

Israel Out of the Occupied Territories! U.S. Out of the Near East!

Defend the Palestinian People!

OCTOBER 17—The Israeli missile strikes last week against West Bank towns and the official residence of Palestinian Authority (PA) president Yasir Arafat in Gaza underscore the obvious: the Occupied Territories are a battleground in a war of terror against the Palestinians. Within the “Green Line,” the pre-1967 border, more than one million Palestinians who are nominally Israeli citizens have been subjected to the same state of siege which has long been the norm in the Occupied Territories—with Arab towns and villages completely sealed off—while pogromist mobs rampage through Nazareth, Tel Aviv and Jerusalem screaming “Death to the Arabs!” Yet courageous Palestinian youth armed with little more than stones and slingshots continue to defy the Zionist state.

Immediately after U.S. president Clinton, meeting with Arafat and Israeli prime minister Ehud Barak in Egypt, announced a vague agreement to “end the violence,” Israeli troops shot dead another Palestinian. Even Arafat’s request for a United Nations “fact-finding mission” on the killings—when the clear fact is that all but a handful of the more than 100 dead are Palestinians, many of them infants and children shot through the head or chest—was spurned, with Israel’s American sponsor instead leading an “inquiry.”

As Israeli tanks rumble through Arab towns on the West Bank, even the facade of Palestinian “autonomy” has been shredded. Barak has now called for a government of “national emergency” to include Likud opposition leader Ariel Sharon, the ultra-chauvinist butcher who triggered the massacre and what is now being called the “Al Aksa Intifada” with his September 28 provocation at the Al Aksa mosque on East Jerusalem’s Haram al-Sharif, the third-holiest shrine in Islam. Israel’s rulers are entirely capable of carrying out a massacre of Palestinian Arabs on a truly genocidal scale. **Defend the Palestinian people! All Israeli troops and settlers out of all the Occupied Territories now!**

When the Muslim Shi’ite Hezbollah militia in southern Lebanon captured three Israeli soldiers, offering to exchange them for prisoners held by Israel, Barak threatened to bomb not only Lebanon but also Syria, holding it “primarily responsible.” While the Arab capitalist regimes impotently plead for an end to the violence, Muslim countries from Indonesia to North Africa have been



Palestinian child in Gaza shot in head by Israeli troops. Over 100 have been killed as Zionist rulers unleash troops, tanks and missiles to quell protests in Israel and Occupied Territories.

For Arab/Hebrew Workers Revolution! For a Socialist Federation of the Near East!

hit by huge protests in solidarity with the besieged Palestinians—though often shot through with anti-Jewish bigotry—including a half-million-strong march last week in Morocco, long one of Israel’s chief allies in the Arab world. In Jordan and Syria, police have repeatedly beat back protesters trying to storm the Israeli and American embassies. Meanwhile, France has seen a wave of despicable anti-Semitic attacks on synagogues, which could be the work of native fascists.

In their murderous effort to bring the Palestinian Arab people to heel, the capitalist rulers of Israel are prepared to draw the whole of the Near East into a bloody conflagration. They see themselves at war

with the entire Arab world, and they are armed with hundreds of nuclear bombs. And behind them stands a far more powerful and dangerous enemy of the world’s peoples: American imperialism. While barely acknowledging the Palestinians gunned down by U.S.-supplied tanks and Apache helicopters, America’s rulers from Clinton and Gore to Bush are using the deaths in Aden of 17 sailors aboard the USS *Cole*—part of the armada enforcing the embargo of Iraq and defending U.S. interests in the oil-rich region—as a chauvinist war cry for imperialist retaliation. Against whom? Washington’s favored “pariah state,” Saddam Hussein’s Iraq, is already subjected to near-daily terror bombing by the U.S. and

Britain, as well as a United Nations embargo which has killed some one-and-a-half million people, largely the elderly and children under five.

The massacre of Palestinian youth in the West Bank, Gaza and Israel; the starving to death of children in Iraq; that is the American-dominated “New World Order” in the Near East. The U.S. imperialists who denounce Islamic fundamentalists like the Palestinian Hamas and Lebanese Hezbollah as the terrorists of the post-Soviet world promoted their growth in the 1980s by sponsoring the anti-Soviet, anti-woman “holy warriors” (*mujahedin*) in Afghanistan as part of the Cold War drive against the USSR.

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Free Imprisoned Basque Nationalists!

Crackdown on ETA/EKIN

The following article is translated from Le Bolchévik No. 154 (Autumn 2000), published by our comrades of the Ligue Trotskyste de France. Shortly after its publication, the Spanish government rounded up nine more Basque nationalists in pre-dawn raids on October 5 and on October 6 sentenced a former leader of the separatist ETA, Francisco Mugika Garmendia, to 109 years in prison for an attack on Spain's Civil Guard in 1987.

LE BOLCHEVIK

On September 13, 300 Spanish cops arrested 20 leaders of the Basque nationalist movement in a night-and-fog raid called "Black Wolf." The Spanish govern-

ment claims to have now arrested the whole leadership of EKIN, the umbrella organization which forms the political leadership of the radical Basque nationalist movement, including its military arm ETA, its political face Euskal Herritarrok, its youth movement Jarrai, etc. EKIN was founded in 1999 after its predecessor organization, KAS, was banned. Among the arrested are Xabier Alegria and Ana Lizarralde. In a move that amounts to criminalizing simple defense of the EKIN/ETA, they have even put behind bars the lawyer of the Basque nationalists, José Maria Matanzas Gorostizaga! And on September 15, French police arrested Ignacio Gracia Arregui, a top leader of ETA, in the French Basque town of Bidart, in an operation assisted by the Spanish cops. We demand: **Freedom now for the arrested militants and for the**

more than 500 others who have been rotting in jail, often for years!

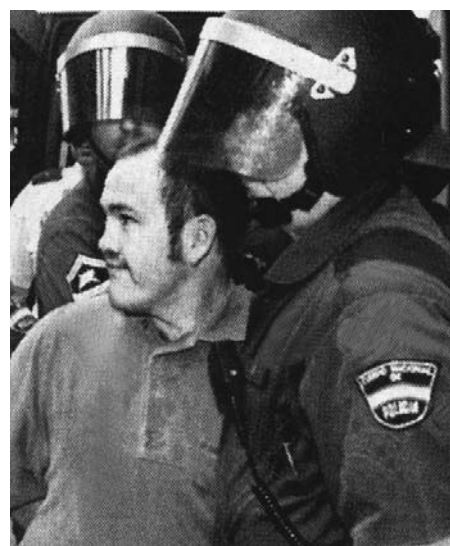
The recent wave of arrests is a response by the Spanish and French governments to the break in the unilateral cease-fire by ETA, which has resulted in the deaths of a dozen Basque capitalists, cops, bourgeois politicians or ideologues, and leaders of the reformist Spanish PSOE (all former high-ranking representatives of the bourgeois state at the time of the coalition between the nationalist PNV and the PSOE in the Basque country). For Marxists, these killings are not crimes against the working class. Marxists oppose the desperate petty-bourgeois strategy of individual terrorism but when the oppressed act against the bourgeoisie and its state, we defend them against capitalist repression. As Bolshevik revolutionary leader Leon Trotsky wrote in 1939 in defense of Herschel Grynszpan, a Jewish youth on trial for shooting a Nazi official in the German embassy in Paris:

"We Marxists consider the tactic of individual terror inexpedient in the tasks of the liberating struggle of the proletariat as well as oppressed nationalities. A single isolated hero cannot replace the masses. But we understand only too clearly the inevitability of such convulsive acts of despair and vengeance. All our emotions, all our sympathies are with the self-sacrificing avengers even though they have been unable to discover the correct road...."

"People come cheap who are capable only of fulminating against injustice and bestiality. But those who, like Grynszpan, are able to act as well as conceive, sacrificing their own lives if need be, are the precious leaven of mankind."

As revolutionary proletarian internationalists, we defend the **right of the Basque people to independence, north as well as south of the Pyrenees**. We denounce the vicious repression against Basques by the Jospin [Socialist prime minister]-led popular-front government in France, which routinely arrests and deports nationalist militants to Spain. Earlier under [Socialist president] Mitterrand, the French police collaborated with the PSOE government when it set up death squads, the GAL, which assassinated at least 27 people. And today the French government also represses Breton and Corsican nationalists. We demand: **Freedom for all these imprisoned nationalists!**

Spain has been engulfed by an ever-increasing hysteria against the Basque



Independent
Spanish cops arrest Basque nationalist Juan Kruz Aldasoro in early August.

nationalists, which has been embraced by the whole spectrum of the left, which regularly participate in reactionary mass demonstrations against the ETA together with the ruling [right-wing] PP and the social democrats of the PSOE. Spanish chauvinism is used to divide the working class and weaken it in the face of massive attacks by the right-wing government against living conditions and job security, and targeting in particular more vulnerable immigrant workers. This has culminated in a racist pogrom against North African workers in El Ejido in the beginning of the year. Meanwhile, Spain is the advanced outpost of the EU [European Union] social-democratic-led racist "fortress Europe" to prevent immigration coming from and through northern Africa. At least several hundred are estimated to have drowned in recent years in an attempt to cross the Straits of Gibraltar. Earlier this week, in one day at least 136 immigrants were arrested in the Straits by the Spanish police. We demand: **Down with the racist deportations! Full citizenship rights for all immigrants now!**

Defending the right of Basque self-determination is key to fighting for a proletarian revolution in Spain. We demand: **Freedom now for Xabier Alegria, Ana Lizarralde and the other imprisoned Basque nationalists! Defend the right of independence for the Basque people! For Trotskyist parties in Spain and France, part of a reformed Fourth International! ■**



TROTSKY

For a Revolutionary Workers Party!

The presidential bid by Green Party candidate Ralph Nader is not the first bourgeois third party campaign to garner support from the reformist left with the argument that this is a necessary step toward building a British-style labor party. In 1948, the Stalinist Communist Party threw its support behind the Progressive Party candidacy of Henry Wallace, a former Democratic Party vice president under Franklin D. Roosevelt.

Explaining why Marxists opposed the Wallace campaign, James P. Cannon, leader of the then-Trotskyist Socialist Workers Party, in a speech given at a February 1948 internal party meeting delineated the principle of proletarian class independence from all capitalist parties and the centrality of the fight for a revolutionary workers party.

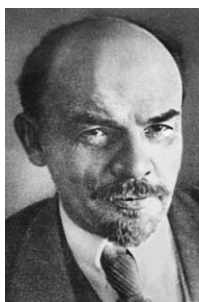
Now, a break-up of the two-party parliamentary system in America is undoubtedly a good thing. It destroys the fetish of the trade union bureaucracy to the effect that it is impossible to operate on the political field outside the traditional pattern. Splits in the two old bourgeois parties are bound to shake up the labor bureaucracy, loosen things up and create a more favorable situation for agitation for the formation of a labor party. But this break-up of the two-party system and splits in the bourgeois parties come about under the pressure of social crisis. These are not our tasks. Bourgeois parties are not the arena for our operation. Our specific task is the class mobilization of the workers against not only the two old parties, but any other capitalist parties which might appear....

It has been argued here that "we must go through the experiences with the workers." That is a very good formula, provided you do not make it universal. We go with the workers only through those experiences which have a class nature. We go with them through the experiences of strikes, even though we may think a given strike untimely. We may even go with the workers through the experience of putting a reformist labor party in office, provided it is a real labor party and subject to certain pressures of the workers, in order that they may learn from their experience that reformism is not the correct program for the working class.

But we do not go through the experience of class collaboration with the workers....

The party must be educated and re-educated on the meaning of class politics, which excludes any support of any bourgeois candidate, and requires even the most critical attitude toward a labor party when we are supporting it. The task is to advance the revolutionary program and build the revolutionary party under all conditions. When that is clearly understood and firmly settled, then we can take up local tactical questions and easily dispose of them.

—James P. Cannon, "Summary Speech on Election Policy," published in Socialist Workers Party *Internal Bulletin* (February 1948)



LENIN

WORKERS VANGUARD

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20 October 2000

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Capitalist Third Parties: No Alternative for Labor, Blacks

Nader: Spare Tire for Democrats

Notwithstanding all the media hype heading into next month's presidential elections, large segments of the population clearly see little substantive difference between the Republican George W. Bush and Democrat Al Gore. Under eight years of the Clinton presidency, workers, blacks, women, immigrants and all the oppressed have been subjected to all-sided attacks. The only significant political difference between Gore and Bush is the Democrats' defense of the "right to choose" on abortion. The bottom line is that both capitalist parties rule for racist American imperialism; if they differ, it is only in how to best tweak the system for maximum profit and exploitation. Clinton oversaw the savage war against Serbia last year, and has presided over the continued bombing of Iraq and the starvation of its people through a military blockade.

With Gore and Bush even more politically indistinguishable than the usual alternatives offered by the dual parties of American capitalism, a space has opened up for the campaign of petty-bourgeois reformer Ralph Nader, running on the capitalist Green Party ticket. Nader is appealing to liberal youth disaffected with Clinton/Gore's "New Democrats" as an "independent" candidate who is "pro-choice" and against the death penalty and "corporate greed." He complains that "the Democratic Party under this administration has become little more than a corporate shadow of its former self." In fact, Nader is simply an old-fashioned "New Deal" Democrat who explicitly calls for a Democratic Congressional majority and seeks to refurbish the party's liberal appeal and, more broadly, the capitalist electoral system.

Nader's brand of liberalism is very much in keeping with the yuppie racist "New Democrats." In an interview on *Larry King Live* (3 October), Nader declaimed against "illegal" immigrants: "I don't think people should come to this country illegally. I think that people who want to come to this country should come on work permits to do jobs that Americans are not willing to do." In the past, Nader has explicitly *opposed* raising specific demands against racial discrimination as "divisive" and has denounced the fight for women's equality as "gonadal politics." And Nader's newfound "anti-racist" platform is fully in line with White House policy, opposing "racial profiling" and tepidly supporting affirmative action while arguing "race and gender should not be a predominant factor in choosing qualified applicants."

The reformist International Socialist

Organization (ISO) and the fake-Trotskyist Socialist Alternative (formerly Labor Militant, allied with Peter Taaffe's Socialist Party in Britain) have been vying with each other over who can be the best builders of Nader's campaign. In the space of a few months, the ISO has gone from opposing Nader to supporting him "critically" to throwing itself lock, stock and barrel into his campaign. The cover of *International Socialist Review* (October/



SL contingent at NYC protest against acquittal of police killers of Amadou Diallo in February. Reformist ISO's campaign for capitalist Green candidate Ralph Nader promotes illusions in bourgeois electoral politics.

November 2000), the theoretical journal in which these opportunists usually present their "left" face, features "The Nader Challenge" and the issue reprints one of his speeches. The previous issue, while acknowledging that "racism is not central in the campaign," carried a lengthy article by longtime ISO cadre Joel Geier which tried to give a working-class gloss to the Nader campaign: "It gives the left the opportunity to fight for class solutions with a small but serious pro-labor alternative.... It is raising the question of an independent working-class party" (*International Socialist Review*, August/September 2000).

Socialist Alternative puts forward pretty much the same line. "A real workers' candidate would have been preferable to the campaign of Ralph Nader, a radical middle class populist," says an article in its *Justice* (September/October 2000). By a "real workers' candidate," they mean the stillborn Labor Party set up some years ago by Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers top Tony Mazzocchi and a handful of other union bureaucrats, which refuses even to run

candidates and has never been anything other than a shill for the Democrats. Now *Justice* sees the Nader candidacy as a way to pressure Mazzocchi & Co. to set up something more like the reformist Labour Party of Tony Blair, which is presently administering the British imperialist state, writing: "The campaign of Ralph Nader for president represents an historic break in US politics. It has created a new situation that contains

ety. In racist capitalist America, the fate of organized labor and that of the oppressed black masses are closely bound together. The Spartacist League is fighting to forge a revolutionary working-class party through linking the struggle for black liberation to the fight for the emancipation of labor through socialist revolution. Central to building such a workers party is breaking the shackles, forged by the labor bureaucracy, that continue to chain the working class to the capitalist class enemy, its government and political parties, particularly the Democrats.

No significant gains for the working class, much less socialism, can be achieved through bourgeois elections, whose purpose is simply to offer a choice over which member of the ruling class is to repress and oppress the working people and minorities for the next four years. The capitalist state—centrally consisting of armed bodies of men such as the military, the cops and prison guards—is an instrument to defend the rule of the bourgeoisie and repress the working class. It cannot be transformed through elections but must rather be smashed through socialist revolution. When Marxists run candidates in bourgeois elections, it is with the aim of advancing the fight for proletarian class independence and to propagate our program of workers revolution. Likewise, we would use positions in a bourgeois legislature as a platform to address the workers and mobilize them in extraparlimentary struggle, as well as to fight against reactionary measures and for such social legislation which would benefit the working class.

How the ISO Abuses History

An article by Paul D'Amato in the August/September *International Socialist Review* purported to give a historical survey on "Marxists and Elections." In a desperate search to provide a patina of orthodoxy to its call for a vote to a party of the class enemy, the ISO cites Engels' not completely unfavorable comments about an 1886 New York City mayoral campaign in which the newly formed Independent Labor Party of New York threw its support to the petty-bourgeois reformer Henry George. With the organized workers movement still in its infancy, Engels spoke strongly in favor of "the formation by the workers of an independent political party...so long as it is distinguishable as a labour party" and described support to George as one of several "transitory evils" (our emphases).

Much water has gone under the bridge in the 114 years since. The rise of imperialism brought with it an entrenched reformist labor bureaucracy, based on the upper strata (skilled craft workers) of the working class. This bureaucracy derives its privileges from its support to the capitalist system. The labor reformists demonstrated their unyielding hostility to socialist revolution and support to the existing bourgeois order—first by their support to the imperialist bloodbath that was World War I and then by their all-out opposition to the Russian October Revolution of 1917, the first (and, to date, only) victorious workers revolution. With the mobilization of the forces of counter-revolution by the German Social Democracy to crush a workers uprising in 1919, the line between the labor reformists and revolutionary Marxists was drawn in the blood of thousands of revolutionary workers and of Communist leaders Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht, who were murdered at the behest of

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major opportunities for the construction of a mass workers party."

Marxists start from the question of what furthers the struggle to overthrow the capitalist profit system, expropriate the bourgeoisie and institute workers rule—the dictatorship of the proletariat as opposed to the existing dictatorship of capital. For the proletariat to advance its class interests, it must be organized independently of and against the bourgeoisie, its state and its political parties, including capitalist third parties like the Greens. But a vote for even the most left-wing bourgeois or petty-bourgeois candidate (which Nader decidedly is not) is, in fact, a vote of confidence in the reformability of capitalism and a vote against the need for a workers party and socialist revolution.

The U.S. is the only advanced capitalist country lacking even a reformist party of the working class, in large part because the bourgeoisie—abetted by the pro-capitalist labor bureaucrats—has successfully utilized the poison of racism to divide the working class and obscure the fundamental class divisions in this soci-

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Britain: Lynch Mob Hysteria Targets “Sex Offenders”

The following article is abridged from the Young Spartacus pages of Workers Hammer No. 174, (Autumn 2000), published by the Spartacist League/Britain.

WORKERS HAMMER

Reactionary hysteria whipped up by Labour’s crusade against so-called “paedophiles” and “sex offenders” was stoked to white-hot heat over the summer. Throughout the country—from Manchester to Bristol, London to south Wales—people were injured, threatened, driven from their homes and to suicide by lynch mob terror. In one instance, a woman paediatrician was attacked by a vicious, moronic mob. Particularly nasty and violent were the rampages which took place at the Paulsgrove [public housing] estate near Portsmouth following the publication of a hit list of “suspected paedophiles” by the *News of the World* in its now-notorious “name and shame” campaign. The tabloid’s editor and architect of this campaign, one Rebekah Wade, is a feature at New Labour fundraising dinners. An account in the *Independent on Sunday* (13 August) summarised:

“Rioters smashed windows, burnt a car, caused a convicted paedophile to flee and go to ground, forced out four other families with no record of child abuse, waved placards calling for lynchings and deportations (to South America, for some reason) and touched off among their own children infantile eruptions of hatred and vandalism. A list of 20 rumoured paedophiles was produced and circulated. A suspected child sex offender from nearby Southampton shot himself dead. A second suspect also committed suicide.”

Scenes of children and toddlers in Paulsgrove carrying signs reading “Don’t House Them/Hang Them!” and chanting “stab him, burn him, kill him” made it clear there was some serious abuse of children going on—by the reactionary vigilantes! And it could hardly be clearer that laws which call for publicising names and addresses of “sex offenders” are an incitement to terror. A similar campaign in Italy, stoked in particular by Alessandra Mussolini’s fascist National Alliance, also took place over the summer, with attempted lynchings in at least four seaside resorts where ferocious crowds chased and beat men accused of “sex offences” with minors. Indeed, these reactionary mobilisations are a culture medium for fascist filth.

The ground has been firmly laid by the Labour government since its election. Weeks after Labour was elected, it brought in the Sex Offenders Act which extended police monitoring of former “sex offenders,” requiring them to become part of a police “register” available to “individuals” in “the community.” It detonated an outburst of reactionary vig-

ilantism at the time (see “Labour’s Frenzy over ‘Paedophilia’: Pretext for State Repression,” *Workers Hammer* No. 163, July/August 1998). This time around, Blair’s porcine deputy John Prescott vowed to bring in even tougher legislation, including extension of the use of life sentences for “sex offenders.” Syd Rapson, Labour MP for Portsmouth North which includes the impoverished, heavily unemployed Paulsgrove estate, embraced the vigilante mobilisations as “democracy having its way” (*Independent*, 10 August). We say: **Down with Labour’s reactionary anti-“paedophile” campaign!**

Coming from the Labour government which brought you the New Deal [forcing the jobless off government benefits] and pitiful wages for youth, slashed social benefits and levied fees for higher educa-

Reactionary hysteria against “suspected pedophiles” was whipped up by Tony Blair’s Labour government.



Tom Pilston

tion, talk about concern for youth is so much hypocritical cant. So, too, is the cynical wielding of understandable horror and outrage over the murder of young people such as Sarah Payne. When it comes to that, the bloody Blair government’s crimes in Northern Ireland, the starvation blockade of Iraq, the NATO bombing of Serbia have meant taking the lives of *hundreds of thousands* of children and youth.

Marxism vs. Bourgeois Bigotry

Crocodile tears have been shed—both in the bourgeois press and in ostensible “socialist” newspapers—about “innocent” people being victimised in the recent round of government-sponsored hysteria. Thus, it’s common to bewail the fact that teenage lovers, victims of mistaken identification, little kids “playing doctor” and others have been targeted both by the state’s “register” and vigilante mobilisations. Such was the climate that, on 6 August, a rabid crowd gathered outside the home of pop singer Gary Glitter following the announcement by a Sun-

day tabloid of his return to London after five months abroad. Glitter had recently served a jail sentence for the “crime” of...downloading child porn from the Internet! His persecution was truly obscene. But who then are the “guilty”? From tabloid rags to the government and the fake-left Labourite press, the answer is “paedophiles.”

“Paedophilia” simply means sexual desire towards children. To equate this with child murder and rape is grotesque and partakes of the same reactionary bourgeois bigotry which declares all sex other than heterosexual monogamy to be “deviant.” We oppose the persecution of those who engage in consensual inter-generational sex, we oppose the reactionary “age of consent” laws and we have a long record of defending against persecution organisations such as the North

that of effective consent, nothing more and nothing less than mutual agreement and understanding as opposed to coercion. One might say that a girl of 11 is too young, whereas one of 14 is able to decide for herself what she wants to do. In any case this is not a matter to be determined by the capitalist state which upholds in every way it can the inherently oppressive nuclear family, including enforcing sexual repression and fear, with untold results of increased human misery. We vehemently oppose state intervention into people’s sexual activities and private lives: **State out of the bedroom!**

Our view on this, an application of elementary democratic rights—including to the most vulnerable sections of the population—is taken from that of the early Soviet workers state which issued from the 1917 October Revolution. Writ-

Reuters



ing in 1923, Grigorii Batkis, director of the Moscow Institute of Social Hygiene, explained:

“Soviet legislation bases itself on the following principle: *it declares the absolute non-interference of the state and society into sexual matters so long as nobody is injured and no one’s interests are encroached upon....* Concerning homosexuality, sodomy, and various other forms of sexual gratification, which are set down in European legislation as offences against public morality—Soviet legislation treats these exactly the same as so-called ‘natural’ intercourse. All forms of sexual intercourse are private matters.”

—“The Sexual Revolution in Russia” [1923], quoted in J. Lauristen and D. Thorstad, *The Early Homosexual Rights Movement 1864-1935* [emphasis in original]

For the capitalist rulers, religious obscurantism, reactionary social mores and the family are weapons to ensure ideological conformity and respect for the “authority” of the institutions of the bourgeois state. The great leader of the Russian Revolution, Leon Trotsky, writing in 1939, explained:

“Civilization can be saved only by the socialist revolution. To accomplish the overturn, the proletariat needs all its strength, all its resolution, all its audacity, passion and ruthlessness. Above all it must be completely free from the fictions of religion, ‘democracy’ and transcendental morality—the spiritual chains forged by the enemy to tame and enslave it.”

—“Moralists and Sycophants,” *Their Morals and Ours*

For Marxists, it should be ABC that the strengthening of the bourgeois state’s repressive apparatus—whether supposedly to “protect children,” to “fight drugs” or any number of pretexts—poses a threat to broader civil liberties for all sections of the working class and the oppressed. And in today’s rotting, barbaric capitalist society, periodic anti-sex witchhunts are a distraction from struggle against and cover for grinding poverty

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WORKERS VANGUARD

Organ of the Spartacist League/U.S.

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and its attendant frustration and violence, much of it perpetuated within the family, the chief institution for the oppression of women and youth in class society. (Thus, the condition of many women and children on the Paulsgrove estate, with unemployment at some 11 per cent, is surely miserable.) These witchhunts are also aimed at imposing on youth abstinence and guilt about sex.

“Age of consent” laws are the handmaiden of all manner of state interference in the lives of and control over young people—from when you can drink to access to birth control. We seek to undercut the economic and legal basis of the nuclear family as part of our struggle for socialist revolution. We call for a radical lowering of the legal age of adulthood with free housing, food and a stipend provided for youth who do not wish to remain at home. Our goal is a society in which the family can be *replaced*; in which sexual relations can be truly voluntary, among *any* consenting individuals; in which the deforming guilt and shame pounded into all of us can be lifted; in which the constraints of economic necessity which force families together and often break them apart are gone.

Labourite Reformists’ Touching Faith in the Bourgeois State

The likes of *Action for Solidarity* completely wallow in Labourite backwardness and bigotry. In its 4 August issue, this newspaper of the Alliance for Workers Liberty (AWL) condemns the media coverage which “creates a climate of fear, feeding the fantasies of paedophiles everywhere” while making no distinction whatsoever between “raping and strangling” and paedophilia. Naturally, these super-slavish Labourites aim all their “concern” over “mob rule” at the “irresponsible manner” of the media; the role of the Labour government is not mentioned. The right-centrist Workers Power contributed its own twist to the last big round of vigilante terror by raising the call for “children’s tribunals, in which adult specialists (lawyers, child psychologists, etc.) can be utilised, should be set up and regulated by democratically elected representatives from schools, care institutions, reform schools” (*Workers Power*, June 1998). This is a (crackpot) scheme to make bourgeois “justice” more effective. There can be no rational or just policy towards the complex questions of sex or sexuality carried out by the capitalist state.

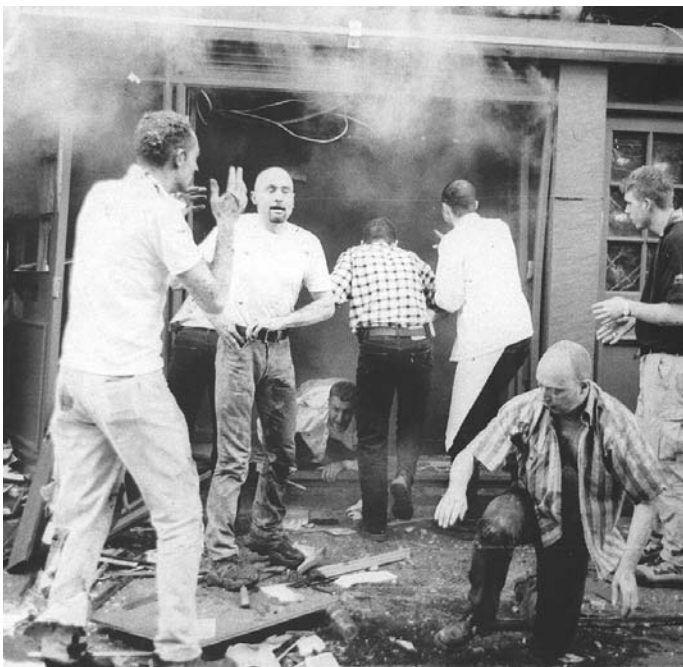
The Socialist Workers Party (SWP), which supported Labour, as it habitually does, in the last general election, wrote in *Socialist Worker* (19 August):

“The witch-hunt was started in a newspaper by Rebekah Wade, the highly paid editor of the *News of the World* and a welcome face in Downing Street.
“It followed on from the witch-hunt against refugees, incited from the parliamentary tea rooms by William Hague and Ann Widdecombe, and the witch-hunt



Paul Mattsson

Fascist National Front provocation targets Gay Pride demonstration in Leicester in July. In April 1999, gay pub in London’s Soho district was bombed by fascist killer.



Libbert/Network

against gays over Section 28—backed by the bishops in the House of Lords.”
What is wrong with this picture? The racist attacks on refugees and immigrants *emanate primarily from the cabinet rooms of the Labour government*. Ditto the witchhunt against “paedophiles.”
To this whitewash of Blair’s government Julie Waterson’s article “The Abuse of Power” (*Socialist Review*, September 2000) added some advice to Labour (which it claims has merely “played into” and “conceded” to reaction). While Waterson’s article notes that “it is impossible for the institutions of capitalism to face up to and deal with questions of child abuse” as the family plays a central role under capitalism, it is chock full of such advice. For example, Waterson cites “extended supervision orders, something which has been available to judges from 1992 yet rarely used.” The SWP’s Paul

Foot went so far as to become a prominent defender of a massive police operation against childcare workers amidst wild accusations that children’s homes had been “infiltrated” by “organised groups of paedophiles,” for example in an article carried in the *London Review of Books* (4 July 1996). Peter Taaffe’s Socialist Party has bewailed the fact that “probation and prison services have also suffered serious cutbacks in recent years” and heartily approve of the “register” imposed in 1997 (*Socialism Today*, September 2000). This slavish looking to the repressive apparatus of the capitalist state is the essence of Labourite reformism.
The “law and order” upheld by the British state—whether or not administered by a Labour government—is vile, racist, anti-woman, anti-gay, anti-youth and anti-working-class. From the banning of *Lady Chatterley’s Lover* to the trial of

Oscar Wilde, the legacy of this state is one of profound hostility to and repression against any challenge to the stifling “moral” code imposed upon the working masses (and rather less, to understate the case, upon the scions of the ruling class). Not so many years ago, students were regularly caned and orphans tortured by the pious representatives of the “Lord” on earth. Today, many youth, thrown on the scrap-heap of unemployment and lacking education, can look forward to long sentences in decrepit prison hellholes. This is the reality of capitalist Britain that we in the Spartacus Youth Group seek to change through building a communist youth organisation as the auxiliary to a revolutionary proletarian party committed to nothing less than the destruction of the whole profit system and the establishment of workers rule. No doubt, as Isaac Deutscher once noted, the tragedies of sex and death will still pursue socialist man. But at least future generations under socialism will be better equipped to deal with them, without the need to uphold ancient oppressions. We don’t pretend to know how future generations will look back on us; as barbarians we suspect, but we hope also with great pity. As we wrote in *Women and Revolution* (No. 43, Winter 1993-Spring 1994):

“To create genuinely free and equal relations between people in all spheres, including sex, requires nothing less than the destruction of this class system and the creation of a communist world. In a classless society social and economic constraints on sexual relations will be nonexistent, and in the words of Frederick Engels, ‘there is no other motive left except mutual inclination’.”

For a more extensive treatment of the issues of sex and capitalist society raised in the above article, see the articles “Something About Incest” and “The Uses of Abuse” (*Women and Revolution* Nos. 28 and 29, Spring 1984 and Spring 1985). ■



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OCTOBER 16—With its massive intervention in the Yugoslav presidential elections, U.S. imperialism finally managed to drive Serbian leader Slobodan Milosevic from power. The victory of Vojislav Kostunica as Yugoslav president has been hailed in Western capitals as a triumph for democracy. Kostunica is, if anything, even more rabidly chauvinist than Milosevic, but he is beholden to the imperialists. His election was bought and paid for by the U.S. and other NATO powers, especially Germany, who openly funded and brain-trusted the opposition parties and blackmailed the population with threats of continued economic sanctions if they didn't vote the right way.

Claiming a clear victory in the first round of presidential elections on September 24, Kostunica's Democratic Opposition (DOS) coalition declared a boycott of the second round and launched a campaign of strikes and demonstrations to force Milosevic out. Opposition centers like Cacak were shut down and workers strikes closed many offices and enterprises, including the country's largest coal mine in Kolubara. Serbian workers certainly had every reason to despise the capitalist Milosevic regime, but these strikes were clearly subordinated to the imperialist-sponsored bourgeois opposition.

The U.S. and European imperialist powers spent over \$60 million to finance the anti-Milosevic opposition, including more than \$20 million (much of it disbursed by the German Red Cross) in the guise of a "partner city" program and almost \$36 million shelled out by the U.S. over the past two years to subsidize Serbian political parties, unions, media organizations and others. Undisclosed millions more were spent by the U.S. Agency for International Development and the National Endowment for Democracy, a CIA front, as well as by capitalist foundations like the Soros Foundation.

Given the difference in population and buying power, imperialist aid to the Serbian opposition was equivalent to someone pumping some \$3 billion into the U.S. Last month the House of Representatives passed the "Serbia Democratization Act," allocating an additional \$105 million over the coming fiscal year to support U.S.-allied forces in Yugoslavia. Imagine the outcry if a foreign government tried to influence American elections on anything approaching such a scale. The U.S. bourgeoisie is still in a tizzy about supposed Chinese contributions to the Clinton/Gore campaign four years ago, allegedly channeled through a Buddhist temple!

As Milosevic's reign came to an end when demonstrators in Belgrade stormed the parliament building on October 5 while police and security forces stood aside, Western spokesmen rejoiced over the fall of "Europe's last Communist dictator." Far from being a Communist, Milosevic, along with his nationalist counterparts in Croatia and Bosnia, played a central role in the imperialist-instigated capitalist counterrevolution that tore apart the multinational Yugoslav deformed workers state in the early 1990s. The counterrevolution was fueled by and in turn intensified a fratricidal slaughter

Serbian Elections Made in U.S.A.



AP
Anti-Milosevic protest in Cacak, center of opposition movement blessed by Orthodox hierarchy and financed by U.S. imperialism.

U.S./UN/NATO Forces Out! For a Socialist Federation of the Balkans!

among Serbs, Croats and Bosnian Muslims, cynically stoked by the Western powers, above all the U.S. and Germany. As Marxists, we oppose the poison of nationalism and fight for the class unity of the workers of Serbia, Croatia, Slovenia, Bosnia and Kosovo in overthrowing all the bloody capitalist regimes of the region. *For a socialist federation of the Balkans!*

The idea of bloody U.S. imperialism intervening in Serbia to install "democracy" is a cruel hoax. The imperialist rulers arrogantly claimed the right to decide who should govern Serbia, and now they have exercised that right. This is the

follow-up to the ruthless U.S.-led bombing campaign last year that killed thousands of civilians and destroyed the entire infrastructure of the country, from factories and office buildings to water and power distribution systems.

As with the continuing U.S. bombing of Saddam Hussein's Iraq and the U.S.-imposed starvation blockade which has killed well over one million people, the imperialist rulers feel they can throw their weight around with impunity. The "democratic" U.S./NATO imperialists wreaked more devastation in Serbia than did German imperialism under Hitler's Nazis in World War II. Combined with a decade of economic sanctions against Serbia, this wiped away a half century of economic progress made possible by the post-World War II overturn of capitalism in Yugoslavia.

While opposing all sides in the three-cornered nationalist civil wars in the former Yugoslavia, the International Communist League called for military defense of the Serbs when they were attacked by the U.S./NATO imperialists and opposed the imperialist embargo. From the outset of last year's war in March 1999, we raised the call: Defeat U.S./NATO imperialism through workers revolution! Defend Serbia! We gave concrete expression to our proletarian internationalist opposition to the imperialist war by collecting almost \$11,000 for the campaign initiated by the syndicalist-

influenced Italian COBAS trade unions to aid Yugoslav workers whose factories had been bombed by NATO. Above all, we stressed the need to forge Leninist vanguard parties to lead the proletariat in the imperialist countries in overthrowing the bloodthirsty capitalist rulers through socialist revolution.

We opposed the predatory "peace" diktat imposed by the U.S., which turned Kosovo into a NATO protectorate today occupied by 40,000 troops. While cynically feigning "humanitarian" concern for the Kosovo Albanians, it was Washington's goal from the beginning to project its power in the region—through the U.S.-dominated NATO alliance—including against its West European imperialist "allies." The imperialists already have 35,000 NATO-led troops in Bosnia and 2,000 in Albania, with a thousand United Nations troops in Macedonia. *U.S. hands off Serbia! All U.S./UN/NATO troops out of the Balkans!*

Capitalist Counterrevolution and "Ethnic Cleansing"

The Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia was born out of World War II, when Tito's Communist Partisans battled the occupying Nazi Wehrmacht as well as the Croatian fascist Ustasha and Serbian royalist Chetniks. Tito's multinational Partisans were the only force in Yugoslavia that opposed communalism. But the Partisan victory led to the creation of a bureaucratically deformed workers state patterned on the Soviet Union under Stalin, in which the working class was deprived of political power. The 1945 constitution formally guaranteed equal national rights for all the peoples of Yugoslavia. But bureaucratic misrule and the nationalist deformations which went along with "socialism in one country" undermined the socialist and egalitarian ideals to which the Tito regime publicly appealed.

Some years later, Tito introduced "market socialism," which opened Yugoslavia to imperialist economic penetration and reinforced disparities among the various regions, fueling resurgent nationalism. After his death in 1980, the bureaucracy began to fracture along national lines. As head of the central bank, Slobodan Milosevic promoted pro-capitalist "market reforms" and came to power in Serbia in 1987 by appealing to "greater Serbia" chauvinism against the Kosovo Albanians. In this, he embodied the link between capitalist restoration and nationalism. But Milosevic was not alone in this regard. His Croatian counterpart in the early '90s, Franjo Tudjman, idolized the World War II pro-Nazi fascist Ustasha while Bosnian Muslim leader Alija Izetbegovic (who resigned last week) was a rabid nationalist and Islamic reactionary, whose 1990 "Islamic Declaration" demanded the "Islamization" of Bosnia's largely secular Muslim population.

With the nations and peoples of Yugoslavia, especially Bosnia, intermingled, any attempt to put this region under the rule of any one of the constituent peoples—Serbs, Croats or Slavic Muslims—is necessarily oppressive of the others. In such a situation, under capitalism, there is no democratic solution to the national question. Self-determination of one people means "ethnic cleansing," the driving out of other peoples. Thus with the breakup of Yugoslavia, Bosnia experienced a communalist war in which *all sides committed atrocities and "ethnic cleansing"* on a scale depending upon the shifting balance of military forces. We wrote at the time (WV No. 578, 18 June 1993):

"The liberal and rad-lib milieu has taken up 'poor little Bosnia' as its latest cause, and various pseudo-leftists are falling over themselves trying to think up arguments for direct or indirect imperialist intervention against the Serbs. As Marxists and proletarian internationalists, we take no side in the squalid nationalist bloodbath that has ripped up the former Yugoslavia, establishing capitalist rule over the corpses of the workers and peasants of all nationalities. But we oppose



New "democratic" Yugoslav president Vojislav Kostunica with Serb-chauvinist paramilitary killers in Kosovo, 1998.

all forms of imperialist intervention in the Balkans, from the economic boycott of Serbia to ‘peacekeeping’ troops.”

The nationalist breakup of Yugoslavia was directly instigated by the imperialists, particularly through Germany’s push for Croatian independence. The character of the armed conflicts changed decisively in 1995 as the U.S. and Germany provided the Croatian army with large quantities of modern weaponry along with training and advisers. In the biggest single act of “ethnic cleansing” in these conflicts, the Croatian forces drove hundreds of thousands of Serbs out of the Krajina region of eastern Croatia. When NATO unleashed weeks of air strikes to back the Croatian army and its Bosnian Muslim allies in routing the Bosnian Serb forces, we called for military defense of the Bosnian Serbs. These air strikes and the subsequent NATO occupation of Bosnia set the stage for last year’s massive terror bombing of Serbia and Kosovo.

The U.S. has now finally ousted Milošević. But the new situation hardly promises a stable imperialist “New World Order” in the Balkans. Not only is the Belgrade coalition regime internally unstable, with competing parties out to knife each other, but the nationalist conflicts in the region may well intensify. With Serbia now joining the European “community of nations,” what will NATO now do vis-à-vis the secessionist Kosovo



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Workers Hammer

ISO (left) rejected defense of Serbia against NATO war last year, pushed idiot pacifism; Workers Power (center) echoed imperialist cry of “poor little Kosovo,” joined in London protest featuring signs reading “NATO—Good Luck.” Right: Spartacist contingent at June 1999 antiwar protest in San Francisco.



WV Photo

Gaullists and the British Tories. But there is scant room in a devastated country like Serbia, under the boot of imperialist domination, for even the trappings of parliamentary democracy. The 18-party Democratic Opposition has the official blessing of the Serbian Orthodox hierarchy and the London-born Prince Alexander, scion of the pre-World War II monarchy, who returned to Belgrade yesterday. The most prominent figure in the

as he toured Kosovo in support of the pogromist Serbian paramilitary gangs.

Such are the leaders of the “democratic revolution” hailed by Western imperialist spokesmen, who are in turn echoed by an array of opportunist leftists. Thus, the reformist British Socialist Workers Party (SWP) of the late Tony Cliff (affiliated to the International Socialist Organization in the U.S.) hailed “Serbia’s revolution” in an article which does not even mention, much less demand the withdrawal of, imperialist troops in the Balkans (*Socialist Worker* [Britain], 14 October). The French Cliffite paper *Socialisme par en bas* (October 2000) headlined an article “Otpor!” (Resistance). Otpor is the student opposition group which was a spearhead of the anti-Milošević protests and was described by the *New York Times* (15 October) as “flush with funds from Western aid groups and governments.”

The right-centrist British Workers Power (WP) group likewise enthused over “a mighty popular revolution” (WP Web site, 10 October). Writing only days before Kostunica was feted by NATO leaders at a European Union meeting, WP asserted that Kostunica “has not offered himself as an open tool of Nato,” while an article written before Milošević’s ouster claimed that “Kostunica never received the open backing of the imperialist powers” (*Workers Power*, October 2000). This is a preposterous cover-up.

The German newsweekly *Der Spiegel* (9 October) reported that the decision to present Kostunica as the joint opposition candidate was imposed at a gathering of feuding opposition leaders summoned together by U.S. secretary of state Madeleine Albright and German Green foreign minister Joschka Fischer during a December G8 summit in Berlin. A month before the election, the U.S. set up an office in its embassy in Budapest to coordinate the opposition campaign and funnel some \$30 million into Serbia.

The “mighty popular revolution” was in reality spearheaded by a small group around Cacak mayor Velimir Ilic, who was part of a Serbian delegation received by high U.S. officials in Washington last year. Ilic, working in close collaboration with anti-Milošević elements in the state security forces, organized a gang of paramilitary thugs and skinheads to spearhead the assault on parliament. On October 4, as Ilic was organizing the convoy to go to Belgrade, Otpor leader Slobodan

Homen met in Budapest with William Montgomery, the U.S. ambassador to Yugoslavia who was then based in the Budapest embassy, to run through plans for the final assault.

Fake-Left Drummer Boys for Imperialism

The political lodestar for groups like Workers Power and the SWP/ISO is not the class interests of the international proletariat but the pressure of their own bourgeoisie, refracted through the pro-imperialist labor bureaucracy and petty-bourgeois “public opinion.” In particular, the SWP and WP are in the tow of the Blair Labour government in Britain—historically a key player in the Balkans—which is among the most rabid forces in the imperialist anti-Milošević coalition. The SWP’s anti-NATO rhetoric during the 1999 war was an expression of its opposition to the interests of *American* imperialism; thus SWP spokesman Alex Callinicos cosigned a statement against the *U.S.-dominated* NATO alliance in favor of intervention under the aegis of the *European imperialists’* Organization for Cooperation and Security in Europe (*New Statesman*, 10 May 1999).

For its part, Workers Power has long been a strident voice in the “poor little Bosnia” chorus. Along with a number of other fake-Trotskyist groups in Britain, WP joined the “Workers Aid to Bosnia” campaign in 1993—which worked hand in glove with UN “peacekeeping” forces—and raised the call, “Solidarity with Bosnian Muslims!” With this call WP placed itself squarely at the service of the Izetbegovic regime—which incorporated into its forces Islamic fundamentalists from throughout the Near East—and its imperialist patrons. When imperialist war propaganda against the Serbs was translated into NATO bombs, Workers Power issued a statement on 5 September 1995 baldly declaring that “in the war between NATO and Republika Srpska [the Bosnian “Serb Republic”], revolutionaries continue to take a revolutionary defeatist position on both sides” (see “Chickens Come Home to Roost over Balkans Betrayal,” *Workers Hammer* No. 148, November/December 1995). This was an open repudiation of the elementary Leninist principle of military defense of a small nation or semicolonial people against imperialist attack.

Last year’s NATO terror bombing was
continued on page 9



Reuters

Serbian factory in Cacak destroyed by 1999 U.S./NATO bombing.

Albanians, who are still nominally part of the rump Yugoslavia? And what of the demand for independence of Montenegro?

Washington’s Serbian Nationalists

Kostunica’s Democratic Party of Serbia, now the core of the new Belgrade regime, is the voice of the new capitalist class that has emerged in Serbia. The opposition platform—drawn up by G17-Plus, a group of Serbian economists bankrolled by the imperialists—is a plan for enriching the Serbian bourgeoisie while ramming austerity measures down the throats of the working class. It calls for rapid privatization of nationalized enterprises, cancellation of price controls, subordination of the country to the International Monetary Fund and World Bank and introduction of a “dual-currency monetary system” making the German D-mark an official currency.

Kostunica reportedly claims to see himself in the mold of West European conservative parties like the French

coalition, Zoran Djindjic, campaigned in Bosnia in the mid-1990s for Radovan Karadzic, head of the Serb paramilitary forces which carried out murderous “ethnic cleansing” of Bosnian Muslims. Another key component in the new ruling coalition is the Serbian Renewal Movement of Vuk Draskovic, who looks back to the pre-World War II ultranationalist Chetnik monarchists.

Kostunica, too, was an ardent supporter of Karadzic. In a 6 October interview with the Internet magazine REDS, Italian journalist Andrea Ferrario reports that Kostunica justified the 1995 massacre of 7,000 Bosnian Muslims in Srebrenica as an “act of self-defense.” Ferrario adds, “He is very close to the Serbian Church and during the years has maintained good connections with the monarchist milieu.” Kostunica first went into opposition to the Tito regime in 1974 because a proposed new constitution granted increased autonomy for predominantly Albanian Muslim Kosovo. Two years ago, he had himself photographed with an assault rifle in hand

All-sided nationalist reaction in former Yugoslavia. From left: Muslim fundamentalist supporters of imperialist-backed Bosnian regime, Croatian soldiers giving fascist salute, latter-day Serbian Chetnik chauvinist.



Reuters



La Repubblica



Der Spiegel

Nader...

(continued from page 3)

the Social Democrats.

Tellingly, D'Amato's "historical" analysis does *not* chronicle the history of "progressive" bourgeois and petty-bourgeois third parties in the U.S.—no doubt because this history starkly illustrates that such movements have served to *divert* the fight for working-class independence back into the Democratic Party. Philistines like Socialist Alternative and the ISO depict every opportunist foray as a "new situation" in order to hoodwink those inexperienced supporters who take their pseudo-Marxism as good coin.

1924: The Farmer-Labor Party and the "La Follette Revolution"

The American Communist Party (CP—then called the Workers [Communist] Party) in its early, revolutionary years was confronted with just such a "third party" movement, albeit one far more radical than Nader's Greens: the Farmer-Labor Party. Spurred by the Bolshevik Revolution, workers in the U.S. engaged in a wave of hard-fought struggles in 1919, from Seattle to the Midwest steel mills to the coal fields of western Pennsylvania. Local labor parties sprang up in a number of cities. Chicago Federation of Labor head John Fitzpatrick, an Irish nationalist with a reputation as a radical trade unionist opposed to American Federation of Labor (AFL) bureaucrat Samuel Gompers, formed a national Labor Party.

Saddled with ultraleft prejudices, the Workers Party initially ignored this movement. By the time it took notice in late 1922, Fitzpatrick's party was no longer an unambiguously working-class organization. In 1920, the Labor Party leadership had entered into negotiations with the bourgeois "Committee of 48," inheritors of the tradition of the "Bull Moose" Progressive Party, which ran arch-imperialist and former Republican president Theodore Roosevelt in the 1912 presidential election. Seeking the vote of rural populists, the Labor Party changed its name to the Farmer-Labor Party. By its very nature, such a *two-class* party means the political subordination of the proletariat to the bourgeoisie through the agency of the petty bourgeoisie—farmers, professionals, shopkeepers and small capitalists—an intermediate layer which can play no independent role in capitalist society.

In 1922, Fitzpatrick joined with the Conference of Progressive Political Action (CPPA), founded by the railroad union tops to support "progressive" candidates of any party. When Fitzpatrick left over the CPPA's refusal to abandon a "non-partisan" orientation and agreed to call a conference to found a new party, the Workers Party joined with him in this effort. At that conference in July 1923, Fitzpatrick demanded that the Communists accept a subordinate role, while they attempted to take organizational control. Fitzpatrick broke with the Workers Party, moving back toward Gompers,



Right-wing racist Pat Buchanan and liberal Ralph Nader, on NBC's *Meet the Press*, share program of chauvinist protectionism.

leaving the newly founded Federated Farmer-Labor Party in the hands of the Workers Party and a few petty-bourgeois populists.

Politically, the Workers Party had accepted the "Farmer-Labor" orientation. It failed to draw a clear class line in its propaganda and did not insist that any new party make a complete break with all bourgeois political currents and be unambiguously *working-class* in character. Thus it coexisted in the Federated Farmer-Labor Party with populist elements who were already lining up behind the proposed candidacy of Progressive war horse "Battlin' Bob" La Follette, a Wisconsin Senator and longtime Republican, in the 1924 presidential election. John Pepper, a Hungarian adventurer who became a leader in the Workers Party by passing himself off as an official emissary from the Communist International (CI), even enthused over a supposed "La Follette revolution."

It was Leon Trotsky in Moscow who insisted on pulling the Workers Party back from the opportunist course of the "third party alliance" in 1924. In the introduction to the first volume of his *The First Five Years of the Communist International*, Trotsky argued:

"For a young and weak Communist Party, lacking in revolutionary temper, to play the role of solicitor and gatherer of 'progressive voters' for the Republican Senator La Follette is to head toward the political dissolution of the party in the petty bourgeoisie.... The inspirers of this monstrous opportunism, who are thoroughly imbued with skepticism concerning the American proletariat, are impatiently seeking to transfer the party's center of gravity into a farmer milieu—a milieu that is being shaken by the agrarian crisis. By underwriting, even if with reservations, the worst illusions of the petty bourgeoisie, it is not at all difficult to create for oneself the illusion of wielding influence over the petty bourgeoisie. To think that Bolshevism consists of this is to understand nothing about Bolshevism."

Trotsky linked the La Follette orientation of the American party with the "worker-peasant bloc" being promoted by the CI leadership under Zinoviev. Though going along with the "third party alliance," Communist leader James P. Cannon, then in a bloc with William Z. Foster, waged a fight against the Pepper regime. By the time of the 1924 elections, the Workers Party had pulled back from its disastrous course and ran its own election campaign. In an unpublished note years later, Cannon acknowledged:

"The cold fact is that the party which had proclaimed itself at its inception as a rev-

olutionary party of the working class, and had adopted a corresponding program, became, for a period in 1924, the advocate of a 'third party' of capitalism, and offered to support, under certain conditions, the presidential candidacy of the petty-bourgeois demagogue La Follette."

—quoted in Prometheus Research Library introduction to *James P. Cannon and the Early Years of American Communism* (Prometheus Research Library [1992])

1948: Henry Wallace and the Progressive Party

In 1928, Cannon was won over to the Trotskyist Left Opposition against the Stalinization of the Comintern, having read Trotsky's critique of the CI's draft program at the Sixth Comintern Congress that year. Expelled from the CP,



1923 conference of Farmer-Labor Party initiated by Chicago Federation of Labor leader John Fitzpatrick (inset).

Cannon and some one hundred supporters founded the American Trotskyist movement to fight for the authentic Bolshevism which animated the early CI as represented by its first four congresses.

After a "third period" sectarian phase in the late 1920s and early '30s, by the mid-1930s the Comintern was firmly wedded to the reformist program of class collaboration exemplified by the "people's front" policy. In the U.S., this was manifested in backhanded support to Franklin D. Roosevelt's "New Deal" Democrats. The massive labor upsurge and working-class radicalization which led to the formation of the CIO industrial unions was accompanied by strong sentiment at the base for an independent party of labor. The CIO tops, including the social democrats and Stalinists, sought to head this off and channel the working class back into the Democrats. In New York, they even formed the American Labor Party (ALP) in order to get socialist-minded workers, who had a long tradition of opposing all capitalist candidates, to vote for Roosevelt on the ALP ticket. Moreover the Stalinists, who had earlier led significant struggles against racist oppression, used their considerable influence to draw black people firmly into the New Deal Democrats, which ranged from Communists and Northern liberals to segregationist Southern Dixiecrats.

With the onset of the Cold War against the Soviet Union in the late 1940s and a witchhunt against union militants and leftists in the U.S., the Stalinists were frozen out of the Democratic Party of Harry Truman. They sought refuge in the presidential campaign of Henry Wallace's Progressive Party. Wallace, a former vice president under Roosevelt, campaigned

on a continuation of the liberal New Deal—a "pro-labor" stance and "peace and friendship" with the Soviet Union.

Cannon had learned the lessons of the 1924 Farmer-Labor Party fiasco. When some members of the then-Trotskyist Socialist Workers Party (SWP) argued for critical support to Wallace, Cannon was adamantly opposed. In a report to an SWP Central Committee plenum in February 1948, he said:

"The Wallace party must be opposed and denounced by every class criterion. In the first place it is programmatically completely bourgeois, as all the comrades have recognized. Its differences with the Republican and Democratic parties are purely tactical. There is not a trace of a principled difference anywhere. And by principle difference, of course, I mean a class difference."

Virtually the whole of this speech could be a polemic against the opportunist arguments pushed by the ISO today to justify its support for Nader. Thus, Geier in his *International Socialist Review* article says the Democrats and Republicans "are both controlled by big business" and adds, "Nader's populism—opposing big business but supporting competition—is anticorporate but not anticapitalist." Here the virulently Stalinophobic ISO is borrowing straight from the Stalinist CP, which has historically justified its support for Roosevelt, Wallace and a host of other capitalist politicians under the rubric of the

"anti-monopoly coalition." In addressing pro-Wallace SWPers in his 1948 report, Cannon explained:

"The argument is made by the Chicago comrades that the capitalists do not support Wallace and therefore it is not a capitalist party. I think it is quite correct that all, or nearly all, of the monopoly capitalists at the present moment oppose Wallace. That is not decisive at all as to the class character of the party. The class character of the party is not determined by the class that supports the party at the moment but rather by the class that the party supports....

"The class character of the party is determined first by its program; secondly by its actual policy in practice; and thirdly by its composition and control. The Wallace party is bourgeois on all these counts....

"We have to stir up the workers against this imposter, and explain to them that they will never get a party of their own by accepting substitutes."

Social Democracy vs. Communism

The social-democratic ISO impostors reject the lessons of history because they reject the fight for a revolutionary party of the working class. In other countries, the ISO's co-thinkers are loyal to the mass reformist labor parties—which are likewise bourgeois in their program albeit rooted in the workers movement. Its German members liquidated into the youth group of the ruling Social Democratic Party; the British Socialist Workers Party declared itself "over the moon" following the election of the thoroughly anti-working-class Tony Blair.

In the U.S., the ISO simultaneously tails pro-Democratic Party "progressive" union bureaucrats like former Teamsters president Ron Carey and the liberal student youth who are Nader's fans. Describing Nader's campaign appearances,

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the *New York Times* (24 September) observed: “To Mr. Nader and his supporters, those crowds are clear evidence that his campaign has finally gained steam, building a movement of disaffected voters—one might call them angry white liberals—that will put the Green Party on the political map.” For all its talk about a “pro-labor alternative,” the ISO likewise sees its constituency as “angry white liberals,” seeking to win them not to Marxism but...more militant liberalism.

If the ISO’s Joel Geier is adept at spurious arguments for supporting a bourgeois third party, it comes from many years of practice. Geier was a leading member of the ISO’s predecessor, the Independent Socialist Clubs (ISC), in 1968 when it was knee-deep in the petty-bourgeois California Peace and Freedom Party (PFP), whose main drawing card was liberal opposition to the Vietnam War being waged by the Democratic Johnson administration. In language almost identical to that being used about Nader today, the *Independent Socialist* (August 1968) enthused:

“A first wave of revulsion from the two-party system, triggered by the spectre of a Johnson-Nixon choice in ’68, led to the creation of the Peace and Freedom Party, the first genuine independent alternative in many years.”

To the deserved dismay of the ISC, the entire constituency of the PFP was sucked back into the Democratic Party fold with the development of the essentially politically identical but much more viable presidential bid of antiwar Democrat Eugene McCarthy.

The American bourgeoisie prefers the two-party system because of its stability in normal times, as Cannon observed in his 1948 speech, absorbing “shocks and grievances by shifting people from one bourgeois party to another.” But it is not intrinsic to capitalist “democracy”; many capitalist countries have three, four and more political parties. Nor does a break with the two-party system necessarily imply motion to the left. Right-wing racist Reform Party candidate Pat Buchanan—who, like Nader, pushes protectionist chauvinism—is standing against the two major capitalist parties, as did Alabama segregationist George Wallace in 1968 when he broke with the Democrats and campaigned for president on the American Independent Party ticket.

Our aim is to advance a proletarian revolutionary program and build a revolutionary workers party. While any electoral support to bourgeois parties is excluded on principle, Marxists will at times extend critical support—like a rope supports a hanged man, in Lenin’s words—to reformist working-class parties if such support helps drive home the principle of class versus class. Thus our comrades of the Spartacist League/Britain have on occasion called for critical support to the Socialist Labour Party (SLP) set up by militant miners leader Arthur Scargill in opposition to Blair’s “New Labour” when Labour purged even its fig leaf call for nationalization of industry (“Clause IV”) from its constitution. Though sharply criticizing the SLP’s “old Labour” parlia-

mentary reformism, the SL/B stressed the significance of this split from Labour at the time: “For the first time in decades, the British Labour Party’s political stranglehold over the workers movement is being challenged by an important split from within” (WV No. 638, 2 February 1996).

Particularly in the case of small reformist formations without a mass working-class base, it is necessary that their election campaigns pose a clear *programmatic* break with capitalist politics if critical support to them is to advance the consciousness of militant workers or subjectively revolutionary activists. That is certainly not the case with the current presidential candidates of the now-reformist SWP, Workers World Party (WWP) or the Socialist Party (SP). Quite the contrary. The empty calls for a reformist “butter not guns” program by the SP and WWP and a quirky farmer-labor populism by the SWP are presented in the framework of bourgeois electoralism which is counterposed to a strategy of class struggle.

The SP is historically rooted in Cold War anti-Communism. Former SP leader Norman Thomas was immersed in scandal in 1967 when it came out that his Institute of International Labor Research was a conduit for \$1 million in CIA funds to “democratic left” politicians in Latin America; the *New York Times* (22 February 1967) headlined: “Thomas Upholds C.I.A.-Aided Work.” As for the SWP and WWP, not surprisingly given Nader’s popularity among

left liberals, these petty-bourgeois “socialists” are running even more nominal campaigns than usual, barely publicizing their candidacies even in the pages of their press. The character of the campaigns is illustrated by WWP’s laundry list of reformist appeals to the capitalist state to “end racism,” “stop police brutality,” “force the pharmaceuticals to distribute drugs on demand.” Not one of them has a word to say on such crucial questions of working-class independence from the capitalist state as opposition to court intervention into the unions.

Whether in proposing electoral tactics or in intervening in strikes and other social struggles, our starting point is the fight to win the working class to the program of socialist revolution. As Cannon wrote in a July 1924 article titled “Communist Candidates and the Farmer-Labor Party” (reprinted in *James P. Cannon and the Early Years of American Communism*):

“Any activities we engage in that do not result in strengthening and building the Communist Party, in increasing its influence over the laboring masses and winning them away from the influence of all other groups and parties, does not serve the real interests of the working class as a whole. If we fail to do this, we fail to develop the instrument which is indispensable, not only for the final revolutionary victory of the workers, but also for all their immediate struggles which lead towards it—that is, an independent revolutionary party which stands up at all times for the interests of the working class as a whole and which leads the way at every stage of the fight.” ■

Serbia...

(continued from page 7)

carried out in the name of defending “poor little Kosovo.” Here again, Workers Power sang in tune with imperialist war propaganda: supporting the Kosovo Liberation Army pawns of NATO imperialism, providing a platform for openly pro-NATO Kosovar spokesmen at a London public meeting, and participating in an April 1999 “Workers Aid for Kosova” demonstration in London which featured Albanian and NATO flags and slogans like “NATO—Good Luck!”

Appealing rather more to pacifistic liberals, the American ISO urged the U.S. ruling class to “stop the bombing” and idiotically whined, “NATO bombs won’t bring peace.” In article after article before and after the air war, these fake socialists did not once call for the military defense of Serbia! The ISO lamented that the “vast sums wasted on bombing Serbia could be used to remove many of the underlying causes of conflicts in the world” (*Socialist Worker*, 9 April 1999). The underlying cause of war is the *system of imperialism*.

The ISO reformists promote the illusion that this system can somehow be changed by pressuring the rulers of the most rapacious imperialist power on earth to change their priorities. But imperialism is not a “policy” that can be made more humane. As Lenin explained, imperialism is “the highest stage of capitalism”: a system based on ruthless plunder of the colonial and semicolonial world, grinding exploitation of the proletariat at home, and a constant battle among the major powers for markets and spheres of exploitation which inevitably produces wars to redivide the world. The only way to end the threat of war is through international proletarian revolution.

U.S. Imperialism Hands Off the Balkans!

The fake lefts’ prostration before the imperialist rulers is the result of years of tailing behind the anti-Communist Cold War crusade against the Soviet Union in the name of “democracy” and “human rights.” And particularly since the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union in 1991-92, pseudo-leftists and liberals have been among the most aggressive voices for imperialist intervention. Liberal columnist Anthony Lewis recently attacked Republican presidential



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Victory of multinational Communist Partisans in World War II led by Marshal Tito (center) created a deformed workers state.

candidate George W. Bush for being too hesitant about foreign intervention, asserting: “If the United States had not intervened in Bosnia and later in Kosovo.... Slobodan Milosevic would still hold power in Belgrade” (*New York Times*, 7 October). In justifying Washington’s flagrant meddling in the Balkans—“a natural area for our expansion”—in an op-ed piece in the *New York Times* (6 October), Robert Kaplan of the New America Foundation, which includes liberals and Clintonites, wrote:

“President Clinton and Secretary of State Madeleine Albright deserve credit for applying the realist principle that projecting power is a prerequisite for the spread of one’s values. In the 1930’s, it was the Nazis who were applying military pressure and supporting local political parties in the Balkans with money, intelligence, printing presses and other aid. Not surprisingly, fascist ideals were then ascendant.

“We should not delude ourselves that the spread of open societies in the Balkans and elsewhere is necessarily a natural development: it is a direct result of the expansion of American imperial authority.”

As this statement shows, the call for “human rights” as a justification for imperialist war plays the same role today as the racist “white man’s burden” did for chauvinist reactionaries a century ago.

The massive intervention by the imperialist powers around the Serbian elections was accompanied by what the *Washington Post* (19 September) called “a global shift of forces to bolster the U.S. military presence in the Balkans.” The focus of these moves was a plan, in the event that Milosevic refused to step down, to intervene in Montenegro following a declaration of secession by the Montenegrin regime of Milo Djukanovic,

a former black market operator and smalltime hood. In preparation for this plan, a special 20,000-man military unit was set up in Montenegro, led by British and Croatian officers. Two days after the Serbian elections, U.S. and Croatian troops launched joint exercises in the Adriatic Sea and Washington shifted an aircraft carrier battle group from the Persian Gulf.

At the same time, the U.S. and the various European powers are each frantically maneuvering to extend their own national influence and short-circuit their

rivals. German diplomats were the first to greet Kostunica upon taking office. Days later, the French foreign minister was in Belgrade touting his country’s historic ties to Serbia. And on October 12, Prime Minister Amato of Italy, which balked at the U.S.-led bombing campaign last year and never closed its embassy in Belgrade, became the first foreign head of government to pay a visit to Kostunica.

We have noted before that with the restoration of capitalism in East Europe and the former Soviet Union, the world is increasingly coming to look like it did in the years before the outbreak of World War I in 1914. Recall that it was conflicting imperialist aims in the Balkans that ignited that worldwide slaughter. And it was the Russian October Revolution of 1917, led by the Bolshevik Party of Lenin and Trotsky, that took Russia out of that war and became a beacon for the proletariat internationally.

If imperialist carnage is not to be the continuing fate of humanity, capitalism must be swept away through proletarian revolution. The International Communist League fights to reforge Trotsky’s Fourth International, world party of socialist revolution, to lead the fight for new October Revolutions around the world. ■

L.A. Transit...

(continued from page 12)

security guards are members of the Teamsters union. These paid thugs for the capitalist class enemy have no business in the trade unions!

The janitors strike was portrayed sympathetically by priests, preachers and liberals as simply a poor people’s struggle. These apologists for capitalism seek to obscure the irreconcilable class divide between those who sell their labor power and those who derive their wealth from exploiting that labor. While Mahony and Jackson preach “reconciliation,” the pro-capitalist trade-union bureaucrats preach class collaboration. The bureaucrats derive their privileged position from their role as defenders of the capitalist system. Thus, they work overtime to hide the class nature of this society. Throughout the transit strike, they declared that this was a fight to “save middle-class jobs.”

No matter how much their profits are

skyrocketing, the capitalists always claim that there is no money in the coffers for the working class. A workers revolution would reorganize society on the basis of a planned, collectivized economy, in which the tremendous wealth created by those who labor would be used to meet the needs of all—free, quality mass transit and health care, integrated education and housing, and jobs for all—not to provide fabulous profits for the few.

The Spartacist League brought our fighting socialist perspective for the labor movement to many picket lines and rallies during the strikes. In the course of the class battles to come, a new leadership of the labor movement must come forward based on the understanding that successful working-class struggle requires the independence of the proletariat from the capitalists and their political parties. Out of such struggles will be forged a multi-racial revolutionary workers party based on the Marxist understanding that the capitalist profit system must be rooted out and replaced by a socialist egalitarian society. ■

Palestinians...

(continued from page 1)

In their desperation to put an end to the slaughter, Palestinian protesters in Australia appeal for intervention by the imperialist governments, while a statement by Palestinian rights activists in Jerusalem likewise calls for “international protection” under the auspices of the UN. The UN is an instrument of the imperialist robber barons and butchers, from presiding over the Zionist partition of Palestine in 1948 to the disarming of Palestinian fighters in Lebanon in 1982—which paved the way for the massacre of as many as 2,000 Palestinians in the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps by Sharon’s killers—to the imperialist slaughter and starvation of Iraqis. *All U.S., British and UN imperialist forces out of the Near East! Down with the bombing and starvation blockade of Iraq!*

Palestinians Revolt Against “Pax Americana”

Israeli (and American) officials arrogantly ordered Arafat to “call off the violence,” as though he could turn the protests against the Israeli terror on and off like a spigot. In fact, this is a spontaneous popular revolt not only against the Zionist occupation forces but against Arafat’s collaboration with the Zionist state and its great power protector, American imperialism. One of the Palestinian youth courageously standing up to Israeli tanks and helicopter gunships in Bethlehem, a 17-year-old member of the Tenzim group nominally under the control of Arafat’s Fatah, the leading force in the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), declared: “The Israelis think that Arafat controls us like puppets. But we are a force of our own.”

When Arafat shook hands with Israeli prime minister Yitzhak Rabin on the White House lawn seven years ago after signing the Israel-PLO “peace accord,”



WV Photo

Spartacist League contingent at San Francisco demonstration in defense of Palestinians, October 14.

Now this arrogant delusion has been shattered. As the young Tenzim fighter in Bethlehem exclaimed bitterly, “The peace is one big lie.” Palestinian American lawyer Michael Tarazi wrote in a piece in the *Washington Post* (11 October):

“After a seven-year ‘peace process,’ Palestinians are actually worse off now than they were before Oslo. We have recognized Israel’s right to exist (and received no such mutual recognition from Israel in return), we have obliterated the offensive provisions from our national charter, we remained quiet and docile to help get Ehud Barak elected prime minister, we jumped through every American and Israeli hoop put before us like trained circus animals and received what in return? Fifty thousand more settlers in the West Bank and Gaza, continued land expropriation, the strangulation of Arab East Jerusalem by Jewish settlements, Jewish expansion into Jerusalem’s Muslim quarter (with no mutual right for Muslims to live in the Jewish quarter), increased travel restrictions, unyielding ‘security’ detentions and torture, complete economic dependence on Israel.”



AFP

Civilian buildings in Iraq reduced to rubble by U.S. warplanes in 1999. Imperialist terror bombing and starvation blockade have continued since 1990-91 Gulf War.

liberals rejoiced over the prospect of a lasting peace. We denounced this anti-Palestinian “Pax Americana” as a “grotesque bargain over the subjugated Palestinian people,” warning that the PLO would “take over the job of policing the Palestinian masses” and place its seal on their national oppression. We added, “By its act, the PLO has invited fundamentalist reactionaries like Hamas to pose as the only fighters against the Zionist occupation” (“Israel-PLO Deal for Palestinian Ghetto,” WV No. 583, 10 September 1993).

When they co-opted Arafat, the Zionist rulers and their imperialist patrons assumed that the Palestinian masses would passively accept whatever terms were negotiated in Washington, while the PA security forces, trained by the CIA, would easily deal with any Islamic fundamentalist fanatics or nationalist hardliners. (Israel fired missiles at Arafat’s residence and not PA headquarters for fear that CIA chief George Tenet was staying there on his “peace-seeking” mission.)

The conditions facing the sizable Arab population within Israel are little better. The European-derived Ashkenazi elite lord it over Israeli society, while the impoverished Sephardic Jews (who emigrated from the Near East and North Africa) are treated like the “poor white trash” of the American South and the Arabs are at best third-class citizens. The ten Israeli communities with the highest unemployment rate are all Arab, and 40 percent of Arab families live below the official poverty line, tens of thousands of them in squatter camps in the Negev desert. In the weeks leading up to the recent explosion, reports Tel Aviv University academic Tanya Reinhart, “Israeli Palestinians have been subject to vicious attacks, and more and more voices in the media (orchestrated, as always, from above) complain about how they have too many rights and are not ‘loyal’ to Israel” (*Mid-East Realities*, October 2000).

The rulers of Washington and Wall Street fear that the present crisis in Israel/Palestine could destabilize the entire

region. They saw the Israel-PLO accord as the centerpiece of the post-Soviet “New World Order” in the oil-rich Near East, a region historically beset by explosive national conflicts and interimperialist rivalries. Now it has utterly collapsed, and a worried editorial in the *New York Times* (10 October) comments:

“Anti-Israel rioting in Jordan and Egypt threatens to freeze or even unravel the peace both countries have made with Israel. Jordan, with its large Palestinian population, could face serious internal unrest. Such an environment of confrontation and instability would be custom-made for Saddam Hussein to exploit, and could tempt both Iraq and Iran to manipulate their oil exports for maximum political leverage in a tight international energy market.”

Whatever the outcome of the immediate crisis, it reveals some important truths about the present-day world. First, American imperialism, for all its cant about promoting “peace” and “human rights,” is the main agency enforcing murderous national oppression and capitalist exploitation in the Near East and throughout the world. U.S. imperialism, however, is *not* all-powerful; it cannot dictate the terms of a “New World Order” in the Near East or elsewhere at will. But while the defiant courage of Palestinian youth has momentarily frustrated Washington’s plans, the defeat of U.S. imperialism requires a *proletarian revolutionary program* capable of mobilizing powerful forces beyond the confines of Israel/Palestine.

Chiefly that means a fight for workers revolution in the imperialist heartlands, centrally the U.S. The International Communist League, of which the Spartacist League is the U.S. section, fights to forge the proletarian vanguard parties needed to lead the workers to the seizure of state power and the expropriation of the imperialist bourgeoisies. We Trotskyists, who fought for the unconditional military defense of the Soviet Union, a bureaucratically degenerated workers state, warned that the counterrevolutionary destruction of the USSR in 1991-92 would usher in a far more dangerous, “one superpower” world. That world-historic defeat for the international proletariat was a direct prelude to the anti-Palestinian Pax Americana. As long as the Soviet Union existed as a counterweight to U.S. imperialism, petty-bourgeois nationalists like the PLO and the semicolonial (“Third World”) bourgeoisies were able to jockey for advantage between the two “superpowers.” But no longer.

Israel: Death Trap for Jews

Barak’s pretext for the missile strikes against Palestinian cities was the killing of two Israeli soldiers in Ramallah by an enraged mob who seized them from the local jail where they had been taken for their safety by Palestinian cops. When young Arab children are killed in cold blood by Zionist troops with automatic rifles and anti-tank weapons, the “responsible” media report that they “died in the crossfire.” But the deaths of two Israeli soldiers suspected of belonging to

an undercover army death squad were denounced by Israeli and Western media and government spokesmen alike as “barbarous,” “sickening,” “a horrific and despicable lynching.” Were the Jewish fighters in the Warsaw Ghetto “barbarous” and “despicable” when they “lynched” any German soldier and collaborator they could get their hands on?

The massive assault on Palestinian towns and villages to avenge the deaths of two soldiers brings to mind the Nazis’ “Operation Reinhard,” when the entire Czech town of Lidice was leveled and Czech Jews deported to the death camps in 1942 to avenge the assassination of Gestapo chief Reinhard Heydrich. And while the killing of an ultra-Orthodox Zionist fanatic from Brooklyn provoked reams of hand-wringing commentary in the American press, barely a word was written about the pogrom launched by his clerical-fascist “settler” brethren after the funeral, as they indiscriminately attacked nearby Arab residents not with stones but with automatic rifles. The Islamist mayor of the Israeli Arab town of Umm al-Fahm, who was himself shot in the face by a rubber-coated bullet, decried the Israeli cops and troops for acting “like the Gestapo once dealt with Jews in Germany,” while elsewhere protesters burned an effigy of Barak bearing a sign, “Hitler of Israel.”

The cries of “Death to the Arabs!” by pogromist gangs in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem express the genocidal program implicit in Zionism, as in all nationalisms. The demand for “transfer”—expulsion of all Palestinians from the Occupied Territories—has long been raised by more mainstream forces than the ultra-Orthodox “settler” rabble and fascist outfits like the “Temple Mount Faithful,” who plot to blow up Al Aksa and instigate a “holy war” against all Muslims. Now, with the unprecedented intensity of the protests by Palestinians within Israel, there is a growing chauvinist hysteria directed against them as well. The Zionist reactionaries who long for “holy war” would do well to remember that five million Israeli Jews are arrayed against some 200 million Arab neighbors and a world Muslim population numbering one billion. What Leon Trotsky wrote on the eve of the Nazi Holocaust is no less true today: *Israel is a death trap for the Jewish people!*

Zionist reaction is mirrored by Islamic fundamentalists who scream “Death to the Jews!” A Muslim cleric in Gaza proclaimed: “It is time for all the Jews who do not belong here, who came from Europe and other countries, to go home.” French colonialism was finally driven out of Algeria in 1962, for example, by a war of attrition which cost a million Arab and Berber lives—though the independent capitalist state which replaced it remains subject to neocolonial domination. But the East European Jews who originally came to Palestine in the early part of the 20th century as colonial settlers, many with the intent of setting up collectivist kibbutzim, were subsequently compacted

Stalinist Class Collaboration: A Legacy of Revolutions Betrayed

Near East, 1950s

Permanent Revolution vs. Bourgeois Nationalism

Part One

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into a Hebrew-speaking nation with the influx of hundreds of thousands of refugees from the Nazi Holocaust, later augmented by millions of Sephardic Jewish immigrants. Israel *is* their home. At the same time, the Zionist state is inherently oppressive to the Palestinian people, founded on their mass expulsion and forcible subjugation.

We call for the right of national self-determination for both the Palestinian Arab *and* the Hebrew-speaking peoples. In such a situation of *interpenetrated peoples*—of two nations laying claim to the same land—there can be no equitable and democratic resolution to these conflicting national rights within the framework of capitalism. As we first elaborated in “Birth of the Zionist State Part 2: The 1948 War” (WV No. 45, 24 May 1974):

“It was clear that the establishment of an independent nation-state, either by Palestinian Arabs or the Jews, would occur in Palestine only at the expense of the other nation. When national populations are geographically interpenetrated, as they were in Palestine, an independent nation-state can be created only by their forcible separation (forced population transfers, etc.). Thus the democratic right of self-determination becomes abstract, as it can be exercised only by the stronger national grouping driving out or destroying the weaker one.

“In such cases the only possibility of a democratic solution lies in a social transformation.”

There can be no democratic, secular, binational *capitalist* Palestine, as used to be called for by the PLO and is today raised by various reformist leftists. Capitalism is based on competition, pitting one people and nation-state against another. The scarce resources of the region—land, water, etc.—*can* be equitably shared, but that requires international socialist cooperation and planning, i.e., *workers rule*. This was historically demonstrated in the Caucasus, likewise a patchwork of peoples, in the aftermath of the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution. Even under Stalinism, the planned, collectivized economy meant that more backward areas were favored for economic assistance over more advanced regions. Under the dictatorship of the proletariat, national conflicts will be resolved through negotiation and referendum, not war and genocide.

But that requires workers revolutions to sweep away all the Zionist butchers, bonapartist colonels and feudalist sheiks. The Arab regimes are no less enemies of the Palestinian people than the Israeli rulers, as seen in the 1970 “Black September” massacre of some 10,000 PLO fighters by the Jordanian monarchy. The evident bankruptcy of petty-bourgeois Palestinian nationalism—from serving as lackeys for the oil-rich Arab rulers to acting as enforcers for the Zionist occupation—has driven many Palestinian militants, once among the most cosmopolitan elements in the region, into the arms of Islamic fundamentalists like Hamas. Erstwhile radical secular opponents of Arafat like Nayef Hawatmeh’s Democratic Front and George Habash’s Popular Front have all but disappeared as they caved in to

Israeli soldier takes aim at defiant Palestinian protesters in Jerusalem.



the imperialist “peace” accords.

Amid this intense hysteria, the liberal Israeli “peace camp” has collapsed. To its credit, the Alternative Information Center (AIC), organized by Israeli supporters of the fake-Trotskyist United Secretariat of the late Ernest Mandel, has apparently not been drawn in by the chauvinist tide, continuing to publicize small protests against the occupation. But the Israeli Mandelites, who went from enthusing

defeat the military might of the Israeli state. What then is to be done?

It is necessary to mobilize the proletariat of the Near East, the only class with the social power and historic interest to sweep away the entire edifice of capitalist oppression and imperialist exploitation. That requires the forging of Leninist vanguard parties—in struggle against Zionism, Arab nationalism and all manner of religious obscurantism—which

parties, whose founding cadre included Jews and other oppressed minorities.

The Zionist garrison-state must be shattered from within, through Arab/Hebrew workers revolution. We have no illusion it will be easy to overcome the intense chauvinism, the hatred and fear of Arabs, which now animates the Hebrew-speaking masses. Today, a sharp rupture in the Zionist consensus would likely require cataclysmic historic events. But this is what revolutionary internationalists must prepare for, while staunchly defending the Palestinians against the oppressor Israeli state and the fascist settlers. For a successful outcome to be possible, a Trotskyist nucleus must be crystallized in Israel/Palestine among militant workers, left-wing students and especially the oppressed Palestinian Arab population.

What is needed is a binational Trotskyist party, seeking to lead the Palestinian Arab and Hebrew-speaking working people in *internationalist class struggle* alongside all the workers of the region. Palestinians constitute a majority of the population of Jordan and one-eighth of the population of Lebanon, with sizable minorities throughout the Near East and around the world. The struggle for the democratic rights of all the peoples of the Near East and for the survival and emancipation of the Palestinian people must necessarily sweep away the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and the bloody Ba’athist regime in Syria, bring down the rotten medieval structure in Lebanon and shatter the Zionist garrison-state. This struggle must place the revolutionary proletariat with its vanguard party at the head of the exploited and oppressed, and can only find its fulfillment in a socialist federation of the Near East. ■



Palestinian women protest in refugee camp in southern Lebanon, October 2. Islamic fundamentalists of Hamas, Hezbollah are deadly enemies of women’s rights.

over “radical” Arab nationalism to tailing the left-Zionist Meretz (which supports Barak) and critically supporting the 1993 accord, are essentially liberals. A call for a public forum in Jerusalem on October 4 co-sponsored by the AIC and Meretz said plaintively, “Many of us feel powerless, dismayed, outraged.”

For Revolutionary Internationalism!

It is notable that the current revolt has brought to the fore a layer of Palestinian youth, including young women in Western-style clothes who are hardly likely to be sympathetic to Islamic fundamentalism, with its harsh subjugation of women symbolized by the veil. These youth proclaim that they are engaged not in an Islamic *jihād* but rather a “war of independence.” But how can independence be won? Obviously, Palestinians with rocks or even small arms cannot

are at once proletarian, revolutionary *and internationalist*. While today the possibility of revolutionary working-class struggle may seem no less a pipe dream than the biblical injunction to “turn swords into ploughshares,” there is a rich history to be plumbed by would-be revolutionaries, including incipient workers revolutions in Iran in 1953 and Iraq in 1958-59 (see “Near East 1950s: Permanent Revolution vs. Bourgeois Nationalism,” WV Nos. 740 and 741, 25 August and 8 September). The mass of workers in Iraq, Iran and Egypt at that time looked for leadership to the Communist



UN “peacekeepers” in Lebanon. All U.S./UN imperialist troops out of the Near East! Down with anti-Palestinian “Pax Americana”!

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Jesse Jackson, L.A. Democrats Defuse Militant Strike

L.A. Transit Workers Face Down Union-Busters

LOS ANGELES, October 17—After more than four weeks, a tentative settlement was announced this morning in the Los Angeles transit strike and workers are slated to be back on the job tomorrow morning. More than 4,300 striking bus and rail drivers, members of the United Transportation Union (UTU), backed up by mechanics in the Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU) and transit clerks, have battled a determined union-busting effort by the Metropolitan Transit Agency (MTA) in the form of proposed new “regional transit zones.” In an editorial comment in the *Los Angeles Times* (15 October), one anti-labor “expert” baldly stated the city rulers’ aim: “The UTU and its fellow unions should be sent packing at the first opportunity, and all the MTA’s bus services should be contracted out to the lowest bidder.” In the end, by flexing their muscle on the picket line and winning widespread support among working people and the poor throughout the city, UTU members were able to beat back the brunt of the MTA’s union-busting offensive.

A contract ratification meeting tonight was turned into a revival meeting for Democratic Party politicians. With a number of city and state officials seated on the platform, UTU local president James Williams hailed Jesse Jackson as the man of the hour. Faced with a militant workforce which had consistently defied the bosses and Democratic Party politicians—from Yvonne Brathwaite Burke and other county supervisors on the MTA board to California governor Gray Davis—the city rulers had to bring in someone whose credentials were a little less tarnished. They found the man for the job in Jackson, who was called in to “mediate” by L.A. County Federation of Labor head Miguel Contreras as the strike reached a critical point.

Jackson—who has never missed an opportunity to try to douse the flames of militant social struggle—came to town saying that the strike must end. At tonight’s meeting, he led prayers and preached the virtues of “reconciliation” with management, hailing everyone from Republican mayor Richard Riordan to the MTA management for doing their job. Jackson, who postures as a defender of labor and blacks, tried to refurbish the image of local Democrats like Burke by recalling that he marched with her in the “old days” of the civil rights movement. Union members were told that when their contract expires in three years, they will be negotiating with a “pro-union” board—a not-so-implicit message that workers should turn out at the polls to vote for the same union-busters they faced in this round.

Here is an object lesson in how the labor bureaucracy’s allegiance to the Democratic Party chains the unions to the capitalist class enemy and is *counterposed* to militant class struggle. The transit strike, which was to have begun months earlier, was postponed by the union tops on Davis’ orders to avoid disrupting the Democratic National Con-



AP photos

Transit strikers shout down back-to-work ploy, October 4. Jesse Jackson, called in to end strike, embraces Democratic Party MTA board member Zev Yaroslavsky as strike settlement is announced, October 17.



vention in August which nominated Al Gore. Now, with the presidential election looming, the AFL-CIO tops who have been mobilizing to get out the vote for Gore feared an upsurge of labor struggle in this key state for the Democrats.

Acknowledging the widespread popularity of the transit strike, two weeks ago Davis tried to end the strike by signing a law that any new “regional transit zones” be covered by existing union contract provisions for four years. Davis’ demand that the strikers return to work was rejected at a UTU mass meeting on October 4. When ATU president Neil Silver bowed to Davis and ordered his members to scab—flouting a 30-year history of transit unions honoring each other’s strike lines—only *eight of 1,800 mechanics* crossed the UTU picket lines. Silver, whom ATU members called a “dead man walking,” backtracked within 24 hours to save his skin. Last Friday, a mass meeting of 2,500 drivers threw back the MTA’s “last, best and final offer.” When UTU president Williams asked all those who wanted to accept the deal to stand up, *no one* did.

The new three-year contract, in addition to the coverage provided under the bill signed by Davis, keeps a key provision extending union protections to new

transit locations. The union also significantly whittled down the number of positions the MTA wanted to switch to a ten-hour shift four days a week and got management to back off from forcing them to be on the job 13 hours for ten hours’ pay. But while older workers get a better pension deal than before, the contract allows management to continue dividing the workforce. The contract maintains a multi-tier wage scale for new hires and for workers in lines taken over by the MTA while bringing in over 300 new part-timers at a far lower pay scale. Such schemes have been a key weapon of the capitalists around the country in undermining union power.

The end of the transit strike comes on the heels of the scuttling of an all-out strike by 47,000 county workers, members of SEIU service employees Local 660, that began on October 11. After only one day, the strike was called off by union bureaucrats in response to a statement by Cardinal Mahony, who cynically appealed to the interests of “the poorest and most vulnerable members of our community” against the overwhelmingly black and Latino county workers, many of whom can barely scrape by on their existing wages. Angry that their union leaders knelt before Mahony, Lincoln Heights welfare workers chanted, “Sold out!” while another county worker said bitterly, “Mahony is nobody. He does not belong to the union.”

Having poured union money into the campaign coffers of the very same county supervisors the union went on strike against, the SEIU tops did not even set up a strike fund. Instead, they spent \$700,000 on TV and radio ads to influence petty-bourgeois “public opinion.” The impotence of this strategy was acknowledged even by an SEIU spokesman after the strike was scuttled: “We’ve learned that the assumption that you usually base a strategy on—that public officials will be responsive to public opinion—you’ve got to toss that out the

window in this case. We’re disappointed.”

If the UTU repulsed the worst of the MTA’s anti-union drive, the concessions the union made—and the scuttling of the county workers strike—are evidence of how labor is hamstrung by the bureaucracy’s allegiance to the Democratic Party. Looking for an alternative, one worker told *Workers Vanguard*, “Nader is looking pretty good to us now.” But Nader’s Green Party is likewise a capitalist party. And Nader, who cut his teeth dragging the unions into the capitalist courts, makes clear that his purpose is to refurbish the Democrats’ liberal credentials. Working people need their own party, not one focused on garnering votes in the bosses’ ballot boxes but a party that pursues the class struggle—mobilizing the power of the working class on the picket lines and in defense of blacks, Latinos and other oppressed minorities—through to a final victory over this system of racism and exploitation. *Those who labor must rule!*

Historically an “open shop” town, L.A. is a city of vast disparities of wealth, with millions of low-paid immigrant and black workers. Many county workers, having had concessions exacted from them during “bad times,” asked why they should still have to make concessions when the economy is producing fabulous profits and government budgets are running surpluses. But the economic boom for the capitalists is overwhelmingly due to the increase in the rate of exploitation: union-busting, driving down wages, imposing multi-tier wage scales, lengthening the workday and gutting welfare and funding for social services. The capitalists derive their profits by exploiting workers.

The overlay to this is vicious racial oppression, consigning black people to the bottom of this society and dividing the working class along racial and ethnic lines. The enforcers for the capitalist class are the cops. And L.A. has one of the most notorious police forces in the country, most recently brought home in the Rampart police “scandal” exposing a machinery of frame-up and assassination.

Following the 1992 acquittal of the racist cops who beat Rodney King, we wrote: “The working class must not allow the black population to be isolated—the *powerful L.A. unions such as longshore, aerospace and city workers should organize work stoppages and mass mobilizations to solidarize with and defend the black community* as the LAPD looks to spill more blood to ‘celebrate’ their racist victory over Rodney King.” The strike by overwhelmingly Latino janitors last spring and the walkouts by county and transit workers—all of which have been widely popular among the working people and poor of the city—are a palpable example of the social power that can and must be linked to the anger of the ghettos and barrios.

This potential is undermined by the labor misleaders who organize cops and prison guards into the union. SEIU Local 660 includes deputy sheriffs, while MTA

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