and paraphernalia seized by the anti-racist protesters.

eight still face sentences of up to a year in the Illinois courts.

A multiracial protest of 1,500 trade unionists and students came out against David Duke in downtown Boston in 1991. Their chants of "Duke stands for genocide—Klan terror will not ride!" nearly drowned out his race-hate speech and left him visibly shaken. This is a taste of the kind of reception Duke should get every time he dares to venture out! Spartacus Youth Club members helped build the Boston protest as we have other labor/minority demonstrations initiated by the Spartacist League and Partisan Defense Committee, which have stopped the fascists cold when they threatened to appear from Washington, D.C. to Philadelphia to San Francisco. We call for mobilizing the social power of labor, together with blacks and other minorities, to stop the fascists when they raise their ugly heads. This is part of our struggle to participate in the building of a multiracial workers party that can lead the working class in a socialist revolution to overturn capitalist class rule and the fascist scum it breeds. ■



Demonstration at UC Berkeley in October 1995 against racist rollback of affirmative action.

Spartacist League Public Offices

—MARXIST LITERATURE—

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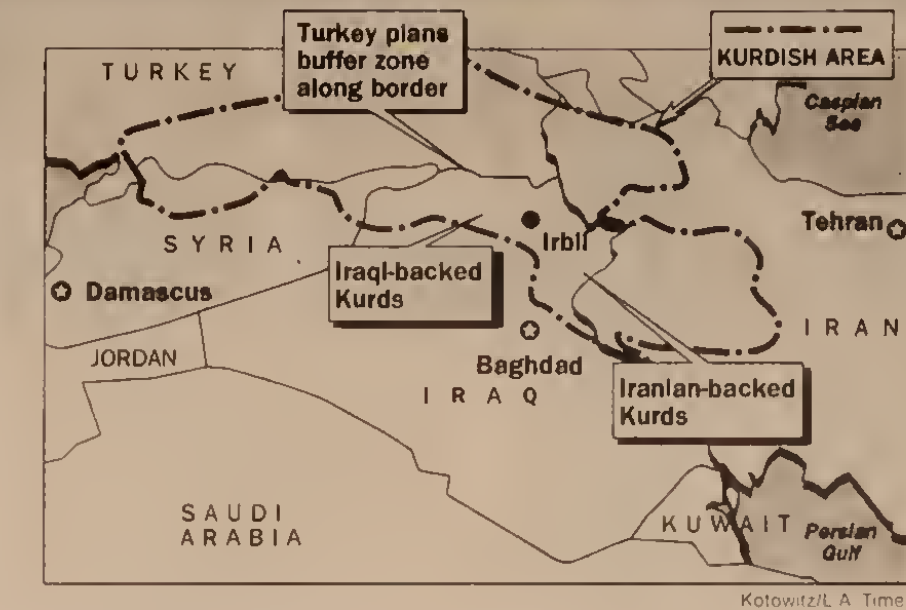
For a Socialist Republic of United Kurdistan!

In the U.S. and internationally, the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist) initiated and joined protests against Clinton's heinous terror bombing of Iraq, demanding "U.S. imperialists hands off Iraq!" At these demonstrations and in protest leaflets issued by different national sections of the ICL, we prominently raised the call, "For a Socialist Republic of United Kurdistan!"

The 25 to 30 million Kurdish people in the Near East constitute the largest nation in the world without a state of its own. Since the downfall of the Turkish Ottoman empire in World War I, the Kurdish people has been carved up primarily among four countries—Turkey, Syria, Iran and Iraq, with a small scattering of Kurds in the Caucasian republics of the former Soviet Union. Thus the realization of an independent Kurdistan cannot be resolved in a capitalist framework, but requires the revolutionary overthrow of four different capitalist powers in the region. But while the Near Eastern bourgeoisies are the immediate oppressors of the Kurdish people, there can be no self-determination for the Kurds without opposing all imperialist intervention in the region. *The various imperialist powers—today, first and foremost, U.S. imperialism—are the chief enemies of Kurdish independence.*

While time and again using the Kurdish people as pawns for their great power ambitions, the imperialists have repeatedly stabbed the Kurds in the back. Clinton's cruise missile attacks on southern Iraq were ostensibly launched in retaliation for the movement of Iraqi troops into the "autonomous" Kurdish region in the northern part of the country. But Washington's claim to act as a "guardian" of the Kurdish people is drenched in cynicism and hypocrisy. State Department spokesman Peter Tarnoff has made it crystal clear that the U.S. "remains firmly opposed to the creation of an independent Kurdish state" (*New York Times*, 4 September). This position is shared by all the imperialist powers, who have installed and armed one dictatorial regime after another with the aim of suppressing any Kurdish struggle which could "destabilize" bourgeois rule in the Near East. The Turkish regime which is carrying out a war of annihilation against the Kurdish people and the Kurdish Workers Party (PKK) is armed to the hilt by both the U.S. and Germany.

The latest U.S. attack on Iraq came after units of Saddam Hussein's army entered the Kurdish city of Erbil on August 31 to prop up the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) in its feud with the rival Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), which is currently backed by



Kotowitz/L.A. Times

Self-determination for Kurdish people requires revolutionary overthrow of at least four capitalist regimes.

thousands of Iranian troops in northern Iraq. Though it labels both Iran and Iraq as "terrorist states," Washington turned a blind eye to the Iranian intervention while moving to "punish" Iraq. During the Iran-Iraq war of the 1980s, the U.S. alternately armed both sides, even as Saddam Hussein and the ayatollahs' regime in Teheran were perpetrating bloody massacres against the Kurds within their own borders.

Meanwhile, the feudal and petty-bourgeois nationalist misleaders of the KDP and PUK have repeatedly sacrificed the Kurdish national struggle for ephemeral and illusory support from the imperialists or their regional lackeys. Today PUK leader Jalal Talabani says he is pro-American while aligning with Iran, while Massoud Barzani's KDP looks to Saddam Hussein's Ba'athist regime. Yet for many years Barzani's father Mustafa, who founded the KDP, was a prime CIA "asset." And during the U.S.-led imperialist onslaught against Iraq in 1991, both the PUK and KDP sided with Washington and entered the CIA-backed Iraqi National Congress. It's true that the present government of Iraq is an enemy of the Kurdish people—and so are all of its predecessors, all the neighboring bourgeois regimes and all the imperialist powers. But a U.S.-sponsored overthrow of the Ba'athist regime in Baghdad would not further the rights of the Kurdish people one iota, only installing an equally murderous, if perhaps more pliant, dictatorship.

The internecine fighting between the KDP and PUK in league with imperialism and the regional oppressors of the Kurdish people underscores the need for *revolutionary internationalist struggle* by the Kurdish masses. Yet even avowedly

Marxist Kurdish groups, like the Workers Communist Party (WCP) in Iraq and Iran, operate on the same premise that "the enemy of my enemy is my friend." Thus the WCP appeals to the United Nations—an imperialist den of thieves—to fight Saddam Hussein's regime.

A day before Clinton launched his terror strikes, the WCP called for international protest actions outside United Nations offices against Saddam Hussein's incursion into Erbil. A leaflet by a WCP exile group in Australia demanded "the immediate withdrawal of the Ba'ath regime's forces" and called "to impose these demands on the UN." Despite the leaflet's claimed opposition to "U.S./UN intervention," this could only be a call on the UN to move against Iraq. At the same time, at a September 6 protest in London, the WCP carried signs reading, "We condemn the U.S. military attack on Iraq," while simultaneously a letter to the UN pleaded to "put an end to the arrogance of the United States." It is under the UN fig leaf that the U.S. has imposed a brutal starvation blockade of Iraq for the past six years, and it was under the UN banner that the bloody slaughter of Iraqis was carried out in 1991. And while today condemning the American missile attacks, in 1991 the WCP refused to take a side defending Iraq against U.S./UN imperialism.

Underlying these contradictory positions is the WCP's schooling in the Stalinist dogma of "two-stage revolution," putting off the aim of socialist revolution to the distant future while today casting about for "progressive" capitalist and imperialist "allies" to help them achieve a bourgeois-democratic revolution for national independence. This stagist perspective is a dead end every-

where, but it is particularly futile in the case of Kurdistan. The Kurdish people cannot achieve statehood without the smashing of *four* reactionary bourgeois-nationalist regimes. The WCP's petty-bourgeois nationalism, however, precludes it from advancing such a perspective. Thus, its leaflet issued in Australia focused entirely on the plight of Kurds in Iraq, avoiding any mention of the Turkish regime's genocidal campaign against Kurds in that country. Moreover, Kurdistan is a desperately impoverished mountainous region with not much of an industrial proletariat—or a bourgeoisie—to speak of. Indeed, the infighting between the KDP and PUK is motivated by a scramble for control of "tax" revenues from the smuggling of contraband oil and cigarettes, a chief source of income in the area.

The motor force for the struggle for Kurdish independence is to be found in the proletariats of the countries which oppress the Kurds. The workers of Turkey, Syria, Iran and Iraq have their own scores to settle with their exploiters. There is also a sizable Kurdish working class with a history of militant struggle in the oil fields of Kirkuk and other strategic centers. But by and large the Kurdish proletariat is to be found in such industrial centers as Baghdad and Istanbul, as well as the mining regions of southern Turkey, with a large concentration in Germany. These workers can serve as a living bridge between the Kurdish struggle for independence and the fight for socialist revolution in the Near East, fighting to extend proletarian revolution to the imperialist heartland of West Europe. As we noted shortly after the 1991 Gulf War in our article "Kurdish Struggle: Near East Flashpoint" (*WV* No. 527, 24 May 1991): "As part of the multinational proletariat of the region, the Kurds can play a leading role in bringing down the whole rotten structure set up to serve the imperialist overlords."

This is the Trotskyist perspective of permanent revolution—that in the colonial and semicolonial countries in the imperialist epoch, only the proletariat in power can achieve the tasks of the bourgeois-democratic revolution. This perspective is counterposed to the petty-bourgeois nationalism—however much "socialist" rhetoric it is garbed in—embraced by the WCP. The struggle for Kurdish national and social emancipation requires the leadership of internationalist vanguard parties rooted in the proletariats of the Near East and, in particular, among the workers of Germany, parties which can only be built in the struggle for a world party of socialist revolution. ■

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L.A. Latino Teamsters Strike the "Tortilla King"

LOS ANGELES, September 8—When their contract expired in early August, 160 truckers went on strike against Guerrero Mexican Food Products, a subsidiary of Gruma USA, the largest tortilla manufacturer and distributor in L.A. The strikers, members of Teamsters Local 63, are taking on a Mexican billionaire known as the "Tortilla King," who owns Gruma USA and its parent outfit, Grupo Maseca. The bosses they're fighting are hell-bent on keeping thousands of other superexploited Latino workers unorganized, atomized and in daily fear of anti-immigrant terror. This strike is being closely watched by tens of thousands of predominantly Latino workers in Southern California's trucking and tortilla-manufacturing industries.

Organized just three years ago, the Guerrero truckers are demanding better pay, health benefits, job security and pensions. The truckers, who haven't had a raise in eight years, currently make \$40 to \$45 after expenses for a 12-hour day delivering tortillas to stores and fast-food outlets throughout the city. Required to buy their trucks from the company and pay for fuel, maintenance and insurance, the truckers barely make enough to feed their families. Now the company wants to impose a \$100 per month medical insurance copayment!

With \$400 million in annual sales, Gruma USA is raking in huge profits. The Mexican conglomerate Grupo Maseca has cornered the Mexican tortilla market and operates 35 plants around the world. Maseca's owner, "Tortilla King" Roberto Gonzalez Barrera, is a monopolist whose \$1.1 billion fortune was made as a lifelong crony of disgraced former Mexican president Carlos Salinas de Gortari. Salinas and his successor, Ernesto Zedillo, have arranged billions in subsidies for Maseca, and used the government's corn monopoly to ruin its competitors.



David Bacon

Striking L.A. Teamsters take on billionaire "Tortilla King."

On August 28, a caravan of striking truckers headed for a union rally was intercepted on the freeway by 30 security guards hired by Gruma USA. Gruma's strikebreaking thugs forced the workers' cars off the road, then sprayed pepper gas at some strikers while ordering others to lie on the ground at gunpoint. When the California Highway Patrol arrived on the scene, they proceeded to arrest six strikers, charging them with assault with a deadly weapon! Only because one of the workers caught the events on videotape did the cops admit their "mistake" and later release the victimized Teamsters.

The Guerrero truckers are facing a hard battle, made harder by the defeatist misleadership of the Teamster bureaucrats. At an August 18 rally, Teamsters president Ron Carey spouted hot air against the "bloodsucking company" while pushing a toothless "consumer boycott" which would derail the

strike. Carey is quite prepared to see this strike go down to defeat. All he wants is to get the Latino truckers' votes in his re-election bid against challenger Jimmy Hoffa Jr. Hoffa is supported by the "old guard" that allowed the Master Freight Agreement to be ripped up at the Santa Fe railyards in 1990. And Carey is no better. When 215 Teamsters were fired by Santa Fe in January 1995, Carey supporters in the Local 63 bureaucracy refused to sanction a strike to fight for their jobs. Instead, they put up "informational picket lines" which let scab trucks run in and out unimpeded. And Carey refused to lift a finger for truckers victimized in the national Teamster strike of 1994, as cops attacked picket lines around the country. Pico Rivera trucker Jesse Acuna, a member of Teamsters Local 208, is spending five years in jail for courageously defending his picket line. We say: All labor must fight for Jesse Acuna's freedom!

A Guerrero striker told *Workers Vanguard* that along with 50 scabs hired by the company, some 15 Teamsters are crossing picket lines. This is a scandal! There ought to be hundreds of unionists—Teamsters, garment workers, longshoremen—on the picket line to teach these scabs a lesson and stop all deliveries. The many non-union truckers who deliver tortillas for Gruma under different brand names, like Mission, as well as thousands of workers in Gruma's Southern California plants need to be organized and brought out to join the strike! A massive organizing drive in Southern California must be linked to a perspective of reaching out to Mexican workers across the border. But that requires a leadership that's prepared to take on the bosses and their state. Earlier this year, over 4,000 L.A. port truckers struck for union recognition. But the Communications Workers tops bowed before every anti-union court injunction and the organizing drive has gone nowhere (see "Victory to L.A. Port Truckers!" *WA* No. 645, 10 May).

What's needed to win strikes and organizing drives is not only militant tactics—like mass pickets and secondary strikes—but also an understanding that the capitalist parties and the capitalist state are on the other side. The AFL-CIO bureaucrats sacrifice workers' struggles in order to elect capitalist Democratic Party politicians. This year's Labor Day celebration in downtown L.A., while cynically "highlighting" the Guerrero drivers' plight, was turned into an obscene pep rally to get immigrant-hating, "open shop" Clinton re-elected. What workers need is a class-struggle leadership in the unions and a revolutionary workers party that fights against the capitalist profit system which relies on union-busting, racism and anti-immigrant bigotry. *Victory to the Guerrero truckers!*

Iraq...

(continued from page 1)

imperialist rivals, particularly Germany.

This message was not lost on the other imperialist powers. Outside of John Major's failing Conservative government (and the loyal Labour Party "opposition") in Britain, which allowed U.S. bombers to refuel on the British island colony of Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean, the U.S. got barely a nod of support from other countries. "Where Are the Allies?" wailed the *Wall Street Journal* (4 September), referring to the "coalition" which backed the U.S. in the Gulf War. In the Near East, even Egypt and Saudi Arabia, which served as regional spearheads for the 1991 imperialist attack, refused to go along with Washington. Russian foreign minister Yevgeny Primakov noted acidly that "the attacks cannot be supported by anyone at all, except those who put domestic politics including pre-electoral questions above all else." France, which has significant investment in Iraq, stopped just short of explicit condemnation, and

announced that its warplanes in the Gulf would not join Britain and the U.S. in policing the extended area of the "no fly" zone over southern Iraq, which now reaches to the suburbs of Baghdad.

Behind former Republican president Bush's 1991 "Desert Slaughter" was Washington's desire to exert control over the oil fields in the region, which are of vital concern to Germany and especially Japan. Following the Gulf War, the capitalist counterrevolution that destroyed the Soviet Union in 1991-92 has ushered in a period of intensified interimperialist rivalry reminiscent of that which prefigured the carnage of World War I. Clinton's latest round of air strikes was intended as both a demonstration of U.S. imperialism's role as top cop of the world and as a warning particularly to the rulers of the German Fourth Reich to stop their "meddling" in the Near East. The backdrop to the U.S. bombing attack was the passage during the summer of two measures which threaten economic penalties against foreign companies which invest in Cuba, Libya or Iran.

Notably, Germany's grudging support for the latest attack was announced by Chancellor Kohl's foreign minister as he was touring the region. German imperialism has been making significant inroads in the Near East in the past few years. While U.S. imperialism has demonized Iran, its German competitors have moved in a big way. German firms have been supplying the ayatollahs' regime with arms, pouring investment in and consolidating "stable contacts" with the Iranian secret service. When Kohl's emissary, Bernd Schmidbauer, negotiated a prisoner exchange in July between Israel and pro-Iranian Hezbollah guerrillas in Lebanon, he was hailed as a hero in the

German press. And Turkey, which has been the focus of direct competition between the U.S. and Germany, recently signed a \$20 billion gas deal with Iran in violation of U.S. sanctions. The *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (13 August) exulted that this was a "slap in the face of Washington."

For Class Struggle Against U.S. Imperialism!

The sharpening of interimperialist rivalries in the Near East is a tripwire for a future world war, the next time with all sides armed with nuclear weapons. But simultaneously, countries like Turkey are highly unstable and ripe for class struggle. In 1991, Turkey was rocked by workers' struggles, with strikes and protests not only over economic demands but also in opposition to the Gulf War. And this year, there have been significant strikes by textile and public service workers. Throughout the region there has been an eruption of violent protests against the imposition of draconian austerity measures dictated by the International Monetary Fund, the imperialist bankers' cartel, exemplified by the bread riots which ripped through Jordan last month.

And in the U.S., the drive to sharpen Wall Street's competitive edge against America's imperialist rivals means all-sided war on workers, blacks, immigrants and the poor. Washington is intent on once again demonstrating that it will stop at nothing to assert its dominant position in the "New World Order" proclaimed over the corpses of a hundred thousand Iraqis slaughtered in the 1991 Gulf War. Much of the left tailed behind the Democrats at the time—just as they do today—and either supported UN economic sanctions against Iraq or wrapped

themselves in social-patriotic yellow ribbons. We of the ICL fought for labor protest strikes against the war and proclaimed: "Defeat U.S. imperialism—Defend Iraq!"

A class-struggle leadership of the labor movement would have organized mass protests, including strikes, against Clinton's latest bomb attack. But the pro-capitalist misleaders of the unions police the labor movement on behalf of the bosses. By pushing protectionist chauvinism, the AFL-CIO tops line up U.S. workers behind their exploiters and *against* workers in other countries. The multiracial working class of the United States can fight to free itself only if it fights together with the working people of the entire world. The key lies in forging a revolutionary international party of the working class.

The American empire runs on blood and exploitation. The devastation of social welfare programs, the racist cop terror unleashed on the ghetto masses, the union-busting and wage-slashing—this is the domestic side of U.S. capitalism's drive to increase its competitive edge against its imperialist rivals. What is needed is a sharp political struggle to oust the chauvinist labor traitors and break workers and minorities from the Democrats. For a workers party to fight for a workers government! ■

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The Struggle for Trotskyism in the Post-Soviet World

We present below a slightly edited transcript of a presentation given by comrade Jon Brule of the Spartacist League Central Committee at an SL forum in New York City on August 1.

This talk focuses on what we Leninists call the "party question." As Leon Trotsky, the great Russian revolutionary leader, emphasized in his 1924 work, *Lessons of October*: "Without a party, apart from a party, over the head of a party, or with a substitute for a party, the proletarian revolution cannot conquer."

Elsewhere in the same work, Trotsky observed that sudden changes in the world situation always produce disorientation and confusion in the revolutionary party, especially within the leadership layers. The period from 1989 to 1992 marked the most profound change in this century since the October Revolution of 1917 burst upon the world's stage. All the bureaucratically deformed workers states in East Europe and the degenerated workers state of the Soviet Union itself were destroyed by counterrevolution and the restoration of capitalism.

All organizations and tendencies which claim adherence to Marxism have been struck with cataclysmic force by the collapse of the Soviet Union. The loss of the first workers state, however deformed and attenuated it was by decades of Stalinist misrule, has brought about a period marked by sharpening interimperialist rivalries, nationalist revanchism, and the intensification of the rate of exploitation and the special oppression of women and minorities (particularly black people in the U.S., immigrants in Europe and dark-skinned peoples in the areas of the former Soviet Union). Capitalist counterrevolution has reduced the working people of the former Soviet Union and East Europe to abject poverty, while inflaming murderous national and ethnic hatreds. And in the West, the precedent-setting attacks against the working class which were carried out more than a decade ago in the United States and Britain by the likes of Ronald Reagan and former Conservative prime minister Margaret Thatcher are now being extended throughout Europe.

In response to this onslaught there have also been and will continue to be huge, raw defensive battles by the working class to hold on to its present positions and its gains from previous decades. Many of these gains were wrested not coincidentally in a period when the Soviet Union still existed. The social services which constitute the so-called "welfare state" currently under attack represented a kind of "tribute" that the capitalist class paid

to the Soviet Union. In other words, the capitalist rulers recognized that they needed to cut into their own profits and provide the working class with some minimal social "safety net" lest a new October Revolution be brought to their doors.

Italy, with its very combative proletariat and what was the largest Communist party in West Europe, is a good example both of how such reforms were granted and the present capitalist moves to destroy them. Or for a graphic "before" and

Mandela's bourgeois-nationalist ANC in the 1994 South African elections, they demonstrated anew their political rotteness. We Trotskyists stand for permanent revolution, the understanding that the fundamental tasks associated with the bourgeois revolutions of the 18th and 19th centuries—genuine national independence, breaking the power of the feudal aristocracy in the countryside, etc.—cannot be achieved in the colonial and semicolonial world short of proletarian

erty in the means of production, and especially the bourgeois state power as "natural" and *irrevocable*. And it's not just the right wing that pushes this reactionary consciousness. The former mass reformist parties explicitly reject even the window-dressing of socialist verbiage as they make their bid to govern capitalist societies. In Britain, Labour Party prime-minister-in-waiting Tony Blair seeks to break the historic ties between Labour and the trade unions, while in Italy, an "Olive Tree" coalition government dominated by ex-Communists fronts for Wall Street and the Vatican.

It is not surprising then that in this context even the most combative workers who are leading battles in defense of their class interests are skeptical of parties claiming to represent the Marxist tradition. This has led to a recurrence of syndicalism, while among the most alienated and radical youth an anti-Marxist, "green"-tinged "anarchism" is popular.

What we of the International Communist League are for is a new October Revolution. The instrument to achieve this is a revolutionary-internationalist, democratic-centralist vanguard party. So we are engaged in a *battle* for this: programmatically, theoretically and, to the modest degree that our tiny forces have the opportunity, to connect with working-class struggle and to demonstrate our program in practice before the masses.

In the "Perspectives and Tasks Memorandum" adopted in January by the ICL's International Executive Committee (IEC), we note that "a reactionary period such as this will test the ICL in ways described by Trotsky in his 1937 article, 'Stalinism and Bolshevism'." Trotsky explained that "Reactionary epochs like ours not only disintegrate and weaken the working class and its vanguard but also lower the general ideological level of the movement and throw political thinking back to stages long since passed through." From 1923 on, the Trotskyist Left Opposition fought to uphold the principles of Bolshevism against Stalinist degeneration. Following Hitler's rise to power in 1933, unchallenged by the German Communist Party, Trotsky called for a new Fourth International. When the Fourth International was formed in 1938, it was clear that the (Third) Communist International had decisively passed over to reformism.

When Trotsky referred to a "reactionary epoch," he did not mean that class struggle had ceased. Indeed, in the 1930s, the question of revolution and counterrevolution had been posed sharply in Germany, while France went through a prerevolutionary period and the Spanish Civil War precipitated a period of dual power between revolutionary workers and pro-capitalist forces within the "Loyalist" regions, especially Catalonia. Trotsky was referring to the subjective factor—the question of revolutionary consciousness. Hundreds of thousands of workers retained their enthusiasm for the October Revolution; yet for the most part these workers identified the Russian Revolution with the Stalinized Communist parties. In 1923-24, Stalin had usurped political power in the Soviet Union; by 1937, you had the Moscow frame-up trials and tens of thousands of Old Bolsheviks were being executed. The Communist International had been destroyed as a revolutionary instrument, and the Stalinists were then helping to strangle proletarian revolution in Spain.

In that situation, many ex-Communists



Spartacist League forum in New York City, August 1.

"after" picture which exposes the utter hypocrisy of the imperialists, look at West Berlin before the collapse of the Berlin Wall and what exists now. West Berlin was maintained—at great cost—as a showcase, a chimera, a fraud to lure workers from the East. Well, the wall is down, the DDR (East German) deformed workers state is gone, and life in west Berlin is deteriorating for the workers because the capitalist rulers perceive no opposition to their unbridled greed.

While the bourgeoisie everywhere trumpets the "death of communism," its ideological impact varies from country to country. In the former colonial world, it is muted by the naked exploitation of "democratic" imperialism. In such countries as South Africa, Brazil, South Korea, possibly Indonesia, with their militant and restless proletariats, there are opportunities today to plant a Bolshevik standard. When the bulk of the fake Trotskyists gave support to Nelson

revolution. Furthermore, the survival and consolidation of socialist revolution in the economically backward countries requires its extension to the advanced capitalist powers.

As the imperialist powers today seek a new carve-up of the world, threatening a new world war while ever more viciously plundering the colonial and semicolonial countries, the national question—the question of the right of national self-determination—assumes a heightened importance for Marxists. Our decision to call for the independence of Quebec, a correction of the earlier line of our Canadian section of the International Communist League, was also a critical step toward dealing correctly with the national question elsewhere.

Bourgeois Reaction and the Communist Vanguard

Bourgeois ideologues today exalt the capitalist "free market," private prop-



Spartakists initiated 250,000-strong protest against fascist desecration of Red Army memorial in East Berlin's Treptow Park, January 1990. Poster for March 1990 election reads: "No to Capitalist Reunification! For a Germany of Workers Councils!"





Reuters



Pelissier/Reuters

Class struggle in West Europe: Italian workers in Milano protest against unemployment, October 1993 (left); students join French miners in Paris march during December 1995 strike wave.

and even former partisans of Trotsky's Left Opposition were renouncing Leninism, claiming that it was the source and inspiration of Stalinism. In reply, Trotsky reaffirmed the validity of Bolshevism against both the Stalinist usurpers and those who openly proclaimed their desertion of Leninism. He emphasized: "In these conditions, the task of the vanguard is above all not to let itself be carried along by the backward flow; it must swim against the current."

Centrists in the Popular-Front Swamp

Today even most subjective leftists view as rather esoteric the idea that a proletarian revolution, like that successfully pursued by Lenin's Bolshevik Party in Russia in 1917, is the key to the liberation of mankind. Buying into the so-called "death of communism," the left in general is rapidly repudiating even any pretense to Leninism, seeking to merge into larger reformist formations together with social democrats and ex-Stalinists. This process is quite evident in Europe. In France, fake-Trotskyist leader Alain Krivine shares a platform with leaders of the Communist Party and the petty-bourgeois Greens, jockeying to work out slates for the next parliamentary elections. In Italy, the fake Trotskyists have jumped into Rifondazione Comunista (RC), an offshoot of the old Italian CP, the bulk of which has now become the openly social-democratic PDS.

Trotsky noted that the reformist Stalinist parties in the West embodied a dual loyalty, to the Kremlin and to their own bourgeoisie—a dual loyalty that would ultimately be resolved by renouncing any ties to the Soviet Union. This process was well underway by the second Cold War period in the 1980s, where it was dubbed "Eurocommunism." Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, former Stalinists throughout the West have become simply another version of social democracy. Meanwhile fake-Trotskyist centrist formations—tendencies which are "revolutionary in words and reformist in deeds"—openly embrace the social democrats. Ten years ago, centrist groups like the late Ernest Mandel's United Secretariat (USec) were howling in chorus with the pro-imperialist wolves against the Soviet Union. But today, leading Italian USec spokesman Livio Maitan and sometime USec "oppositionist" Franco Grisolia can rub shoulders with the former "hardline" pro-Kremlin Stalinists who run Rifondazione Comunista, the main left prop of the popular-front bourgeois government in Italy.

In Italy, there was a wave of militant strike action against austerity measures dictated by the European Union's Maastricht agreement. This culminated in a one-day general strike in October 1994, in which 25 million people participated. The huge strike wave was cynically manipulated by the reformists for their popular-frontist ambitions, to bring down

the right-wing Berlusconi government in order to obtain their own ministerial portfolios. When the trade-union bureaucrats called a one-day general strike, their centrist tails demanded a two-day strike or even an "unlimited general strike." In glorifying economist militancy, the fake left was really tailing the reformists. Thus they all called for a vote to the popular front. Grisolia, an editor of the oppositional journal *Proposta* within Rifondazione and at least at one time associated with the "International Trotskyist Opposition" of the USec, called for votes to all candidates of the popular front in the March 1994 election, including the openly bourgeois politicians. More recently, Grisolia took a position to the right of the initial stance of the RC leaders, arguing to support the previous capitalist government of Prime Minister Dini against a motion of no confidence.

The same thing was true in the French strikes that broke out in December of last year. There was much rhetoric about "May 1968" coming from fake Trotskyists who occupied not unimportant posts in the trade-union bureaucracies which ultimately suppressed the workers' militancy. In every way, there were more *differences* here with 1968 than similarities. This strike wave did not occur in the midst of revolutionary overturns in the former colonial world like Vietnam, which gripped the imagination and support of youth and the oppressed across the imperialist centers. In part what was significant about the recent strike wave in France was that it occurred in the midst of such a reactionary period. It was the first *proletarian* blast of opposition to the New World Disorder—of course, we had already seen the peasant insurgency in Chiapas, Mexico and the Los Angeles upheaval following the acquittal of the racist cops who beat Rodney King.

What is necessary is a Bolshevik party that can transcend the false division between parliamentary class collaboration and apolitical militancy or syndicalism. As we note in the IEC memorandum:

"Even as small, fighting propaganda groups, the sections of the ICL embody the revolutionary program. It is our role to intervene with that program, to *provide revolutionary leadership*. Particularly in a period characterized by defensive struggles against bourgeois attacks, and by understandable skepticism in the working class about parties and Marxism, it is vital to struggle for a program of transitional demands that leads the proletariat ineluctably to one conclusion: the necessity for socialist revolution. The party is the instrumentality to win workers to this consciousness. Ceding the ground to alien class forces through economist liquidation of the party question or tailing of other currents, or conversely adopting a posture of sterile abstentionism or abstract propagandism, is to renounce our reason for existence."

In his famous work *What Is To Be Done*, Bolshevik leader V. I. Lenin fought against glorification of trade-union militancy. Socialist consciousness does not arise spontaneously from trade-union

struggle but has to be brought to the working class by a revolutionary party. Lenin argued for and built a party that was a genuine "tribune of the people," seeking to mobilize the proletariat against all forms of oppression—racial, national, sexual. That kind of party is absolutely counterposed to participation in or support for a bourgeois popular-front government. This stands in sharp contrast to how our centrist opponents act. In Italy, for example, the centrists are embedded in RC, which lends its support to the current prime minister, Prodi, a well-known opponent of abortion rights. Meanwhile, Rifondazione holds joint meetings with scum like the chauvinist Northern League, which terrorizes immigrants.

The Fight for Programmatic Clarity

Of course, our small revolutionary international is hardly immune to the disintegrative pressures of this period of post-Soviet reaction. Political fights have been necessary in our Italian and French sections, among others. The former editor of our Italian journal, *Spartaco*, who rhapsodized over the "unlimited general strike," took his liquidationist politics to their logical conclusion and joined RC. Unlike our opponents on the left, who either remain silent, lie or present sanitized versions of their organizations, we strive to be candid in assessing the tasks and difficulties facing us. This is not because we have an inflated sense of

self-importance, but a recognition that the state of the revolutionary vanguard is in itself a critical question for the workers movement.

A Leninist party is a vanguard party—it is not a "party of the whole class," like the British Labour Party, in which the more advanced workers are swamped by the more backward ones. A Leninist party strives to recruit into its ranks the most advanced workers and members of the revolutionary intelligentsia. To do so it must politically expose the pretensions of other tendencies in the workers movement, particularly the centrists. That is why we have a polemical press. The overwhelming preponderance of Lenin's *Collected Works* consists not of descriptions of how the working masses are oppressed, but of polemical articles that sharply delineate the Bolshevik vanguard from Menshevism and centrism. This polemical approach toward external political opponents goes hand in hand with keeping one's house in order internally. This is true not least of all because soft spots within the revolutionary party inevitably show up, in more magnified form, as the program of our competitors.

What was particularly sharply posed during Cold War II was the need to stand for unconditional defense of the degenerated and deformed workers states against imperialist attack and internal counter-revolution, while calling for proletarian political revolution to oust the parasitic

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Young Spartacus

Interview with Union Summer Activist



Koester/Time

Union Summer activists protest a non-union hotel in Los Angeles.

The enthusiastic response on college campuses to the AFL-CIO's "Union Summer" program probably surprised no one so much as the union bureaucrats themselves. Over 3,000 young people applied for 1,000 slots, and program organizers scrambled to add extra places. In the end, some 1,200 young people—52 percent of them minorities, 54 percent women, 42 percent from union families—were organized into 41 separate "waves," or groups. Participants were given a place to sleep and \$210 a week during three-week stints working as adjuncts to local AFL-CIO unions in 22 different cities across the country.

The increasing gap between the ostentatious wealth of the ruling class and the impoverishment of a widening pool of those at the bottom of this society has led to a renewed popularity of the union movement. A recent *Newsweek* (8 July) poll shows that 68 percent of young people in the U.S. view the unions positively; this spring, campus workers

strikes at Yale and Barnard won considerable student support. The existence of a layer of young people eager to associate themselves with the working class is, for Marxists, an important development. While the motivations of the Union Summer youth we encountered varied widely—from those who saw union work as social work, seeking to aid poorly paid workers viewed as less fortunate than themselves, to those looking for opportunities for civil disobedience and "direct action" against racism and injustice—almost all saw the labor movement as a vehicle in the struggle for a better society. The program was pitched in a way that appealed to this sentiment, as explained to the *Nation* (12 August) by AFL-CIO Union Summer coordinator Andy Levin: "Put simply, we want to inject a massive dose of class consciousness into youth politics.... Our message is that labor is where it's at in the fight for social justice in the nineties."

But for the "new" AFL-CIO leader-

ship under John Sweeney, "social justice" is just rhetoric, a useful cover in which to package the real content of their program, which is the same as that of the old AFL-CIO: support to the status quo and pressuring the capitalist Democratic Party. The Union Summer program was consciously modeled on the electoralist strategy and civil disobedience tactics of the liberal-led civil rights movement of the 1950s and '60s, based on the premise that workers' rights will be won through government action, not through class struggle.

Even a serious effort to organize the mass of unorganized industrial workers in the heavily black South would pit the labor movement directly against the capitalist state—the courts and the cops—as well as the racist terrorists of the KKK. Far from being a neutral arbiter in the struggle between labor and capital, the state defends the private property and rule of the capitalist class. America's rulers foster racial divisions in order to hide the class divide fundamental to capitalist society. It is in the interests of the whole working class to wage a frontal assault on the pervasive oppression of blacks in the U.S. The leadership of the working class desperately needs is a party which recognizes the bosses' government as the class enemy and champions the cause of black liberation as part of a revolutionary struggle to eliminate the capitalist system.

The unions in this country were built in opposition to the bosses' government. But today all the militant tactics used in organizing the unions—from mass pickets and sit-down strikes to "secondary strikes" against the suppliers and transporters of struck facilities—are shunned by the labor tops because they are "illegal." So Sweeney & Co. prate that strikes are "outmoded," that consumer boycotts and impotent campaigns to expose corporate greed are the only possible tactics in labor's arsenal. Most Union Summer youth never even got near a union organizing drive. Rather, they were mobilized

in endless public relations gimmicks where they were on show as the supposed "new blood" which Sweeney promised to bring to the labor movement.

We publish below an interview with Momoko, who worked in the Union Summer program in the San Francisco Bay Area. Particularly telling is her account of how Union Summer participants went to the picket lines of striking SEIU janitors only on their own initiative. The one time they were officially dispatched to the lines was...to hand out leaflets telling workers who were honoring the janitors' pickets to "go back to work." So "raising class consciousness" AFL-CIO style turns out to be mobilizing youth to act as scabherders for the capitalists. That used to be the job of the Junior Chamber of Commerce! There can be no effective union movement or labor solidarity without recognition of the fundamental principle that picket lines mean don't cross! *Young Spartacus* supporters showed Momoko *Labor's Turning Point*, a film about the 1934 Minneapolis Teamster strikes, which were led by Trotskyists, to illustrate both what the picket line has meant historically and the crucial need for revolutionary leadership in the labor movement.

No doubt the experience of Union Summer participants varied a bit across the country. *Young Spartacus* would like to hear from other Union Summer activists about their work in the program and the lessons they've drawn from it. There is a great leap involved in moving from simply identifying with the working class as one of the victimized sections of the population to seeing it as the key agency for revolutionary social change. The proletariat has the social power to bring an end to this entire system of exploitation and oppression, wherein the many are forced to toil for the tiny minority who own industry. In freeing itself, the working class will necessarily liberate all sections of society from the manifold forms of oppression

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Young Spartacus

Spartacus Youth Clubs fight to win students to the cause of the working class.

Revolutionary Internationalism in Action

ICL Protests Bombing of Iraq

As soon as the International Communist League's Japanese comrades reported that American B-52 bombers had left Guam for Iraq—hours before the U.S. media announced the imperialist attack—the ICL swung into action from Tokyo to Toronto and from Berlin to Berkeley. The Spartacist League/U.S. immediately issued a protest leaflet. On September 3, the day of Clinton's terror-bombing, Spartacus Youth Club members in New York City organized a soap-box protest rally at Hunter College. Our comrades in the German Jugend Spartakisten (Spartacist Youth) built a rally at Humboldt University in Berlin, while our Canadian comrades demonstrated at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver. The next day, the Juventud Espartaquista rallied at the huge UNAM university campus in Mexico City.

In addition to mounting our own protests, the Spartacus Youth Clubs also mobilized contingents for, and had speakers at, demonstrations organized by the reformist Workers World Party in New York City and San Francisco on September 3. Our call that "Saddam Hussein should be dealt with by his own working people for his crimes against them" drew applause from the many Near Eastern protesters. And our insistence that "the main enemy is at home: U.S. imperialism" sharply counterposed our revolutionary opposition to imperialist war to the fake leftists who seek to pressure liberal imperialist "doves." One person who attended the San Francisco protest with the SYC noted the pathetic idiocy of the reformists' bleat, "Money for jobs, not for war" when the same government that bombed Iraq just gutted the welfare system here, condemning millions to death in this country.

Our international protests were not cheap-talk "anti-Americanism" but true examples of Leninist internationalism. Many sections of the ICL outside the U.S. issued their own leaflets, which in addition to condemning the U.S. assault on Iraq took aim at their own ruling classes and the reformist misleaders who tie the oppressed to their exploiters. Our comrades of the Ligne Trotskyiste de France (LTF) carried placards protesting the bombing at a demonstration in Paris in defense of African refugees fighting



Spartacist League, Spartacus Youth Clubs protest imperialist attack on Iraq (clockwise from left): San Francisco; MIT campus in Cambridge, Massachusetts; University of Maryland; New York's Times Square.

deportation. Drawing the connection between the crimes of U.S. imperialism and those of the French bourgeoisie, the LTF leaflet headlined, "Cops Attack Africans in Paris, U.S. Imperialism Attacks Iraq—Down with the Racist New World Disorder!"

Our German comrades of the Spartacist Workers Party (SpAD) exposed the hypocrisy of the Social Democratic Party's condemnation of "superpower USA." These reformist spokesmen for German imperialism, who are in a de facto coalition with the right-wing Kohl government, are simply reflecting the heightened rivalries between these two imperialist powers since the collapse of

the Soviet Union. Germany is today the largest arms exporter to Turkey, which is carrying out a bloody war of terror against the Kurdish Workers Party (PKK) and the Kurdish people, while the German government viciously oppresses the large Turkish and Kurdish minority in its country. The SpAD's leaflet demands, "Down with the ban on the PKK and all Kurdish groups! Full citizenship rights for all those who have made it here!"

In Milano, the Lega Trotskista d'Italia (LTDI) exposed the reformist Rifondazione Comunista (RC). Our Italian comrades' leaflet denounced RC for demanding imperialist sanctions against Iraq in 1991 as an "alternative" to bombs. In fact, the imperialists did impose a starvation boycott on Iraq, which has killed some 600,000 Iraqi children. The LTDI leaflet proclaimed that "blood is on the hands of those who supported sanctions." An LTDI speaker at a September 6 protest outside the U.S. consulate drew the class line against the capitalist "Olive Tree" popular-front government supported by RC, calling on the working class in "Break with the Olive Tree/Rifondazione! For a revolutionary workers party!"

The Spartacist League/Britain exposed the ever more tattered pretensions of the Labour Party to represent the interests of working people. In a leaflet distributed at a protest initiated by a Kurdish group in London, our comrades noted, "The Labour Party leadership gave its wholehearted support to this murderous war; the so-called left of the Labour Party like Tony Benn and the pacifists of CND supported a policy of starving Iraq through UN sanctions." The statement denounced British imperialism's hypocritical talk of "humanitarian aid," explaining that it means "mass terror against oppressed

Catholics on the streets of Northern Ireland," "scores of deaths of black people in police custody" in Britain and "brutal incarceration and deportation of refugees and asylum seekers."

The comrades of the Spartacist Group/Japan issued a leaflet noting that it was the Japanese rulers who bankrolled the 1991 imperialist war against Iraq, when for the first time since World War II the Japanese army was sent overseas. Calling for revolutionary struggle against the Japanese and U.S. capitalist rulers, their leaflet stated: "Japan is not a colony of the U.S. but the second-largest imperialist power in the world, with its own appetites—to once again enslave and exploit the workers and toilers of Asia." U.S. warships based in Japan were deployed for the latest cruise missile attack. Our comrades explained, "What is needed are strikes by the Japanese proletariat working on the bases, similar to those that occurred in Okinawa during the Vietnam War in 1971 which prevented U.S. ships and planes from leaving the base for 24 hours. U.S. military out of Japan!"

Here in the belly of the beast, the SL/U.S. called for mass protest against the main enemy of the international proletariat, U.S. imperialism. We reprint the September 3 SL leaflet below.

In the early hours of this morning, the United States launched a terrorist cruise missile attack on Iraq ordered by the Clinton White House. We say: U.S. imperialism—hands off Iraq! U.S. and all imperialist forces out of the Persian Gulf! This latest attack on Iraq is a cynical attempt by the Clinton White House to boost the Democrats' electoral fortunes in

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Union Summer...

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rooted in class divisions. But the working class will only use its power if it is made conscious of its position in society and its historic mission. It is the job of Marxists to bring this consciousness to the working class—to fuse our scientific understanding of society with the social power of the proletariat.

The AFL-CIO labor bureaucracy, today as before, was aptly described by Daniel DeLeon, one of America's early Marxists, as "labor lieutenants of the capitalist class." It has been bought off, essentially hired to defend the interests of the bourgeoisie within the labor movement. To many Union Summer activists, the hold of this bureaucratic layer on the working class must seem like a death grip. But this appearance is deceptive. There is great disaffection building up at the base of American society. The power wielded by these venal careerists is not based on any earned authority; it could easily be shattered with the next eruption of class struggle. The task of Marxists is to fight within the working class and among all layers of the oppressed to build the integrated revolutionary workers party necessary to revitalize the labor movement and lead its future struggles to victory. Revolutionary student youth can play an important role on the campuses by organizing Spartacus Youth Clubs, which seek to be the student/youth auxiliary to a class-struggle opposition within the labor movement. We look forward to winning Union Summer activists to this perspective.

* * *

Young Spartacus: What made you take an interest in labor struggles and join the Union Summer program?

Momoko: First of all, I've always been aware that the working class has always been exploited, and I never equated the pro-capitalist view of the bureaucrats with the actual views of workers themselves. I was aware that there has to be economic justice for justice to exist in all areas. My interests were heading in the direction of labor history as a history major, but I had never had any interactions with rank-and-file union members and that's what I wanted to find out about.

When the AFL-CIO sent recruiters to our campus, they showed *Salt of the Earth* (a movie about striking miners in New Mexico) and then after that there was a short question-and-answer session and applications were handed out. I was excited because the organizer who spoke to us was young and Latina. She defied the stereotype of the union organizer, you know, wearing the Democrats' T-shirt or a cap that says "Made in America." She mentioned that her favorite book was [Frantz Fanon's] *The Wretched of the Earth*. She completely related to our frustrations as college students of only learning theory and not being able to apply any of it.



Labor must be mobilized in defense of all the oppressed: trade unionists march in August 1995 Philadelphia demonstration for death row political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal.

YSp: Where we warned that the AFL-CIO's "new voice" shares the same pro-capitalist program and aversion to class struggle as the old Cold War bureaucrats who preceded them, much of the left has embraced Sweeney's claims that consumer boycotts and civil disobedience will revitalize the labor movement. Were you expecting Sweeney's election as president of the AFL-CIO to make a change?

Momoko: No. A labor organizer came to give us a talk and introduce us to the labor movement. It had nothing to do with the Union Summer recruitment program, but she voiced a lot of hope for the labor movement because Sweeney had just been elected along with [United Mine Workers chief] Trumka and [AFSCME leader] Linda Chavez-Thompson. But I had read either in *Workers Vanguard* or *Z Magazine* about Sweeney, the fact that he was tied to the CIA and that this was just another old AFL-CIO bureaucrat. There was just not much of a difference except in what he was saying in order to appeal to the people, but really with the same program.

YSp: When you joined Union Summer, what were you expecting your activity to be?

Momoko: At first I was definitely expecting a longer orientation which included the history of the AFL-CIO. We were given a lot of reading material, but it was mostly material about the positive side of the AFL-CIO. It was interesting because some of it touched on the general strikes that happened in the '30s and how victorious the unions were. But there was no mention of how much the unions have changed since then and how their strategies have become very limiting and very appeasing of the capitalists. I guess I was naive to expect that the Central Labor Council would actually admit to their weaknesses and their kiss-butt attitude toward the capitalists and that we needed a change. But when I arrived there, you know, I saw that the people who were going to be working with us, the site coordinators, were in their 20s, so I guess for some reason I expected that they would have very leftist views. And I was to find out later that they were very much tied to the Democrats; they're proponents of electoral politics. That was very disap-

pointing. I expect that the AFL-CIO Organizing Institute is graduating all these young, supposed leftists to fight for the labor movement while believing in Clinton as the labor proponent.

YSp: Were you expecting that you would be assigned to help with a union organizing drive?

Momoko: I was expecting to be introduced to organizing and how that's done, although I was really nervous because I've never been a laborer myself. But it turned out that none of us were called out to organize people. I thought that at least we would be able to interact with workers and talk to them and ask them questions about how they feel about the union and what it's doing for them, what it's not doing for them. But it turned out that we were just showpieces for the AFL-CIO. We'd wear our Union Summer T-shirts and we'd help organize these ridiculous rallies, but it didn't do much but maybe vent some frustrations for workers and maybe appease workers who probably want a lot more done for them and their struggles. And so basically the only people I met that have to do with the unions were the leaders.

YSp: What was your main assignment?

Momoko: My main assignment was organizing one rally that was called "America Needs a Raise." We would drive out to various locations and solicit people on the street to come to this rally. We told them they'd be able to voice their frustrations and their opinions on issues that affect the common worker, specifically raising the minimum wage, but also other issues like health care and stability and different things. It was supposed to be a town hall meeting but it really wasn't because the speakers had been hand-picked way before the day. Linda Chavez-Thompson was there. Two people who hadn't been chosen to speak—one was a guy who was really ecstatic about the forming of a new labor party—were told to shut up because they supposedly had "politically biased opinions" that shouldn't have been expressed. This was pretty ridiculous because outside of the town hall meeting there were people holding signs that said, "My president cares about me" and "Vote Democrat in '96." I was outside ushering people in. I

was actually told not to let anyone with "those crazy newspapers" come in, meaning *Workers Vanguard* and another group.

YSp: During your three weeks in the Union Summer program, the janitors in SEIU Local 1877 were on strike around the Bay Area. These largely minority workers, many of them immigrants, were fighting to bring their wages up to the federal poverty level and to have health care coverage for their families. Our comrades and supporters joined the picket lines daily yet we never ran across any people from Union Summer.

Momoko: Actually, a few of us did go out on the picket lines. There was one guy, who's at the Organizing Institute now, who suggested a day off for the picketing janitors because it was Father's Day and they should be with their families. So he organized a bunch of us to go and picket for them instead.

YSp: The janitors faced a difficult struggle, especially given their dispersal among many different buildings. They really needed the stationary engineers, Teamsters and garbage drivers to honor their strike. But the Central Labor Councils did nothing to get these unions to shut down the buildings. We have insisted that picket lines mean that no one and nothing must go through.

Momoko: A few days before a rally for striking Safeway workers, a few of us Union Summer people were called out to help the Justice for Janitors program. We went to some place in San Jose where some workers didn't show up for work one day because of the strike.

YSp: They were honoring the janitors' picket lines?

Momoko: They were honoring the picket lines. But when we arrived there, we were given flyers that said "Go back to work" and we were instructed to hand those out to union members who had refused to cross the janitors' line. They told us to rush over there in the morning and hand out these notices to the workers because we "didn't need their help," to quote the notice that we were giving to them. The notice said we will ask for your help when we need it. What the workers were doing that was so wrong was the fact that they hadn't called a vote to honor the picket line! And they looked really pissed off; they didn't want to go in to work.

YSp: The SEIU bureaucrats insisted on a "rolling strike" where the janitors would shut down one building for one day and then go back to work the next day. Janitors in Oakland and San Ramon got fed up with this sabotage after two weeks and voted to stay out until they had a contract. What did you think of the SEIU's rolling strike strategy?

Momoko: I thought that was ridiculous, it was obvious that it wasn't hurting the companies at all. It was just another conciliatory action, voicing anger at the corporations but also saying at the same time, "We just want a piece of the cake. Here, come on, we're not really doing anything to aggravate the situation, so



Capitalist chief Clinton at AFSCME convention in June. Labor tops tie workers to racist Democrats, push chauvinist protectionist poison.



Cohen/Public Employee Press

WV Photo

maybe you can give us part of a deal." The leaders admitted to the fact that one-day strikes weren't really hurting the companies because, you know, how much trash can accumulate in one day?

There was actually a Union Summer intern in my group whose father was a janitor with Local 1877. He was pissed; he wanted a general strike, not a puny rolling strike. And I remember when our group went over to the local hall, right before an action at the Great Mall, we were given this grand speech by one of the leaders about how effective rolling strikes were and how they were replacing the old-fashioned and no longer effective general strike. The woman whose father is a janitor was shaking her head.

The action at the Great Mall was the most aggressive action I experienced while on Union Summer. We ran through the mall with our picket signs, screaming at the security guards and handing out leaflets to the customers about the janitors strike. It was supposed to spread awareness of the plight of the janitors. I don't think they were on strike against the mall. I guess this was supposed to be the time to vent frustrations for the janitors.

YSp: The "corporate campaign" has become a really common tactic of the pro-capitalist labor leadership, where strikers' impulse to use mass picketing to shut down production is derailed into consumer boycotts, letter-writing campaigns and picketing shareholders meetings to "win" liberal public opinion and appeal to "image-conscious" corporations. What do you think it would have taken for the janitors to win their struggle?

Momoko: A general strike: all the other union workers that compose the workforce that the janitors are part of should have honored the picket lines, not shown up for work, and shut the companies down for as long as it takes for them to grant what the strikers were demanding.

YSp: Why do you think that didn't happen?

Momoko: The leadership just wants to appease the corporations and not cause any trouble for the unions and their reputation because they're so tied to the capitalists and the politicians.

YSp: In this election year, given that the labor leadership is trying to mobilize votes for the Democratic Party, you can imagine that it would be a big problem for them to have that kind of confrontation with the capitalists and the Democratic mayors and politicians. As Marxists, we see that both the Democrats and the Republicans are capitalist parties. The welfare bill, which is a direct attack on blacks, immigrants and the unionized workforce, was passed with bipartisan support and signed into law by Clinton. A woman in Boston told us she was disappointed that her assignment was to sign up people to vote. Did any people from your group do voter registration?



Bay Area janitors' rally in May. Union Summer activists were told to hand out "go back to work" leaflets to workers honoring janitors' picket lines.

Momoko: Towards the end of the program, I asked one of the site coordinators what I could continue to do in the Bay Area for the labor movement, and he said, "Oh, you know we're going to have voter registration going on. You can definitely help with that." And I thought, if that's all you want us to do, that's really helping the labor movement! I and another dissenter confronted one of the site coordinators about the issue of proposing voting as opposed to any direct action, and the coordinator just kind of blew us off by saying that "You guys are college idealists. I was one myself, too, you know. You'll soon come to see that it just doesn't work to be an idealist and this is the best way." What was frustrating was that at the beginning of the program, I started befriendng a few people and I really saw them as having a lot of potential for changing society. But towards the end of the program a lot of people were buying into this whole electoral politics system.

YSp: From what you describe, it sounds like the Union Summer leaders were pretty consciously looking for people they could train to carry on with their program.

Momoko: Definitely. Towards the middle of the first week, I think they consciously picked out people who had "leadership abilities," people who didn't question why we were having this rally and what it was for, people who were just willing to go out and get as many numbers as they could. I and a few other people live in the Bay Area; we could have easily stayed over to help them. They just selected the people who were obviously not questioning the labor leadership's ideas and strategies.

YSp: Some Union Summer people went to help the strawberry pickers in Watsonville who are fighting for a union. Like the janitors, these workers are over-

whelmingly immigrant and are among the most vulnerable and exploited, particularly in the atmosphere of Prop. 187 anti-immigrant hysteria and Clinton's racist "counter-terrorism" bill. Yet the AFL-CIO has been pushing trade protectionism, allying itself with American imperialism's drive for profits and appealing to blatant "yellow peril" racism. You earlier mentioned the union bureaucracy's "American jobs for American workers" flag-waving rhetoric. Can you tell us more about that?

Momoko: I noticed at the Labor Council building different signs that said "Buy only American-made products." "Made in the USA." Their argument was: support American labor and don't support "Them" with a capital T, the "others." The site coordinators kept emphasizing how international the AFL-CIO is, that they support all workers around the world. We were shown a film on the *maquiladoras* in Latin America working for Gap. But there was just no discussion on what the AFL-CIO is or should be doing for them. It was only "Boycott Gap."

One girl, who was probably the biggest supporter of the leadership and the Democrats, said, "Well, maybe we can shut their plants down or something, if we got enough people mobilized to boycott these products." And then another woman spoke out and said, "Wait a minute. If we do succeed in closing a store down, we'll also be succeeding in taking away jobs from people. As awful as their conditions are, they depend on what they're doing for their livelihood. It isn't just a hand-aid issue where we can boycott products to hurt a small, minuscule sector of the big problem." I think what she was trying to say was that obviously we have to just completely overhaul this system, because capitalism is the problem and capitalists are the enemy. But she was told to end the discussion because it was getting late.

YSp: What you were starting to discuss is what really needs to happen—organizing workers on both sides of the border to fight their common enemy. Reviving the labor movement requires uniting *all* workers in struggle against racial oppression and anti-immigrant chauvinism. That's why we raise the demand for full citizenship rights for all immigrants.

Some Union Summer activists in Chicago were able to be part of the action on June 29 against the KKK, who were trying to recruit for race terror.

Momoko: I was really excited when I read about Union Summer interns going to the anti-KKK demonstration. I was wondering how they were able to get away with that!

YSp: The Partisan Defense Committee and the Spartacist League have mobilized workers and minorities in united-front demonstrations supported by key unions to stop the fascists when they

have tried to take their program of race terror to the cities. The fascists are the shock troops of the ruling class. They must be met by the social power of the working class to crush them when they are still small. But, for example, when we organized a labor/black mobilization in Springfield, Illinois in January 1994 against the Klan, the AFL-CIO tops told union locals to stay away. Why do you think that the AFL-CIO bureaucrats don't mobilize the ranks to come out and defeat the racists?

Momoko: If they don't even want to aggressively fight corporations when their workers want to strike, there's no way they'd want to fight the KKK in the interests of their multiracial members and all of society. Because they want to stay away from any kind of action that can cause a lot of tension and aggravate the peace that they have with the cops. I don't know if they see the KKK as a threat. I definitely didn't see the KKK as a threat until recently, until actually when we started discussing the action against the KKK and what it means to have these fascist people in reserve for capitalists in the future when they might be needed, because I never had any economic analysis of fascism. I remember being afraid in high school when I turned on the TV and saw a bunch of skinheads. People basically calmed me down and said, "They're just a stupid group out there preaching hatred, don't even worry about them. We're being protected by our cops and our government."

YSp: The cops and the government showed exactly what side they're on in Chicago when they arrested nine anti-Klan protesters for successfully defending themselves against the fascists. A Union Summer activist was among those arrested, and they are still facing charges. You and another woman from your Union Summer program wrote a very strong letter of solidarity to those who had been arrested.

Momoko: The church burnings were heavily reported through the media. Even events like that weren't discussed during the Union Summer program.

YSp: These are critical issues for American labor. The working class cannot win any of its struggles if it's divided along race and ethnic and national lines. A lot of industry is moving to "open shop" states in the South. Last summer, poultry workers in Alabama lost a unionization effort after white plant supervisors burned a cross on company property to intimidate the mainly black workers. And in defending the capitalist profit system, the labor misleaders necessarily adapt to the racism of the system.

Momoko: It's also interesting that there were Union Summer programs in the South. There was a Southern bus tour, and a few of us asked our site coordinators what the Southern bus tour was going to do. And the site coordinator replied that it was going to be a major voter registration campaign—and that was it! And we had been told that the South was the most critical area in the country to organize workers because that's the most unorganized region, but here they were sending Union Summer people to go and register people to vote. That was a direct message to us that they weren't very interested in organizing workers and thereby causing trouble.

YSp: You had expressed earlier that by the end of your Union Summer internship you were somewhat discouraged about the prospects for labor struggle. Can you describe the way you were thinking then?

Momoko: At the rally where Linda Chavez-Thompson told those two people to shut up, a bunch of people in the back rows would cheer and clap their hands; they were wearing the "Union Yes" shirts, they were obviously union members. That was really frustrating to me.

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Trotskyism...

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Stalinist bureaucracies. We not only called for this but we put our money where our mouth is. We pushed our resources to the limit to intervene in the decisive battles where the fate of the homeland of the October Revolution was fought out. When the Afghan city of Jalalabad was besieged by CIA-backed *mujahedin*, the Partisan Defense Committee organized a campaign to provide needed assistance. We mobilized our forces internationally for an extensive intervention into the DDR when the Berlin Wall came down; this was followed by our work in the Soviet Union itself.

We were a hundred times right against our fake-left opponents, who claimed that the working class would gain by supporting capitalist restorationists like Yeltsin in Russia or Lech Walesa in Poland. But being right doesn't always make you rich, at least immediately. As Trotsky explained to his followers after the crushing of the Chinese Revolution of 1925-27, you don't recruit masses in the wake of defeats. We didn't gain a lot of new adherents in the Reagan years, and most of our opponents didn't do us the favor of self-destructing. So effective polemical struggle against our opponents remains an essential task.

A revolutionary party is not built simply through the process of engaging and leading the masses in struggle. A Leninist party has two central tasks: to *maintain* the programmatic integrity of the party by ceaseless vigilance and internal struggle and to struggle always to *extend* the party. The pressure of alien class influences emanating from bourgeois society constantly bears down on the vanguard. Inevitably some party cadre become worn out or demoralized. Challenges to the program emanating from within the party, as well as external challenges, must be combatted politically. As long ago as 1888, Friedrich Engels stated: "It seems that every workers' party, in a great country, can only develop itself by internal struggle, and this is based on the laws of dialectical development in general."

A Leninist party is built through a process of splits and fusions with other tendencies. This was true of Lenin's Bolshevik Party and James P. Cannon's Socialist Workers Party (SWP). And it's also been our own history. The Revolutionary Tendency (RT), forerunner of the Spartacist League, originated in the early 1960s as a revolutionary opposition to the SWP majority's capitulation to Castroism and black nationalism. The RT itself underwent a split with the Healy/Wohlfarth gang. A few years after the 1966 founding of the SL, there was a split with an unprincipled bloc headed by Harry Turner and Kay Ellens, the latter now with the newspaper *Spark*. But then a couple years later the SL fused with sev-



Striking municipal workers in Johannesburg, September 1995. Combative black proletariat of South Africa needs a Bolshevik party.

eral New Left and former Maoist groupings who had come over to Trotskyism, the most prominent being the Communist Working Collective in 1971. That's all within a decade of the founding of the RT.

Splits and fusions alike can be methods of building the party, on the condition that both the unification and the split in each case is properly motivated. A false unification can be politically fatal; an example was the merger in Spain in 1935 of Andrés Nin's Left Opposition with the Right Opposition group led by Maurin to create the Workers Party of Marxist Unification, whose Spanish acronym was the POUM, which became the key centrist obstacle to proletarian revolution in Spain. Likewise, to split when necessary is not, as some would have it, a sign of political weakness. No crime can be greater than to put off a necessary party fight out of fear that it might lead to a split. As Cannon, for many years leader of revolutionary Trotskyism in the U.S., put it during a factional struggle in the SWP in the early 1950s: "You can set it down as a law for this party fight as for all others when great issues are at stake; the more resolute, aggressive, and uncompromising the struggle against the revisionist tendency the smaller will be the losses, if any, in the long run."

The counterposition of "mass work" to Leninist party building is dead wrong. The tasks of a party at any given time depend on many factors, including the size and capacity of the organization, the state of the class struggle, and the relationship of forces within the left. In the early 1930s, several years after the Left Opposition in the U.S. was founded, the American Trotskyist movement was challenged by a guy named Albert Weisbord. Weisbord, in point of fact, had some credentials as a mass worker; as a member of the Communist Party (CP), he had led the militant Passaic textile strike in 1926. Now Weisbord argued for ignoring the CP and jumping directly

into organizing the masses. This was a period in which the unions were mainly in retreat, and subjectively revolutionary workers were overwhelmingly concentrated in the CP. The Trotskyists rejected Weisbord's advice, and concentrated on recruiting cadre from the CP as the best route to the masses. A few years later, when the American workers began to show some forward motion, it was the Trotskyists who led the Minneapolis general strike. Weisbord's group underwent several splits and disappeared from the scene.

This does not mean that even small propaganda groups cannot lead exemplary mass struggles. On several occasions, we have mobilized significant numbers of trade unionists and minorities to stop intended marches by fascist scum like the KKK and Nazis. Recently, we initiated an anti-Klan mobilization in Chicago on very short notice. Undoubtedly we would have had more forces if Daley's Democratic Party machine hadn't kept the Klan rally secret until the last minute. But when the Klan marched toward the anti-fascist demonstrators, they ran into a much bigger force than their own, and received a well-deserved trouncing.

Germany: No Capitulation to Stalinism

For the past year, we have waged a sustained political fight internally against Jan Norden, longtime editor of *Workers Vanguard* (see "A Shamefaced Defection from Trotskyism," WV No. 648, 5 July), who was expelled in June along with his associate Marjorie Stamberg for willfully violating our organizational rules: denying in practice that the party has a monopoly over the public political activity of its members. Norden did not openly fly his political colors but took his differences underground, acting as an undeclared factionalist. A long and thorough internal political discussion clarified the issues among the membership.

In the end, despite his years of authority in the party, Norden left with only his longtime political collaborator and personal companion, Stamberg, and his protégé Negrete. The following citation by James P. Cannon fits Norden to a T:

"Experience has shown that when party members cease to be revolutionists their whole attitude toward the party changes. They begin to hate the party; the party becomes a prison to them, and they insist on breaking out. That—and that alone—is what causes splits, if you want to know the real reason."

Norden's split over the party question was the first crack in our central cadre in many years. Had his revisionist course not been fought and defeated, it would have wrecked our party. As it was, he almost succeeded in causing a split in our German section. In our article, which laid out the political issues behind Norden's defection in detail, we labeled him a "Pabloite of the second mobilization." Michel Pablo was an adventurer who emerged after World War II as the leader of the decimated forces of the Fourth International. In the 1950s he predicted "centuries of deformed workers states," discarding the Trotskyist understanding that the degenerated and deformed workers states were unstable and transitional regimes which would be removed either through proletarian political revolution or through capitalist counterrevolution. Pablo prettified the Stalinist bureaucracies, and claimed that "The Communist Parties retain the possibility in certain circumstances of roughly outlining a revolutionary orientation." Seeking to pressure the Stalinists to the left, Pablo wrote off the forging of Trotskyist parties as the critical factor in carrying out international proletarian revolution.

Norden's outlook is actually very akin to Pabloism, an expectation that various non-proletarian forces, whether it be nationalists, Castroites or burnt-out ex-Stalinists, can somehow under certain circumstances play a social or political role that is in fact precluded by their class composition, history and program. Norden's refusal to accept the reality of capitalist counterrevolution in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe drove him from episodic impressionism to outright revisionism. He began to prettify alien class forces. He greatly exaggerated the military capacity of Hussein's army, while Stamberg declared that the Cuban masses under the sway of Castroite ideology had "class consciousness." Norden began to infer that anyone under the guns of imperialism or persecuted by the imperialist state (such as former DDR government officials) was by definition "progressive," or at any rate a prospect for "revolutionary regroupment."

In the immediate wake of the counter-revolutionary destruction of the DDR, Norden, who played a central role in guiding the work of our German section, predicted massive proletarian resistance in eastern Germany and advocated agitation for a general strike. If economist calls for an "unlimited general strike" during the recent strike struggles in France and Italy were wrong, Norden's call in the former DDR was downright absurd. Here was a situation of mass layoffs and factory closures, where the workers were demoralized and bewildered and hadn't yet realized what had happened to them. This was the denial of reality.

Then came suppression of the Trotskyist analysis and program. We had an extensive internal discussion over capitalist counterrevolution in the DDR and the former Soviet Union. This discussion focused on the key role of consciousness. We produced something like six internal bulletins on this. The most cogent analysis of the events in the DDR was published in *Spartacist* No. 45-46 (Winter 1990-91) in the documents by comrades Seymour and St. John, which pointed to the critical absence of class consciousness, eroded by decades of misrule by the Stalinist bureaucracies, that paved the way for capitalist restoration. The Seymour and St. John documents were suppressed from the German-



Monad Press



L'illustration

Popular Front leaders, social democrat Léon Blum and Stalinist Maurice Thorez, betrayed French general strike of 1936. Thorez declared: "It's necessary to know how to end a strike."

language edition of *Spartacist* for two years.

Then after the denial of reality and the suppression of the Trotskyist program came the overt political capitulation and adaptation to the Stalinists. This plunged to its most grotesque depth in a phrase in our public press in Germany, which Norden himself insisted upon, praising Stalin as commander in chief of the Red Army during World War II. And then there was Norden's speech at Berlin's Humboldt University in January 1995, where he repeatedly cozied up to an audience of the very Stalinist hacks we had intended to lead a workers political revolution against. His key phrase, repeated over and over again, was that "there was no revolutionary leadership." In other words, if he could have played history over again, Norden would have liquidated our party in the key period in which we fought for a workers political revolution in East Germany and for a red socialist Europe of workers councils. Instead he would have had us serve as "erudite" advisers to the Stalinist gravediggers of revolution.

Despite our tiny size, the power of our program was what counted in the pre-revolutionary situation presented in the winter of '89-90. At the beginning we were a small propaganda group without connections to the East German proletariat and intelligentsia. *But we were getting connected.* Soldiers in the East German army took our propaganda very seriously and when we called for soldiers committees, they tried to form them.

The January 1990 demonstration against the fascist desecration of a Soviet war memorial at East Berlin's Treptow Park is itself a flesh-and-blood example of the power of a revolutionary program in action and how even a small vanguard can make the leap to lead in a revolutionary or pre-revolutionary situation. A quarter of a million working people came out

Lenin, addressing Red Army troops, with Trotsky (right of podium), 1920. We fight for a new October Revolution.



in defense of the Soviet monument at our initiative, which was of course overtaken by the Stalinist SED, then the ruling party of the DDR. But our party speakers addressed 250,000 people in what was the first Trotskyist speech ever at a mass rally in a deformed workers state since Trotsky's Left Opposition was crushed.

The appeal of our program, the mass response to defend the DDR exemplified in the Treptow action, deeply frightened the imperialist bourgeoisie and the treacherous Stalinist bureaucrats. They literally moved up the date for *Anschluss* (unification)—advancing the elections which would decide the fate of East Germany by more than a month. The recognition that we were the revolutionary leadership was not lost on the class enemy or the decrepit Stalinists. The morning after the Treptow demonstration, the radio carried reports of the DDR

"round table" government denouncing the Spartacists. The West German social-democratic SPD, the Trojan horse of capitalist counterrevolution in the East, brought maximum pressure to bear on the SED to disavow the action. Although shaped by the disproportion of forces, there was in fact a contest between the ICL program of workers political revolution and the Stalinist program of capitulation and counterrevolution.

Leninism vs. Trade-Union Opportunism in Brazil

Norden's different conception of the party—its role and its methods of work—and his centrist adaptation to alien political programs was revealed in Brazil soon after the fight over Germany was resolved. For some time, we had been engaged in fraternal relations with the Luta Metalúrgica (LM) group in

Brazil, with Norden and Negrete (then a leading member of our group in Mexico) acting as the chief ICL representatives (see "A Break in Fraternal Relations with Luta Metalúrgica," *WV* No. 648, 5 July). We had made painful cuts to release the necessary cadre and financial resources to pursue the possibility for a historic breakthrough for revolutionary Trotskyism in Latin America. But when the party took control of this work away from Norden and Negrete, we discovered that LM and the ICL had been toys in Norden's game of smoke and mirrors. LM's real political problems had been prettified rather than openly struggled with, while the most crucial internal fights in the ICL (particularly those reflecting unfavorably on Norden, like over Germany) had been kept secret from LM. With "fraternal" relations like this, who needs distant consins?

The October 1994 "Declaration of Fraternal Relations" between LM and the ICL was contrived in the manner of a centrist outfit like the British Workers Power group. Norden and Negrete wrote the document themselves and then claimed falsely that it proved Luta Metalúrgica's deep and broad agreement with the ICL. It is typical for "internationalists" like Workers Power's LRCI to concoct such documents as an "orthodox" umbrella beneath which each national section can do as it pleases, in flagrant contradiction to genuine internationalism. Such agreements aren't worth the paper they're printed on. When the LRCI split last year, its two Latin American sections, which had been part of their "international" for several years, simply packed their bags and quit en masse. That shows how little real agreement there was.

Originating as a proletarian formation with a militant history in the steel industry center of Volta Redonda, LM had

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Pabloites of the Second Mobilization

Former *Workers Vanguard* editor Jan Norden and his tiny coterie showed up at the August 1 Spartacist League forum in New York City with a 95-page bulletin, published without a union "hug" (label), claiming that the International Communist League had undergone a "centrist turn" in the few short weeks since their expulsion. In his summary remarks, SL speaker Jon Brule pointed out that in the course of more than a year of internal discussion, during which we circulated at least 392 pages of documents by Norden and Stamberg alone, they repeatedly denied that they had any fundamental differences with the ICL. Brule noted:

"We characterized that as dishonest, underground, centrist political activity—somebody who has differences and doesn't openly argue them is dishonest. That's manifestly the case, isn't it? Just look at the title 'From a Drift Toward Abstentionism to Desertion From the Class Struggle'—this presumably all happened since June 7? In other words, by their own admission, they were pursuing underground undeclared factional activity inside the ICL."

Indeed a few weeks later, the Norden group posted a statement on the Internet that they were now the "Internationalist Group" (IG). They now insist, "We have fought against this turn, and would be doing so today in the ranks of the ICL were it not for our expulsion, which had the character of a preemptive strike to forestall a factional struggle." But less than three months earlier, in their final statement on the way out the door, Norden and Stamberg claimed that there was "not a sufficient basis for the declaration of a faction or tendency," repeatedly complaining about "enormous pressure to declare a faction" coming from the party majority and about the "push to force Norden and Stamberg to declare a faction!"

The Nordenites' cover story for our supposed "centrist turn" is that we

"deserted the class struggle" by breaking fraternal relations with the Brazilian Luta Metalúrgica (LM) group, allegedly as their MEL supporters in the municipal workers union in Volta Redonda were about to raise a motion to kick the cops out of the union at a June 19 union meeting. In fact, we broke relations with LM on the fundamental premise that the main

task in Brazil was to construct a revolutionary party based on the program of Trotskyism, and to put out a party press reflecting that program. But LM refused to break with a course of trade-union opportunism and rotten-bloc maneuvers.

As we noted in "A Break in Fraternal Relations with Luta Metalúrgica" (*WV* No. 648, 5 July): "Despite a formal advo-

cacy of the class independence of the workers, LM combined with non-Marxist and even sinister elements and brain-trusted the MEL slate without ever mentioning in their election propaganda the question of removing the cops from the municipal workers union." The real story is that given their own centrist appetites, the Nordenites find it incredible that we would break with a group of trade-union militants on something as unimportant to them as the party question.

It was the ICL which pushed LM to engage in a difficult and principled struggle against the police presence in the union. And they did so only when compelled by a police provocation (see "Military Police Invade Municipal Workers Assembly—Brazil: Hands Off Volta Redonda Union!" *WV* No. 642, 29 March). But the June 19 union meeting was *not* advertised as the showdown with the cops the Nordenites would have us believe. The notice for the meeting in the MEL union newsletter (7 June) called on the membership to turn out because "our wage campaign has begun"—with not a word about the question of cops in the union. As comrade Brule said at the August 1 SL forum in reply to the Nordenites' floor interventions regarding the municipal workers union meeting, "Not only do you make up a bogus issue here, but then you lie about that too."

When they were members of our organization, Norden and his protégé Negrete increasingly found themselves at odds with the ICL because they amnestied and conciliated LM's centrist policies, seeking to justify this with the argument that LM was under the guns of the bourgeois state. By this argument, Trotsky should never have broken with the P.O.U.M., who were savagely persecuted by the Stalinists during the Spanish Civil War. At the same time, Trotsky

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Ernest Mandel (left) and mentor Michel Pablo at 1988 Paris meeting. Norden "group" follows in footsteps of Pabloite liquidationism, rehashing charges of Spartacist "abstentionism."

The United Secretariat, 1974

"Spartacist League grouping is 'in practice,'⁵⁶ The Spartacist League has demonstrated time and again a sectarian abstention from the real, day-to-day struggles of the working class. It is, after all, not difficult to find

"Spartacist League, Anatomy of a Sect," published by the Canadian Revolutionary Marxist Group in June 1974. Reprinted in "Hate Trotskyism, Hate the Spartacist League" No. 1

The Norden "Group," 1996

"erratic course of the ICL's International Secretariat (I.S.), which has in recent months veered sharply to the right toward a policy of abstention from the class struggle. In order to carry out its bureaucratic

"From a Drift Toward Abstentionism to Desertion from the Class Struggle," by the Norden "group," July 1996. Reprinted in "Hate Trotskyism, Hate the Spartacist League" No. 9

Trotskyism...

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broken empirically with the popular front on its own terrain. Their opposition to the now electorally defeated Popular Front led by Lula's Workers Party and their understanding of the importance of the fight against racial oppression provided a basis for what should have been a modest declaration of fraternal relations. Fraternal relations are a process of testing apparent programmatic agreement through common work and debate of differences. We recognized that the transformation of LM, consisting mainly of self-taught workers, into a Leninist propaganda group would not be easy. They had no party press and no conception of polemical work against other groups on the left. In fact, when we sent comrades to Brazil, they discovered that most members of other left groups in the large cities had never heard of LM.

Nor was LM familiar with Leninist organizational norms. They had meetings without motions or minutes. These procedures are no guarantee of Bolshevism but without them an organization is doomed to Menshevik amorphousness, with no mechanism for internal party struggle. We fought hard with LM over all these political questions. Norden and Negrete, for their part, sought to blunt these fights, excusing weakness on the part of LM by claiming they were only "cultural differences." That is repugnant liberal paternalism—in reality a statement that comrades from the semi-



New York memorial meeting, August 1940, for Leon Trotsky, murdered by Stalinist assassin.

colonial countries would be second-class members of our International.

We fought LM's view that workers don't give a damn about Marxist theory and can't be educated. This was first expressed in the appalling statement that "workers don't care about the cops," which arose in the course of our struggle to get LM to carry out a fight against the presence of cops in the municipal workers union in which LM had influence. LM also opposed our efforts to educate the union president in such essential works as Lenin's *State and Revolution* to arm him

with an understanding of why the cops do not belong in the labor movement. In hindsight, it is very clear that this despair over the capacity of the proletariat to assimilate Marxism and achieve consciousness as a class for itself—i.e., the understanding of the proletariat's need to seize state power—is at the root of LM's deeply ingrained trade-union opportunism. If you don't believe in the capacity of the workers to fight for a revolutionary program, then any unprincipled shortcut or deal is possible. And that's what LM did—and kept on doing—

at the top of this municipal workers union, until the police themselves broke the deal and LM's rotten bloc with centrist and pro-cop elements among the union tops blew up in their faces.

When it did blow up, LM did indeed wage a principled struggle to get the cops out of the union—at our insistence and with significant assistance from us, including an international campaign of solidarity. And of course we continue to defend LM and the union against police provocations and threats. But LM's unwillingness to break from their amorphous and unprincipled combinationism in the unions led us to break fraternal relations. And we are proud of this split, which is vital in establishing the basis for building a revolutionary party in Brazil today, because nothing would eclipse the future of Trotskyism there quicker than a *false unity* with centrists.

This is a reactionary political period, but one nonetheless presenting opportunities for communist intervention and for the growth of our party. The fight against the Norden group and our struggles with Lula Metalúrgica have been critical to reaffirming the centrality of a Leninist-Trotskyist party in this new, challenging and *transient* post-Soviet period. As Trotsky said to his supporters in the aftermath of Hitler's rise to power in Germany, "Precisely in the periods of revolutionary ebb tide are cadres formed and tempered which will later be called upon to lead the masses in the new assault." A new October Revolution is what we're for and we're building the party to lead it. ■

Pabloites...

(continued from page 13)

of course defended the POUM against Stalinist and capitalist repression, just as we have and continue to defend LM and the MEL in their struggle against the cops and the bourgeois state. Comrade Brule pointed out in his summary:

"The methodology that because somebody's under attack by the bourgeois state, therefore you cannot break relations is simply a continuation of the whole basic Pabloite methodology of the Norden group. Their argument in Germany was that if former DDR officials are being persecuted by the West German state, we should defend them. That is correct. But what they wanted to do after that was *wrong*, which was to delete our criticisms of these individuals. These were the people who sold out and opened the door to capitalist restoration in Germany. Because we defend someone against state persecution doesn't mean that we drop our political criticisms.

"It's the same thing with Cuba. Yes, we defend Cuba against imperialism. But does that mean that we are any less trenchant in our criticisms of the Castro bureaucracy? But that's the methodology of the Norden group."

This methodology has a name. In our article, "A Shamefaced Defection from Trotskyism" (WV No. 648, 5 July), we characterized Norden's politics as "Pabloism of the Second Mobilization." In the

late 1940s and early '50s, the new post-war leadership of the Fourth International centered on Michel Pablo pushed through a policy of "deep entrism" into the Stalinist and social-democratic parties, despairing at the prospect of building an independent Trotskyist vanguard during the Cold War. Pablo's liquidationist line, justified with the argument that the Stalinists could "roughly outline" a "revolutionary orientation," destroyed the Fourth International. And while the objects of their affections have repeatedly changed, the Pabloites have continued their liquidationist approach ever since. And what is their favored response to our attacks on their opportunist politics? That we are "abstentionists" who "flee" from the class struggle!

Now Norden has taken his earlier impressionism over Castro's Cuha and the "hardline" Stalinist leaders of the former DDR (East Germany) and theoretically generalized this into an outright revision of the Trotskyist understanding of the Stalinist bureaucracy. In their bulletin, the Nordenites fume over a statement by an SL comrade that the East German Stalinist "SED in 1989-90 was *leading* the counterrevolution," claiming that this denies Trotsky's position on the dual nature of the Stalinist bureaucracy. In Norden's interpretation of this dual nature, he takes a page from Pablo, who

saw in the bureaucracy an inherently progressive side coexisting with a more reactionary side.

Trotsky understood that the Stalinist bureaucracy was a parasitic caste which sat atop a collectivized economy, while simultaneously serving as a transmission belt for imperialism. This was its dual nature. In *The Revolution Betrayed* (1936), his decisive analysis of the Stalinist bureaucracy, Trotsky stressed that this parasitic layer had an organic tendency to transform itself into a capitalist ruling class, pointing out: "Privileges have only half their worth, if they cannot be transmitted to one's children. But the right of testament is inseparable from the right of property." He further noted that the bureaucracy "continues to preserve state property only to the extent that it fears the proletariat."

Unable to play an independent role, the bureaucracy would be shattered when subjected to fundamental class forces. This is in fact what happened. But when the terminal collapse of Stalinism came, the pressures emanated overwhelmingly from one direction, that of the imperialist bourgeoisie. Norden is prepared to concede that the Stalinists may have "*prepared the way* for counterrevolution" and even "*play a counterrevolutionary role*." But actually lead counterrevolution? Never! But that's what the SED did.

Standing at the head of the East German state, the SED *actively* worked to demobilize the working class, dismantling the workers militias (*Betriebskampfgruppen*) and pushing through capitalist reunification under its slogan of "one fatherland." It was only the forces of the ICL, struggling for proletarian political revolution, who offered a program in opposition to the SED's counterrevolutionary course.

While still subject to Leninist discipline as a member of our party, Norden edited an article titled "Soviet Workers: Smash Yeltsin/Gorbachev 500-Day Plan!" (WV No. 510, 21 September 1990). The caption under the lead photo read, "Boris Yeltsin and Mikhail Gorbachev plan for restoration of capitalism." Elsewhere the article asserted that "Gorbachev and Yeltsin want to sell off the Soviet Union's industrial and mineral wealth to Wall Street and Frankfurt." It is not the ICL's line which has changed, but rather Norden's. While the Nordenites claim to uphold the program of the Spartacist tendency, their bulletin presents a worked-out perspective that runs counter to the tasks of a Leninist fighting propaganda group. It is clear that they are moving as rapidly as possible to distance themselves from our politics. We don't know where Norden and his IG are going, and probably neither do they, but it's somewhere very far from Trotskyism. ■

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The Norden "Group": Polymorphous Opportunism

Introductory Note

"After Spartacist League Purges Leading Cadres, ICL Flees from Class Battle in Brazil: From a Drift Toward Abstentionism to Desertion from the Class Struggle"

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Farrakhan...

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policy. One straightforwardly described how militiamen and troops of the regular army divided up the captives as loot after a raid. The other told how militiamen are "paid" by being encouraged to loot and take captives. He said the troops "return back with children, goats, cows, whatever goods they could loot. It is clear that under government policy whatever you loot, it is yours."

Needless to say, the capitalist owners of the *Baltimore Sun* have their own ax to grind in exposing Farrakhan and the Sudanese slave-traders. For years, Sudan has been ravaged by a bloody civil war between the Arab-dominated regime in the north and the southern-based Sudanese People's Liberation Army, which provided escorts for the *Sun* reporters. As we noted in our previous article:

"During the Cold War, Turabi and his reactionary Muslim Brotherhood group were considered an 'asset' by the State Department because of his vehement anti-Communism and his alliance with mullahs fighting against the USSR in Afghanistan. With the collapse of the Soviet Union, the U.S. no longer needed this relationship with the Sudan regime.... Now American attentions have shifted south."

The imperialist vultures have a long history of "divide and rule" aimed at subjugating and exploiting the peoples of Africa. The racist American rulers, who were more than happy to support the slave-trading Turabi Islamic regime in the past, are not opponents of black slavery in the Sudan or anywhere else, despite their occasional hypocritical "human rights" rhetoric. It will take international socialist revolution to put an end to slavery, such grotesque practices as female

genital mutilation and all forms of oppression. As Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution underlines, in former colonies and semicolonial countries the gains of the bourgeois-democratic revolution can only be achieved through workers' revolution—in the case of Africa, centered on countries like South Africa and Egypt with their sizable proletariats—and its extension to the imperialist heartland.

Farrakhan: Bad News for Black People

In appealing the government's ban against accepting the money from Libya, Farrakhan said that the funds would be used to aid minority-owned businesses and to help poor people left "in the lurch" by welfare cuts. But while Farrakhan criticized Clinton's signing of the anti-welfare bill, when the yuppie racist Democrat was elected in 1992 the NOI leader called on him to "say farewell to welfare" and "cut federal spending" in order to "eliminate the federal debt in a reasonable amount of time" (*A Torch-light for America* [1993]).

Farrakhan has garnered a measure of support among blacks because he at least appears to speak up to the racist rulers. But what is he saying? Farrakhan's disgusting tirades against Koreans, Jews and Arabs mirror the racist reaction being pushed by the Democrats and Republicans. The NOI's Million Man March in Washington, D.C. last October was a reactionary mobilization which called for "atonement," thus blaming blacks for their oppression while forgiving the oppressors and exploiters for their crimes against black people, workers and the poor. Is it any wonder that right-wing Republican vice-presidential nominee Jack Kemp has now praised



Palmer/U.S. News & World Report

Nation of Islam rent-a-cop in Baltimore housing project.

Farrakhan's program as "wonderful"? Farrakhan's backward attitude toward the rights of women was expressed not only in the exclusionist character of the Washington march but in the fact that women are often excluded from his meetings. The NOI leader opposes abortion, calls to "change homosexual behavior," and wants schools segregated by sex. He holds up Saudi Arabia, where people accused of robbery have their hands cut off and women are beheaded for "adultery," as a model of fighting crime.

Far from fighting the all-sided oppression of black people in this deeply racist society, what Farrakhan wants is that a few black capitalists get rich exploiting the ghetto market, while the mass of blacks remain at the bottom of this

vicious system of exploitation and oppression. Farrakhan stands for the vicarious creation of a class of black exploiters within an all-black country "somewhere" from within the United States. The NOI's perspective of "black capitalism" is a fraud that has nothing to do with the liberation of blacks from the poverty and racism which are inherent in capitalism. Black people need jobs, housing, schools, health care and a fight to smash all forms of discrimination.

We fight for *black liberation through socialist revolution*, in which black workers will play a key role as a strategic component of the multiracial U.S. proletariat. This requires the forging of a revolutionary workers party which champions the cause of all the oppressed. ■

ICL Protests...

(continued from page 9)

November, and it is also meant to send a message to the racist U.S. rulers' imperialist rivals, particularly Germany, that American imperialism is the military top dog in the world. Clinton and Dole kill Iraqis and Kurds as an election stunt! Capitalism means racism and war! A workers party is what we're for!

In 1991, U.S. imperialism devastated Iraq, killing tens of thousands of people in the one-sided slaughter called "Operation Desert Storm." In the aftermath of this slaughter, a brutal economic embargo remained in place which has cost the lives of hundreds of thousands of Iraqis who have died of malnutrition and disease. Now Clinton is planning on tightening the screws, ripping up the lousy UN-brokered deal where Iraq could exchange oil for food. We say: Down with the imperialist embargo of Iraq! United Nations—den of thieves! Overthrow the bourgeoisie!

The same racist rulers, the Democrats and Republicans, who have condemned

millions of welfare mothers and their children to death by "abolishing welfare as we know it," bomb Iraq and have starved hundreds of thousands of Iraqis. We say: For class struggle at home against racist U.S. imperialism! Break with the Democrats and Republicans—For a revolutionary workers party!

Clinton says his bombing of Iraq was in retaliation for the incursion of Saddam Hussein's army into the Kurdish "no fly" zone. Yet while the White House now weeps crocodile tears for the embattled and oppressed Kurdish people, U.S. imperialism has been one of the main backers of Turkey, which has waged a war of annihilation against the Kurdish people. We call for a Socialist Republic of United Kurdistan! Down with U.S. imperialism! Hands off Iraq! Saddam Hussein should be dealt with by his own working people for his crimes against them. Down with the oil sheiks, emirs and military strongmen! Workers to power! For a socialist federation of the Near East!

In the aftermath of the destruction of the former Soviet Union—a degenerated workers state—the imperialist bour-

geoisies around the world see nothing standing in the way of their system of unbridled exploitation, poverty and war. As rivalries between the competing imperialist powers increase internationally, the racist rulers wage war against the working class, the poor, young people, immigrants and blacks at home and rain cruise missiles down on Iraq abroad. The Spartacist League fights to build a revolutionary internationalist workers party to overthrow the imperialist rulers and build an egalitarian socialist society. The Spartacus Youth Clubs fight to win students over to the side of the international working class and to become active partisans in its struggles against the imperialist homophobes who starve blacks and the poor at home and Iraqis abroad. Asian, Hispanic, black and white—Workers of the world unite! ■

Union Summer...

(continued from page 11)

I guess I equated them with the rest of the rank-and-file union members in this country since that was the only exposure I got to them. So I did come out of the program thinking, "Oh my gosh, the labor movement's not going to make any mark for workers in general." Although it was really inspiring to see the janitors.

YSp: Workers have shown no lack of combativity and courage but have been systematically demobilized by their own leaders. James Cannon, the great American Trotskyist, said in the 1920s, "The fight for a class movement of the American workers is in the first place a fight against the capitalist ideology which dominates them. The labor bureaucrats of the AFL...are the direct bearers of this ideology in the working class and must be fought as such." We think what's needed first and foremost is a *political* struggle against the bureaucrats and for a revolutionary leadership.

Momoko: After discussing about labor issues with you, I guess I realize that

there is potential, and what was accomplished in the '30s can be accomplished now. But at this point I'm not sure how that can be done. It's interesting because those of us who were frustrated were demoralized, and we were given really subtle messages that there wasn't a place for us in the labor movement. We were so tired throughout the program because for three weeks we didn't really have a day off and we were working 10 hours a day, so we really couldn't think about what we could do possibly to change things that were really wrong and what alternatives there are.

YSp: What we're trying to do is win revolutionary-minded students to our view that only the working class has the power to overturn the capitalist system, which is the source of racism, unemployment, war, homelessness and discrimination. In order to replace the capitalist system with socialism, the working class has to come to an understanding of this task and has to build its own political party to lead this struggle. And we think that students, as part of the revolutionary party, can play a key role in bringing these ideas to the working class. For my last question, I wonder if there's anything that you would like to say to other Union Summer participants now that you're looking back on your whole experience.

Momoko: When I left the program I was really pessimistic about the labor movement, having seen what the leadership is about, their strategies. But I suggest that people who are frustrated with the program and the labor movement itself should not focus so much on the misleadership but delve into labor history because that will allow them to see the great potential that the labor movement has in mobilizing to fight against the capitalists, and to delve into Marxism and to discuss with Marxists what strategies should be used against the capitalists. I think realizing the potential of the working class can lead us into a real fight, a genuine fight against capitalism, rather than the conciliatory actions that are really not taking the working class anywhere. That's my suggestion. ■

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Louis Farrakhan: Apologist for Slavery in Sudan

U.S. Government Hands Off— Let NOI Leader Get His Libyan Money!

Last month, Nation of Islam (NOI) leader Louis Farrakhan went to Tripoli to accept a "human rights" award from Libyan strongman Muammar el-Qaddafi. But Farrakhan was forced to decline the \$250,000 prize money because the U.S. government had made clear that if he accepted, they would threaten him with jail for violating yet another "anti-terrorism" bill signed by President Clinton in August. When Farrakhan visited Tripoli earlier this year as part of a world tour, Qaddafi had also pledged a \$1 billion contribution to the NOI. This has also been blocked by Washington, citing economic sanctions imposed on Libya in the name of the United Nations. Farrakhan is a reactionary, anti-Semitic demagogue. But as a September 10 protest letter by the Partisan Defense Committee declared: "The U.S. government has no business dictating who or where Farrakhan gets his funding from. This imperious ban is a threat to humanitarian groups, religious denominations, political parties—indeed, any organization with international supporters and cothinkers."

The U.S. imperialists push their economic boycott against Qaddafi's Libya by claiming it is a "terrorist state." At home, the "war on terrorism" is a convenient catchword to justify the government's "right" to arrest, intimidate and spy on anyone they wish. Now the racist rulers are using the "terrorism" label they had pinned on Qaddafi as a stick to beat Farrakhan. Despite the declamations about Libya supposedly being an "outlaw nation," the real terrorists are the masters of America's imperialist empire, who delight in bombing semicolonial countries like Iraq any time they feel the need to demonstrate their military might. Qaddafi was himself targeted for

assassination by U.S. air strikes on Tripoli in 1986, which killed his baby daughter.

Even an article in the *Wall Street Journal* (26 August) expressed concern over the Clinton administration's ban on Farrakhan getting his award from Libya, asking: "Does the administration want to get into a battle over an ostensibly humanitarian contribution to a religious organization—thus sparking a constitutional fight that other religious groups might join?" This mouthpiece of the bankers is far less concerned about Farrakhan's constitutional rights than it is about the international repercussions of the legislation Washington is using to go after him.

The new "anti-terrorism" law passed last month would impose U.S. sanctions on foreign firms investing in Libya or Iran. This came just days after Congress passed the Helms-Burton bill, mandating penalties against foreign companies which operate in Cuba and use property expropriated from American firms by the Cuban Revolution. Canada, Mexico and various West European countries were already up in arms over the Helms-Burton bill. The latest measure has created a furor in Europe—particularly Germany, which has considerable investments in Iran—and the European Union promptly threatened to retaliate against U.S. companies. In the name of "anti-terrorism," Washington thinks it can throw its weight around the world at will.

Slavery in Sudan "Touches the Lives of All"

The U.S. government's recent moves against the NOI will likely enhance Farrakhan's reputation among some as a "black leader" who stands up to this

racist system. But as we have warned repeatedly, Louis Farrakhan is bad news for black people. One need look no further than Farrakhan's support to the Islamic fundamentalist regime in Sudan, where chattel slavery has become increasingly widespread. When Farrakhan's cozy relationship with the slave-trading Sudanese regime was exposed late last year, it provoked an uproar in the black press (see "Farrakhan and the Sudan Slave Trade," WV No. 638, 2 February). Seeking to amnesty his ties to Sudan's Islamic fundamentalist leader Hassan al-Turabi, Farrakhan has consistently denied the existence of the slave trade in that country. But the abduction and enslavement of black women and children in Sudan has been abundantly documented by Anti-Slavery International in London and other human rights organizations, as well as the UN and others.

Now this has become a red-hot issue once again, after the recent publication of an investigative series on slavery in Sudan in the *Baltimore Sun* (16-18 June). When Farrakhan indignantly challenged reporters at the National Press Club in Washington last spring to go to Sudan and see for themselves, the *Baltimore Sun* took up the challenge. The *Sun* sent two reporters to Sudan with instructions "to see if they could buy slaves"—and they did. The dramatic three-part series by foreign correspondent Gilbert Lewthwaite, who is white, and black columnist Gregory Kane thrust the issue of chattel slavery in Sudan back into the news.

The reporters were introduced to an Arab slave trader in the village of Manyel in the southern province of Bahr el Ghazal, who specialized in returning slaves from the predominantly Arab north



NOI leader Farrakhan at award ceremony in Tripoli, Libya.

and selling them back at a profit to their families in the largely black south. The reporters described the rueful group of a dozen young boys who were offered for sale:

"Some have bruises and scars to attest to their maltreatment...."

"There is no trace of hope in their expressions. Their eyes are downcast. Those who dare to glance up do so with mistrust. These are boys whose childhood has been wrenched from them."

The reporters decided to buy the oldest child and his half-brother, aged twelve and ten, who were immediately returned to their families. The two youths had been in bondage for six years, forced to work in the fields without any pay except scraps of food. The price was \$500 or five head of cattle apiece. The journalists described the transaction as "a negotiation of breathtaking simplicity, struck just 50 yards from where people are buying and selling salt, dried fish and other ordinary commodities.... We put \$1,000 into the outstretched hand of El-Haj, and two young souls pass from bondage into the embrace of family and home."

Lewthwaite and Kane personally witnessed the horror of villages haunted by slavery. In one village where they sought testimony on the slave trade, a 60-year-old man spoke of his humiliation at being offered for sale as a slave in a town square. A 17-year-old girl recounted her harrowing escape while her master debated whether to adopt her as his daughter or take her as a concubine. And a desperate blind widow said she was contemplating suicide because her four-year-old daughter, who served as her "eyes," had been abducted by slave traders. As the reporters wrote: "Here in southern Sudan, there can be no doubt that slavery exists. Like the heat of the sun or the onset of the rainy season, it touches the lives of all."

The Sudanese government insists—parroted by the NOI—that if forced captivity exists in Sudan, it is because of hostage-taking in intertribal conflicts and does not reflect government policy. However, on two separate occasions, the *Baltimore Sun* reporters were able to interview officers of the government militia who explained how the slave trade was encouraged by government

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Kane/Baltimore Sun

Baltimore Sun reporter (left) pays \$1,000 to a Sudanese slave-trader to buy freedom for two youths held in bondage.



Lewthwaite/Baltimore Sun