

Protest U.S. Terror Bombing of Iraq!

FEBRUARY 26—On February 16, a week before U.S. secretary of state Colin Powell kicked off a mission to the Near East, more than two dozen U.S. and British jets slammed 36 missiles into the southern outskirts of Baghdad, killing two civilians and wounding dozens. This was the first air strike targeting the Iraqi capital in over two years, a deliberate and planned provocation by the incoming adminis-

tration of George W. Bush. At a press conference in Mexico City, Bush said that he had personally ordered the attack allegedly to destroy improved Iraqi radar facilities used for tracking U.S. warplanes. In London, Labour prime minister Tony Blair dutifully echoed: "Operations such as the one last night would not be needed if Saddam stopped attacking us."

What gall! U.S. and British jets have

been attacking Iraq twice a week or more since a massive bombing raid against Baghdad and other areas in December 1998, wreaking devastation and murdering hundreds of people. Whole areas of Baghdad and other cities have been razed to the ground, while United Nations economic sanctions have claimed well over a million more lives. But in the eyes of the imperialist mass murderers, Iraq has no right to defend itself.

The recent attack (followed by a February 22 missile strike on Mosul) was to be expected from the moment Bush took office. In our article "U.S. Hands Off Iraq!" (WV No. 751, 2 February) we noted that the gang that carried out the 1991 war in which tens of thousands of Iraqis were murdered is back in the White House, with Bush Sr.'s defense secretary, Richard Cheney, serving as

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Free Abortion on Demand! Defend Separation of Church and State!



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If George W. Bush has his way, a recitation from the New Testament will become part of the application process for federally funded social services. Following the appointment of his attorney general, John Ashcroft—whose admiration for the Confederacy is in direct relationship to his contempt for blacks, women and gays—Bush named John J. DiIulio to head the newly formed White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives. A few days earlier, as anti-abortion bigots gathered in the nation's capital to proclaim their "love" for "our pro-life president" on the anniversary of the 1973 *Roe v. Wade* decision legalizing abortion, Bush decreed an end to U.S. aid for family planning groups overseas, intoning "Taxpayer funds should not be used to pay for abortions." They are not currently used for that purpose in any case, but they will soon pay for spreading the gospel.

In Bush's home state, such "faith-based initiatives" are already well under way. One church-based "welfare-to-

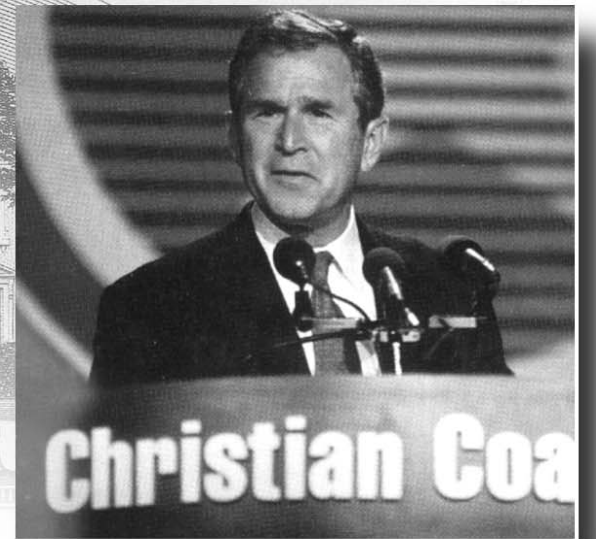
work" program in Texas offers a course titled, "Who's the Boss? All Authority Comes from God." An evangelical detox center in Los Angeles lauded by Bush boasts of "born again and delivered disciples." In announcing his new scheme, Bush surrounded himself with a number of black preachers. But in this racist country, the vision of a white Christian America is symbolized by the burning cross of nativist Protestant racist terror which dominated the anti-union Jim Crow South, enforced by KKK Dixiecrats.

After two straight months of record-setting layoffs and with the economy well on the road to recession, it is the hell fires of grinding poverty, unemployment and malnutrition that face America's working people. Whether the Democratic plan to pay off the bankers with current tax surpluses or the Republican plan to provide a massive tax cut for the rich is enacted, or some hybrid of the two, it is clear that both ruling-class parties are determined to cycle even more money into the hands of the bourgeoisie and leave the hundreds of thousands soon to be added to the

unemployment rolls to the tender mercies of god.

The growing involvement of the church in state affairs which Bush seeks to expand was prepared by the 1996 Clinton-inspired "Welfare Reform Act" gutting welfare, which made it easier for religious groups to get state funding. During the election campaign, Democratic candidate Al Gore, who professes that Jesus is his chief political adviser, supported "charitable choice" legislation similar in intent and substance to Bush's new program. Bush's proposal has also drawn admiring interest from Democrat Richard Gephardt, the House minority leader, as well as from AFL-CIO president John Sweeney. We Marxists stand as intransigent opponents of this direct assault on the First Amendment ban against state establishment of religion. Defend the separation of church and state!

It was, in fact, Democratic president Jimmy Carter who first packaged "born again" Christianity in the late 1970s with "life is unfair" austerity for working peo-



Feanny/SABA

ple. In the more than two decades since, there has been a massive transfer of the national income to the very rich, enforced by the union-busting spearheaded by Ronald Reagan's smashing of the PATCO air traffic controllers union in 1981, based on a plan drafted by the Carter administration. This defeat was abetted by the craven union tops, notable among them social-democratic Machinists head William Winpisinger, who refused to mobilize their membership to honor PATCO's picket lines.

With plummeting union membership and the accompanying erosion of wages and benefits, the few gains won during the social struggles of the 1960s came under attack. Even the sop of "affirmative action" access to decent education for black people has been largely withdrawn. And while the Democrats are chiefly distinguishable from the Republicans in defending the right to abortion, women's access to abortion became increasingly nonexistent in many areas of the country during the Clinton administration.

Although the religious right provided the ground troops for these attacks, this program of social reaction was backed by the mainstream of both bourgeois parties, as America's rulers attempted to regain the authority and world dominance that had been set back with their defeat on

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Mexico City: No Reprisals Against UNAM Student Protesters!

The Mexican ruling class is still seething a year after the ten-month-long student strike at Mexico City's National Autonomous University (UNAM), which sparked social struggle throughout the country and was quelled only through a massive crackdown by the Federal Preventive Police (PFP). The bourgeois press and politicians erupted in a witch-hunting frenzy when student activists marking the first anniversary of the government crackdown again occupied UNAM buildings and courageously defended themselves against strikebreaking thugs (see "Mexico City: Student Activists Occupy UNAM Campus," WV No. 752, 16 February).

Eight of these students, including strike leader Alejandro Echevarria ("El Mosh"), who was imprisoned last year, now face reprisals from the administration amid howls over their supposed violation of the "rights" of the 35 anti-strike thugs they disarmed and disrobed. The students' action recalled the "battle of El Mexe" last February, in which 60 riot police were disarmed by villagers defending striking students at the local teachers college and then humiliated by being forced to strip in the public square.

On February 22, the day before an UNAM administration tribunal was to meet, over 200 students demonstrated in defense of the eight activists. Outside the

Demonstration in Mexico City on first anniversary of cop assault which ended UNAM strike, February 6. Now student protesters face victimization.



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tribunal itself, which only one of the targeted students attended, another protest was held. After several hours, the tribunal announced it would render a decision within five days. We reprint below a February 24 protest statement by the Partisan Defense Committee in defense of the UNAM activists.

* * *

The Partisan Defense Committee energetically protests the threat of sanctions and expulsions against eight student activists from the School of Political Sciences (Argel Pineda, Jorge Martínez Valero, Alejandro Echevarria, Aldo Reyes, David Jaramillo, Jaime Vázquez Martínez, Roberto José Bermúdez and Victor Alejo) who on February 6 were commemorating the one-year anniversary of the brutal police occupation of the university which broke the student strike, with more than 700 strikers incarcerated. The activists guarding the facilities the night of the occupation did nothing more than defend themselves against a potential violent attack by anti-strike thugs, some of whom hold the post of professor while also holding metal pipes to "persuade" student activists of the benefits of "peaceful dialogue." The university authorities cynically accuse the students of violently disrupting the "normal" academic life of UNAM. For them, "normality" would have prevailed if on the night of February 5-6 the gardens of the School of Political Sciences had been covered with the bloodied bodies of students beaten up by the administration's hired thugs.

The Mexican ruling class's methods in repressing leftist and worker protest and dissent are well-known worldwide. From the [1968] Tlatelolco massacre to the kidnappings and beatings of leftists and union organizers, to the murderous military siege in Chiapas and the occupation of UNAM by the PFP last year, these are the "normal" workings of the capitalist rulers who now scream about "undemocratic excesses" at UNAM because students didn't play by the administration's rules...and won a battle. This threat of sanctions is nothing more than political vengeance for the ten-month-long strike that students maintained last year, and

for the fact that the latest provocation orchestrated by the university authorities was *defeated* by the students. In fact, four of the nearly 1,000 students arrested by the PFP last year still face criminal charges, including "rioting," in the bourgeois courts.

The students' elementary defense action is labeled by the pro-PRD [Party of the Democratic Revolution] bourgeois newspaper *La Jornada* as "barbarism," a "cowardly attack against tens of teachers and officials" of UNAM, while PAN Congressman Fernández de Cevallos [from the ruling National Action Party] calls for state repression against the students and the bosses' association COPARMEX has "confidence that they will be expelled" (*La Jornada*, 7 February). The purpose of the witchhunt unleashed by the press, the bosses' associations, the state, the UNAM administration and the bourgeois parties is to criminalize political protest and send a threatening message to all those who dare to fight, like the population around El Mexe school last year and the UNAM students, against the government's privatization schemes and in defense of public education. The attack against the student activists is an attack against the workers movement and all the exploited and oppressed, who have a deep interest in defending public education. An injury to one is an injury to all! We demand the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of *all* charges against the student activists.

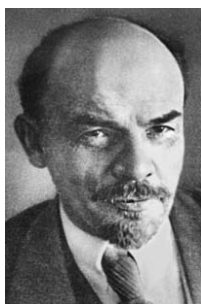
We salute the successful action of these students in defense of their protest, and expose the hypocritical "commitment" of groups and individuals that call themselves "leftist," such as En Lucha and El Mosh, who rapidly moved to label the defeat of a provocation a "mistake, because [the student activists] fell into a provocation" (*La Jornada*, 14 February), grossly capitulating to the bourgeoisie's witchhunt campaign. In counterposition to these groups' tailing of their own bourgeoisie, the Grupo Espartaquista de México and its youth section, the Juventud Espartaquista, fight to link the student struggle with the social power of the working class in our fight to build an egalitarian socialist society through proletarian revolution. ■



TROTSKY

For Women's Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!

International Women's Day, March 8, originated with a 1908 demonstration in New York City of women garment workers, mainly immigrants, demanding an eight-hour day and women's suffrage. In 1917, an International Women's Day march in Petrograd, Russia sparked the revolutionary upheaval that culminated in the Bolshevik workers revolution. In an article on the second anniversary of the October Revolution,



LENIN

Bolshevik leader V.I. Lenin addressed the status of women in refuting bourgeois slanders that soviet (workers council) power was anti-democratic. While women in most capitalist countries subsequently won the right to vote and other measures of legal equality, social inequality is rooted in capitalist property relations and will only be eliminated through socialist revolution.

The status of women makes clear in the most striking fashion the difference between bourgeois and socialist democracy and furnishes a most effective reply to the question posed.

In a bourgeois republic (i.e., where there is private ownership of land, factories, shares, etc.), be it the most democratic republic, women have never had rights fully equal to those of men, *anywhere in the world, in any one of the more advanced countries*. And this despite the fact that more than 125 years have passed since the great French (bourgeois-democratic) Revolution.

In words bourgeois democracy promises equality and freedom, but in practice *not a single* bourgeois republic, even the more advanced, has granted women (half the human race) and men complete equality in the eyes of the law, or delivered women from dependence on and the oppression of the male.

Bourgeois democracy is the democracy of pompous phrases, solemn words, lavish promises and high-sounding slogans about *freedom and equality*, but in practice all this cloaks the lack of freedom and the inequality of women, the lack of freedom and the inequality for the working and exploited people.

Soviet or socialist democracy sweeps away these pompous but false words and declares ruthless war on the hypocrisy of "democrats," landowners, capitalists and farmers with bursting bins who are piling up wealth by selling surplus grain to the starving workers at profiteering prices.

Down with this foul lie! There is no "equality," nor can there be, of oppressed and oppressor, exploited and exploiter. There is no real "freedom," nor can there be, so long as women are handicapped by men's legal privileges, so long as there is no freedom for the worker from the yoke of capital, no freedom for the labouring peasant from the yoke of the capitalist, landowner and merchant.

—V.I. Lenin, "Soviet Power and the Status of Women" (November 1919)

WORKERS VANGUARD

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AP

Student strike leader Alejandro Echevarria (El Mosh) and over 700 others were arrested in cop crackdown at UNAM last year.

Defend Dr. James Pendergraft, Michael Spielvogel!

Racist Anti-Abortion Vendetta

Dr. James Scott Pendergraft, a black doctor who operates five abortion clinics in Florida, and his associate, Michael Spielvogel, were found guilty of frame-up charges of conspiracy, extortion and mail fraud in U.S. District Court in Ocala on February 1. Dr. Pendergraft, whose services include late-term abortions, now faces 30 years in prison, \$750,000 in fines and the loss of his medical license, while his co-defendant faces a 40-year sentence and a \$1.25 million penalty. The prosecution of Dr. Pendergraft caps a years-long vendetta against this courageous defender of abortion rights aimed at intimidating all abortion providers.

Dr. Pendergraft opened the Ocala Women's Center in 1998, nine years after the previous abortion clinic was burned to the ground. He then sued a dozen anti-abortion terrorists, Marion County, the city of Ocala, the police chief and the

sheriff, charging the authorities with failing to protect his clinic from harassment. This region of the South has been especially hard hit by anti-abortion terror. In 1993 and 1994, two abortion doctors and an escort were shot dead in Pensacola. In 1998, "right to life" killers bombed a Birmingham, Alabama clinic, killing a security guard.

In retaliation for his suit, Dr. Pendergraft was indicted on extortion—for his comment during negotiations with city officials that he would bankrupt the county!—and other bogus charges. Under the watch of Clinton's Justice Department, Pendergraft and Spielvogel were caught in the web of a racist, anti-abortion conspiracy involving collusion between an FBI agent, the Marion County attorney and its Board of Commissioners chairman, all of whom are members of churches that have organized a concerted

campaign of intimidation to shut down the clinic. The prosecutor, U.S. attorney Mark Devereaux, is an all-purpose bigot who used foul racist caricatures in his closing arguments against Dr. Pendergraft.

Counterposed to the liberals who preach reliance on the capitalist state and the Democrats to protect abortion rights, the Spartacist League calls for free abortion on demand and for mass mobilizations backed by the social power of labor to defend abortion clinics. We reprint below a February 21 letter by the Partisan Defense Committee to Devereaux protesting the frame-up.

* * *

The Partisan Defense Committee demands that the outrageous charges of "extortion" against Dr. James Pendergraft be dropped immediately. This courageous doctor, who has put his life on the line to give women access to medi-

cally safe abortions, now stands convicted of the "crime" of suing the town of Ocala for failing to protect his clinic from anti-abortion harassment. This is a transparent attempt to persecute an abortion provider, wholly in the service of racist and religious reaction.

Your malicious attack on Dr. Pendergraft is part and parcel of a growing campaign of government restriction of abortion rights and state intimidation which has shut down abortion clinics around the country. It is an adjunct to and an incitement for the ongoing terror campaign against abortion clinics. This campaign subjects doctors, nurses and patients to threats, assaults and murder. It also increases the already high cost of abortion to prohibitive levels for poor, black and Hispanic women.

We note that this prosecution of a courageous black doctor comes in the same city where a black trade unionist, Rexford Weng, faced racist prosecution for removing the Confederate flag of slavery from the Marion County government office complex. We demand you stop immediately your persecution and prosecution of Dr. Pendergraft. Drop all the charges immediately. ■

Facing Five Years for Defending Their Union

Defend Charleston ILA Five!

Five members of the International Longshoremen's Association (ILA) face felony charges with five-year prison terms for defending their union against a massive union-busting assault in Charleston, South Carolina on 20 January 2000. On that day some 600 cops assaulted hundreds of picketing members of the overwhelmingly black ILA Local 1422. The union successfully beat back a five-month attempt by the Nordana shipping line and the Charleston Port Authority to use a non-union outfit to unload their ships. The bosses and their state are now vindictively trying to railroad these militants. On the West Coast, the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) is taking up the defense of the Charleston Five—four members of Local 1422 and one member of ILA Local 1771—with port shutdowns projected for the first day of the trial.

Local 1422 president Ken Riley spoke at two San Francisco Bay Area events last week co-sponsored by the Northern California Labor Committee in Defense of the Charleston Longshore Workers and the Bay Area Local Organizing Committee for the Black Radical Congress (BRC). At the meeting held at the ILWU Local 10 hall on February 23, Riley's remarks underlined the gut hatred of the capitalists in the Deep South for blacks and unions. Riley also made clear the close ties of the union bureaucracy with the capitalist Democratic Party, which meets in the Local 1422 union hall in Charleston. The other scheduled speakers—Jack Heyman of the ILWU Local 10 executive board and Karega Hart of the

BRC—said nothing about the Democratic Party.

A representative of the Partisan Defense Committee was invited to briefly address the crowd of some 150, overwhelmingly longshoremen, before the floor discussion began. After her remarks, which we reprint below, underlining the need to break from the Democrats and forge a workers party, spokesmen for various reformist left-wing outfits and even the NAACP made a point of criticizing the Democrats—but only in order to pressure them.

Illusions that this racist, capitalist party can be pressured into serving the workers are deadly dangerous. For example, on 14 April 1999, trade-union misleaders and fake "leftists"—including in the ILWU—were willing to sacrifice the freedom of death row political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal on the altar of collaboration with the Democrats, by endorsing a demonstration that explicitly counterposed the call to re-try Jamal to the demand for his immediate freedom. This stance undermined a potentially powerful ILWU work stoppage on behalf of Jamal which took place on that day.

* * *

Hello brothers and sisters, my name is Kathy Ikegami and I'm speaking on behalf of the Partisan Defense Committee, the class-struggle, legal and social defense organization allied with the Marxist Spartacist League, who many of you know for its newspaper, *Workers Vanguard*.

We continue to support the Charleston

ILA in its struggle against the vicious union-busting by the bosses and their government. The ILA's victory against Nordana stands as a beacon of hope to working people and blacks in the non-union South. All of labor must demand: Drop all the charges against the Charleston Five!

Local 1422's victory in the face of massive cop terror shows the poten-

the Klan. It didn't work: despite the threat of mass arrests, we marched and the Klan didn't! [applause]. The statements of protest to the mayor of Gary—including those from Local 10 and Local 1422—were *crucial* in staying the hand of those that wished to conciliate the Klan. They put the city of Gary on notice that the labor movement, nationally and internationally, had their eye on them. We



Mic Smith/Post and Courier

Hundreds of cops assaulted ILA mass picket on Charleston waterfront, January 2000. Union prevailed against company scabherding, but five members now face imprisonment.

tial for the kind of unionization drive needed across the "open shop" South as mentioned by other speakers. But understand—such a unionization drive will necessarily come up against not only the race-terrorists of the KKK, but also the whole system of entrenched racism and capitalist exploitation: the cops, the courts, the capitalist state, and the Democratic Party.

Local 1422 was part of the huge protest against the Confederate flag of slavery and racism which flew atop the state capital in Columbia, South Carolina. That flag was put up there by a Democratic state administration in the '60s and it has been kept flying by the Democrats.

We found the same kind of thing in Gary, Indiana on January 20, where the PDC organized a labor/black mobilization to stop the KKK: it was the Democratic Party mayor who directed the city government to deny us a permit, hoping to keep us from demonstrating against

want to express here our thanks for those letters.

The independence of the working class from the capitalist parties—both the Democrats who prefer to use lies against the workers and the Republicans who use force—is necessary in order to fight against the one-sided class war that the capitalists have waged for the past 50 years. It is the current leadership of the unions that has tied the workers to the class enemy through its support of the Democratic Party.

It is for that reason that we believe it is necessary to wage a political struggle within the unions to forge a party of class struggle. Such a party would understand that union rights and black rights are inseparable. It is our contention that such a party can only defend the working class and fight for the cause of black freedom through social revolutionary means and not through collaboration with the bosses and their government. ■

International Women's Day Forum

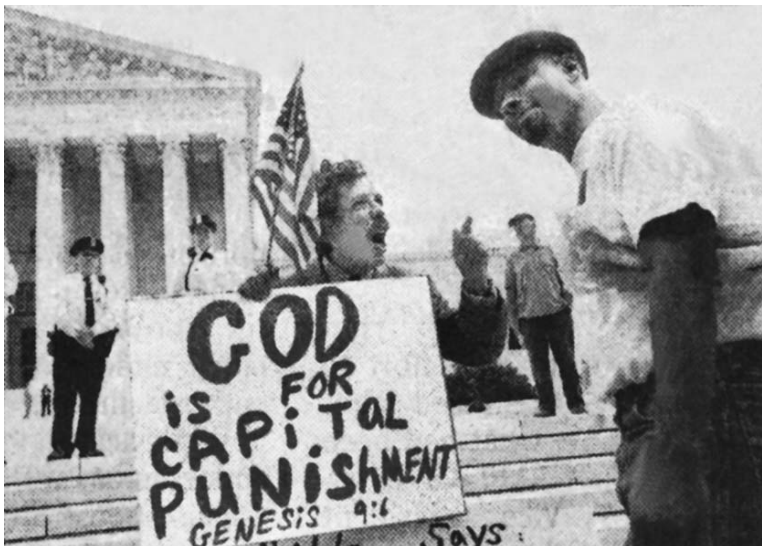


Taliban: Bitter Fruit of U.S. Imperialism's Anti-Soviet War Women in Afghanistan

Saturday, March 10, 4 p.m.
Women's Building, Audre Lorde Room, 3543 18th St.
(BART: 16th St. & Mission)

SAN FRANCISCO

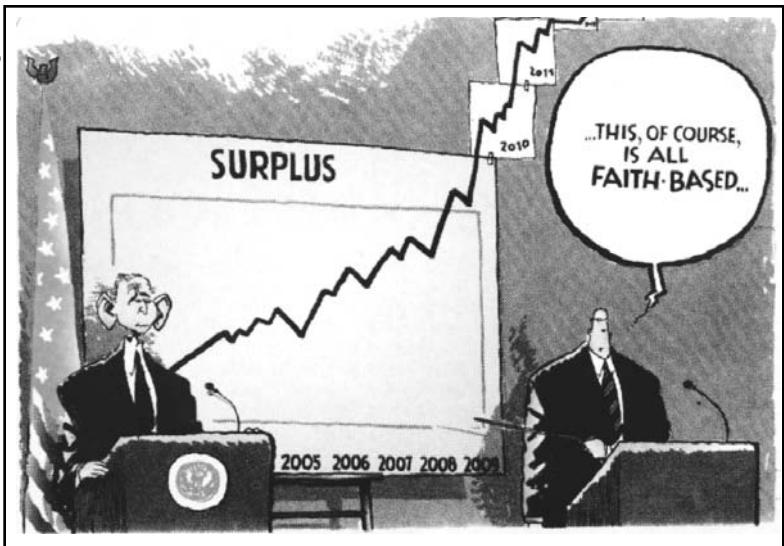
For more information call:
(510) 839-0851 or (415) 395-9520



Perkins/Washington Post

Religious bigotry is a battering ram for the racist death penalty, anti-abortion terror. Capitalist parties slash funding for social welfare, public education while cycling billions more to the rich.

Jack Ohman/Oregonian



Holy War...

(continued from page 1)

the battlefields of Indochina. The Spartacist League unconditionally supported the military victory of the Vietnamese and hailed the successful, if bureaucratically deformed, social revolution that drove the imperialists and their domestic parasitic lackeys out of South Vietnam, calling for “two, three, many defeats for U.S. imperialism!” The rest of the left channeled militant antiwar youth into the arms of the Democratic Party with chauvinist/pacifist appeals to “bring our boys home,” and then joined with Richard Nixon in pleading for “no more Vietnams.”

Only a few short years after the last of U.S. imperialism’s hitmen scurried out of Vietnam, these reformist leftists—tailing behind the pro-imperialist “AFL-CIA” tops—clambered onto Carter/Reagan’s Cold War II drive aimed at the destruction of the gains of the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution in the USSR. The capitalist counterrevolution there in 1991-92 was a historic defeat for the world working class that had as its domestic counterpart a reinvigoration of the U.S. bourgeoisie and an escalation of its assault on the living standards of working people and on the hopes of women, blacks and all the oppressed for a modicum of justice.

Bourgeois Rule and Religious Reaction, Then and Now

The one true religion of the ruling class is profits. The bourgeois revolutions in Europe in the 17th and 18th centuries had to wrest social and political power from the feudal aristocratic and clerical estates under an absolute monarch. The newly ascendant bourgeoisie jealously guarded its power against the forces of feudal reaction. In the American colonies of Britain, the heirs of the various religious sects that had fled persecution agreed upon the need to prevent the dominance of any one religion and enshrined separation of church and state in the Constitution

after the revolutionary war of 1776-83. The most far-sighted representatives of the young bourgeoisie subscribed to the rationalism of the Enlightenment, which held that earthly phenomena could be explained in earthly terms without reference to the machinations of angels and incubi.

However, as a ruling class, the capitalists found one element of “the old-time religion” indispensable, the “holy” family. The family is the historic instrument for the subjugation of women. It is the institution that assures that private property is passed on from one generation of the possessors to another, while guaran-

tees that have landed thousands of men in prison for consensual sex with those younger than an arbitrarily determined “age of consent” have been expanded into a hideous “anti-pedophile” crusade that brands people criminals for life simply for viewing a “suggestive” picture of a child in the privacy of their homes. Millions of black youth and others who have done nothing except engage in recreational chemical use have become long-term residents of the nation’s prisons as part of the “war on drugs.” The ideological cover for this racist war on black people, pushed as ardently by black Democrats as by right-wing bigots, is a hys-

breaks and vouchers to “private” providers of education while public schools continue to go to hell. This will encourage “home-based Christian” education to indoctrinate the next generation of religious bigots, who will be carefully schooled in the seating arrangements on Noah’s ark as well as in the horrors of “Onanism” (masturbation). Those with sufficient means to afford private schools will be rewarded with state subsidies. At the same time, even fewer funds will find their way to school systems which often lack even the money for books, while parents and teachers will be excoriated for their failing public school students. Meanwhile, public school districts in 29 states already mandate “elective” Bible classes.

Bush’s frontal assault on separation of church and state is carried out under the rubric of “compassionate conservatism.” In an article titled “God’s Country” in the *New York Review of Books* (2 November 2000), liberal writer Joan Didion pointed out that Bush adviser Marvin Olasky, who authored the book *Compassionate Conservatism*, has links to the president of South Carolina’s segregationist evangelical college, Bob Jones University, and to Charles Murray, co-author of the racist tract *The Bell Curve*.

Bush and DiIulio claim that religious organizations will be funded in a non-discriminatory way. But Bush admits to a “problem with the teachings of Scientology being viewed on the same par as Judaism or Christianity.” When it comes to Louis Farrakhan’s Nation of Islam, Bush declaimed during his campaign, “I don’t see how we can allow public dollars to fund programs where spite and hate is the core of the message.” Bush’s inauguration ceremony was marked by an explicit invocation “in the name that’s above all other names, Jesus, the Christ.” And in a 1993 interview with the *Austin American-Statesman*, Bush proclaimed that those who do not believe in Christ will go to hell.

These are the types Connecticut Senator and Democratic vice presidential candidate Joseph Lieberman promotes when he demands a more central role for religion in American public life. Lieberman, a longtime advocate of school vouchers, was selected as Gore’s running mate both for his opposition to affirmative action and as “a man of morals” who attacked Bill Clinton for his complete-



Family planning clinic in Guyana. Bush’s ban on U.S. funds to international agencies providing abortion advice is a death sentence for many women in Africa, Asia and Latin America.

teering that women of the exploited classes, chained to hearth and home, are responsible for the reproduction and succor of the next brood of laborers. Thus, faced with a declining birthrate, Emperor Napoleon III saw the need to increase the population to provide manpower for the French Army. In exchange for the Pope declaring abortion an excommunicable offense, in 1869 the emperor publicly recognized the Pope’s infallibility on religious matters, greatly assisting the consolidation of papal authority, but not doing much for the French birthrate.

Religious obscurantism has always been a handmaiden of social reaction and counterrevolution. At the height of the first Cold War against the Soviet Union and the McCarthyite witchhunt against reds and labor radicals in the 1950s, the words “under god” were added to the Pledge of Allegiance and “In God We Trust” was declared the national motto, while highway billboards proclaimed: “Communists Hate God. Send Your Child to Sunday School.—J. Edgar Hoover.” In the post-Vietnam War period, the American ruling class launched a crusade to restore “family values.” No charge was too grotesque, no practice too outrageous in this pursuit. Across the country, day-care workers and preschool teachers were dragged through the mud and thrown into prison hells at the hands of Inquisitorial “therapists” who implanted hallucinatory “testimony” in children detailing nonexistent Satanic abuses.

In growing numbers, women are imprisoned for child neglect if they rely on imperfect babysitting resources in order to make a living or simply go to the store for a carton of milk. Parents are arrested for petty crimes committed by their incorrigible adolescents and, in one notorious case, literally chained to their acting-out delinquent. The “statutory rape”

terical campaign to “save our children.” We oppose all laws against “crimes without victims” and call for the decriminalization of drugs.

“Compassionate Conservatism,” Racism and Anti-Semitism

Spurred by decades of government assaults on abortion rights, the religious right mobilizes to terrorize and, at times, kill abortion providers. The result is that 86 percent of U.S. counties lack any access to such services. Now Bush’s newly appointed head of the Department of Health and Human Services, former Wisconsin governor and “right-to-lifer” Tommy Thompson, has threatened to review FDA approval of the RU 486 abortion drug, which was finally granted after years of procrastination. We fight for free abortion on demand as part of a program of free, quality health care for all.

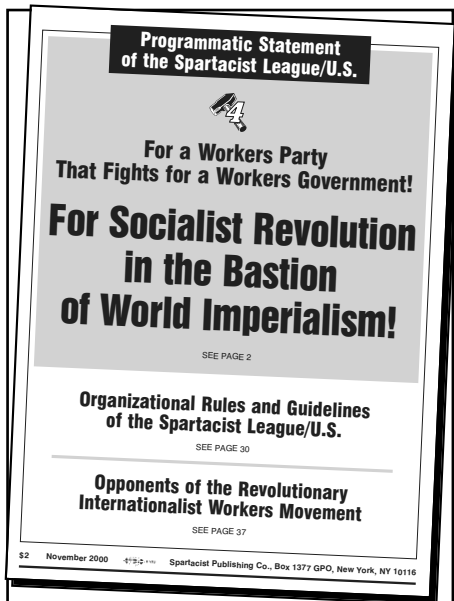
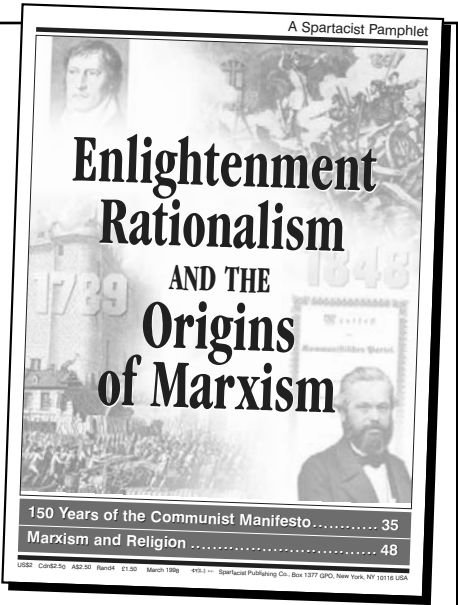
Bush’s “educational reform” plan is a thinly disguised ploy to dispense tax

This pamphlet reprints presentations given by SL Central Committee member Joseph Seymour on the origins of Marxism in the French Enlightenment and in left Hegelianism. Also included are “150 Years of the Communist Manifesto” and “Marxism and Religion.”

In the retrograde climate of post-Soviet reaction, the struggle to reassert the validity of the program and purpose of revolutionary Marxism is crucial for our fight for new October Revolutions.

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Programmatic Statement of the Spartacist League/U.S.

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Florida: 13-Year-Old Gets Life

Lionel Tate spent his fourteenth birthday in a Fort Lauderdale cell this winter, facing a lifetime in prison without parole, short of an unlikely commutation from Florida governor Jeb Bush. One of the youngest people ever convicted of murder in the U.S., the black youth cried as bailiffs led him away in handcuffs following his trial for the accidental death of six-year-old Tiffany Eunick, the daughter of his mother's friend.

Twelve years old at the time of Tiffany's death, Lionel said that he had been imitating TV wrestling moves when he accidentally dropped the girl onto a table. But the prosecutor went for blood; even the jury foreman later said that she was uncomfortable with the harsh sentence. If Lionel had been 16, the legal age for execution in Florida, he would likely have ended up on the state's death row. But he probably would not have been charged at all if he had come from a well-to-do white family instead of being the son of a single mother from Jamaica.

In 1996, Florida Republican William McCollum sponsored the "Violent Youth Predator Act," raving on the floor of the House: "They're not children anymore. They're the most violent criminals on the face of the earth." The most violent criminals are the American capitalist rulers, who ride roughshod over the world's poor and working people and unleash all-sided cop terror against the ghettos and barrios under the guise of the "war on drugs" and the "war on crime." Three-quarters of imprisoned youth are black or Hispanic; a black teenager is **48 times** more likely to

do time for a drug offense than a white teenager. In California, even before last year's passage of the draconian "juvenile crime initiative," Proposition 21, non-white children were 6.2 times more likely to be charged as adults, and seven times more likely to be sentenced to prison when tried as adults ("The Color of Justice," Justice Policy Institute, March 2000).

The ruling class deems 13 too young to vote, drink or have sex, but not too young to be thrown behind bars for life. Last year, Oklahoma enacted a law that children as young as ten could be jailed, while under Proposition 21 many youth will spend their entire lives in prison. In all matters sexual, from music videos to abortion, the banner of "impressionable youth" is raised to bring on the censor: gay teachers are witchhunted and fired, pregnant teenage girls are compelled by the state to tell their parents if they need an abortion, reactionary "age of consent" laws and "anti-pedophile" witchhunts criminalize youth sexuality.

The purpose of this reactionary agenda is not to protect children. It is to strengthen the hands of the state: the cops, courts and executioners. As the tragic accident that led to the death of Tiffany Eunick shows, children are more likely to act on impulse than adults. They are also more likely to change their values and behavior than adults. But for "their own good," they are thrown into adult prisons where they are far more likely to be brutalized and raped than rehabilitated.

The ultimate weapon in the U.S. capi-

talists' arsenal of repression is the death penalty. In a world that often seems to be united only by its torture chambers, the U.S. leads in the execution of children. And Florida is second only to Texas in



Lionel Tate

AP

the rate of legal lynching in the U.S. Abolish the racist death penalty!

The reformist left has seized on the death penalty in Texas and Florida to focus on the Bush brothers as the country's biggest executioners. But while the Republicans may be more blatant in their promotion of racist terror, these attacks on the black population and the entire working class are a bipartisan affair. It was, after all, Democrat Bill Clinton who pledged to "end welfare as we know it"—i.e., throw women and children onto the street to starve. Under Clinton, more

Americans were imprisoned than under any previous administration, and the rate of incarceration for blacks escalated. In 1997, Clinton declared that his "top law-enforcement priority" was the passage of a bill to "toughen the treatment of youthful offenders." The Democrats view working-class and minority youth in the U.S. not much differently than they do the Iraqi children who have been killed by their starvation sanctions and terror bombing.

Combined with the intensification of racist repression is an attack on education, since the capitalists see no reason to cut into profits in order to pay to educate working-class and minority youth for whom they can't provide jobs. As the minimal gains made in the struggle against school segregation continue to be eroded, what passes for education is more segregated than at any time since the civil rights movement. Black students in the inner cities attend schools with overcrowded classrooms, outdated textbooks, antiquated lab facilities and often even lacking paper. These "schools" are little more than holding pens—complete with armed guards and metal detectors—for youth who are offered little future outside of unemployment, prison or early death in this decaying capitalist society.

The Spartacus Youth Clubs struggle to win youth to the understanding that there is a future—in helping to forge a revolutionary party of the working class to fight for a communist society that is organized for the benefit of those who labor, not for the profit of a handful of owners. The capitalist state, the bourgeoisie's apparatus of terror and repression, must be smashed and replaced with a workers state that defends the interests of the working class and all those oppressed under capitalism. ■



WV Photo

Spartacist contingent joins in defense of Birmingham, Alabama abortion clinic against religious bigots, 1994.

ly consensual sexual involvement with Monica Lewinsky. Zionists like Lieberman may feel they are just as secure in racist America as in semi-theocratic Israel. But the ruling circles in this country are predominantly white Anglo-Saxon Protestant, and government funding and support of religion will serve to whip up an evangelical fervor that will be dangerous to all—not least Jews.

A number of black preachers, most of whom undoubtedly steered their flocks to vote for Southern Democrat Al Gore, have also embraced Bush's "faith-based initiative" in hopes of getting some government money. This is playing with fire. To get some sense of the racist underpinnings of the Republican right's social programs, one need only look at Bush's choice to head up the Office of Faith-Based Initiatives (eerily recalling the "Association of Defenders of the Faith" that carried out the Inquisition in northern Italy against Jews and other "heretics"). John DiIulio is a devout Catholic and Clintonite "new Democrat" who endeared himself to the Bush crowd as the academic advocate for imprisoning ever greater numbers of ghetto youth. In his 1996 book *Body Count*, written with John Walters and Reaganite William Bennett, DiIulio ranted against "thickening ranks of juvenile 'superpredators'...who murder, assault, rape, rob, burglarize, deal

deadly drugs, join gun-toting gangs and create serious communal disorders." Making clear that they were targeting the ghetto population as a whole, DiIulio & Co. added, "At core, the problem is that most inner-city children grow up surrounded by teenagers and adults who are themselves deviant, delinquent or criminal." What followed was the "Violent Youth Predator Act of 1996," under which juveniles are jailed alongside adults.

Workers Revolution Will Liberate Humanity

While religiosity permeates the American population more than that of any other industrialized country, people are also deeply distrustful of government meddling in their private affairs. Notably all three voucher initiatives on state ballots in November were resoundingly defeated. And Kansas recently reinstated the teaching of evolution, overturning a decision two years ago by a previous school board dominated by Christian fundamentalists. The American bourgeoisie is not about to turn the country's schools over to a bunch of ignorant bible-thumpers (unless they have to). The largest industrial economy in the world—and a military dependent on nuclear submarines and missiles—cannot be run without skilled, educated workers and competent scientists, engineers and technicians.

But the imperialists are interested in providing the working masses only with such necessities as are required to keep the wheels of industry in motion and with the wherewithal to raise the next generation of toilers. Indeed, in the epoch of imperialist decay, they have displayed a willingness to forfeit human existence itself—a very palpable possibility in the event of a thermonuclear interimperialist war—in the quest for the dominance of their particular nationally based class rule. It is only the proletariat which by its nature and role in capitalist society has the objective interest of ending for all time class exploitation and thus establishing the basis for the free and complete development of all mankind.

Bourgeois rule employs religious reaction to substitute the kingdom and glories of heaven for man's freedom on earth. As Marxist materialists, we understand that religious belief and superstition will not disappear until the forces that perpetuate hunger and poverty have been smashed through socialist revolution. We stand, therefore, against all persecution of religious belief and for the full freedom of

religious expression. But religious reaction, like fascism, when vested with bourgeois state power aims at destroying the ability of the working class to organize. It must be fought tooth and nail.

For that reason, we miss Madalyn Murray O'Hair, a principled atheist whose 1950s Supreme Court suit successfully challenged prayer in public schools, and who fought each and every attempt by the forces of "righteousness" to legislate religious practice and belief. Continuously hounded by the bible-thumping bigots, O'Hair was forced into an isolation that set the stage for her murder a few years ago. But it is no more possible to uproot the forces of religious reaction in bourgeois society than to rid such society of the threat of fascism. Each has its place in assuring the dominance of the bosses' rule when the normal mechanisms of bourgeois democracy prove insufficient. It is critically necessary to forge a multiracial revolutionary party of the working class to smash this rotting imperialist order and proceed to the liberation of all humanity from the chains of ignorance, exploitation and oppression. ■

Spartacus Youth Club Class Series

BAY AREA

Alternate Tuesdays, 7 p.m.

March 13: **Cuba: The Fight Against Capitalist Counterrevolution!**
UC Berkeley, 179 Dwinelle Hall
Information and readings: (510) 839-0851

BOSTON

Alternate Mondays, 7 p.m.

March 5: **Workers of the World Unite—The Power of the Proletariat**
Harvard University, Loker Commons
Information and readings: (617) 666-9453

NEW YORK CITY

Alternate Tuesdays, 7:30 p.m.

March 6: **The Fight Against Capitalist Counterrevolution**
Columbia Univ., Hamilton Hall, Rm. 609
Information and readings: (212) 267-1025

TORONTO

Alternate Wednesdays, 7 p.m.

March 14: **The Family and Women's Oppression**
U of T, International Student Centre
33 St. George St. (just north of College St.)
Information and readings: (416) 593-4138

VANCOUVER

Alternate Wednesdays, 6:30 p.m.

March 14: **Building a Party of the Bolshevik Type**
UBC, Student Union Building, Rm. 213
Information and readings: (604) 687-0353

Visit the ICL Web Site!
www.icl-fi.org

French Trotskyists Say: Asylum for Kurdish Refugees!

We publish below a leaflet issued by the *Ligue Trotskyste de France* on February 21 in response to the imprisonment of Kurdish asylum-seekers by the popular-front government, which includes the Socialist Party (PS), Communist Party

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(PCF) and Greens. After the leaflet was issued, on February 21 French police also arrested an alleged leader of the Basque separatist ETA, Francisco Xavier Garcia Gaztelu, who faces trial in France and extradition to the torture chambers of Spain. We demand freedom for Gaztelu and other Basque nationalists imprisoned in France and Spain.

On the morning of February 17, a cargo ship, the *East Sea*, ran aground on the Côte d'Azur with more than 900 people aboard, nearly 500 of them children, nearly all Kurds from Iraq. They were fleeing terrible oppression in Iraq, which has moreover been under incessant imperialist bombings and a murderous embargo. They have all requested political asylum. We say: Right of asylum for all the Kurdish refugees! Full citizenship rights for all those who have managed to reach this country!

The reaction of the PS-PCF-Green capitalist government was immediate: the survivors of the *East Sea* were surrounded by the CRS [riot police] and imprisoned in an unused barracks near Fréjus. The residents of the region who were looking to make donations of clothing and toys and to express their solidarity could not come near this veritable concentration camp guarded by the army. Vaillant, PS member and minister of cops, denounced the "inappropriate presence on our territory" of Kurdish refugees (AP dispatch, 18 February), and declared on television that "Europe and notably France is not ready to welcome all those who want to immigrate." PS spokesman Vincent Peillon even polemicized against the Gaullists—who largely destroyed the right of asylum in 1993—because they called for welcoming the Kurds!

As for the PCF, Robert Hue declared, "In this precise case, I consider that it is necessary to examine with care, and in detail, the situation of hundreds of refugees. Those who qualify, under law, for the right of asylum, must be granted it." As for the others, "the authorities of our country should take the appropriate measures of humanity and solidarity," presumably while deporting them (*L'Humanité*, 19 February). Finally sensing the high degree of popular sympathy for the plight



Lionel Cironneau
Kurdish refugees imprisoned in France after their ship ran aground in February.

Full Citizenship Rights for All Immigrants!

of the Kurdish refugees (and besieged with legal technicalities), the government has backed off momentarily and is allowing the refugees to file applications for asylum.

This iron policy against the Kurdish refugees on the part of the French popular-front government is registered in the framework of a reinforcement of the racist fortress against immigrant workers which is the capitalist European Union. The Jospin government, for example, has joined forces with the Labourite Blair to reinforce police controls in the trains between Paris and London. The French and Spanish governments work hand in hand in the violent repression of the Basque people, with France regularly arresting and deporting Basque militants to Spain.

At the domestic level, a war is being waged by this capitalist government against *sans-papiers* [undocumented immigrants] and the rest of the population of immigrant origin. The occupation of the St. Bernard church on February 4 in a commemoration of the anniversary of the 1996 occupation was immediately met with the brutal forces of the state:

one protester suffered a broken arm and fractured ribs, eleven *sans-papiers* were put into detention camps and two Moroccans were quickly deported. Last autumn, in the PCF-controlled Paris suburb of Aubervilliers, some 50 African families occupied, in the utmost misery and without any shelter, the small park in front of the mayor's office after they were brutally expelled from their housing by the cops at the behest of the PCF administration.

But the French government doesn't just target immigrant workers here. It dreams equally of moving back into Iraq to exploit the workers there. The Kurdish region of Iraq contains enormous oil reserves. Health minister Bernard Kouchner, fresh from his mission as consul leading the imperialist occupation force in Kosovo, declared in *Libération* (19 February):

"When I see President Bush bomb Iraq again, I don't think that this serves much purpose. The Kurdish people have been forgotten. Their exodus cannot be stopped unless a solution is found for this people of 25 million. I know, it is a political problem which has dragged on for a long time."

We defend Iraq against the American and British imperialist bombing, and denounce as well the UN economic embargo which has killed more than a million and a half Iraqis over more than ten years. But when people like Kouchner—and the rest of the fake "left" in this country—shed crocodile tears over the state of the Iraqis or the Kurdish refugees, it is to better emphasize their own rapacious French imperialist interests (notably against their American rivals) hypocritically cloaked as "humanitarian" intervention. But this is the same French "human rights imperialism" which practiced systematic torture during the Algerian War and which has pillaged and plundered much of the African continent. In the last decade, since the counter-revolutionary destruction of East Europe and the Soviet Union, imperialist rivalries to redivide the world have been

enormously sharpened. And remember that France took part not only in the imperialist bombing of Serbia in 1999 but also of Iraq in 1990-1991.

Within France, the municipal election campaign is centered on the question of "security," a racist code word which at bottom means an increase in daily racist terror primarily targeting youth of immigrant origin. As soon as he was elected in 1997, Jospin declared that "security" would be a major priority of his government; today, France is second only to Northern Ireland in all of Europe in its ratio of police per resident. The government fuels a fear of "insecurity" among the population precisely to better justify the reinforcement of its bands of armed men especially in the ghettos, just as during the Gulf War it pushed a similar "fight against terrorism" and more recently a grotesquely hypocritical "fight against anti-Semitism." Down with the detention camps! No to the expulsions! Cops out of the ghettos!

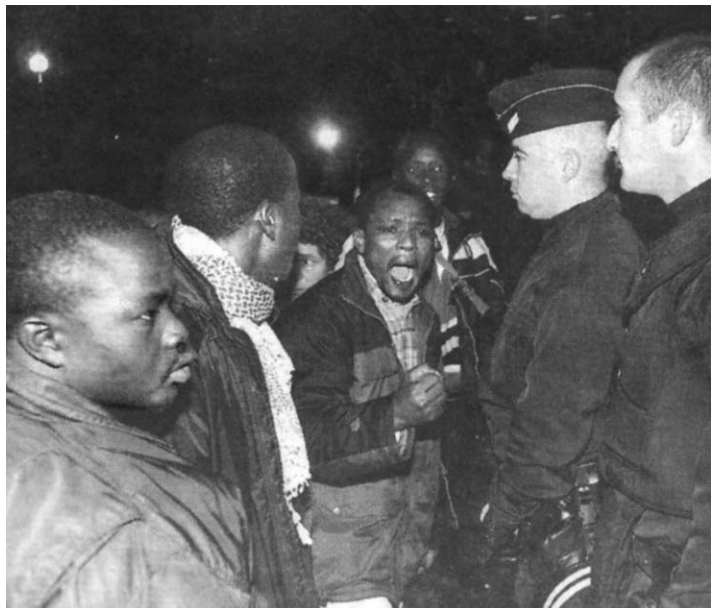
In private industry in this country, the workers of immigrant origin, coming mostly from the Maghreb [North Africa] and sub-Saharan Africa, form a strategic component of the proletariat. The recent period has been marked by a strong increase in social struggles, with more and more frequent combative strikes, including with picket lines: the working class is fed up with austerity and the "flexibility" of the Aubry laws. This is why the government resorts to the arm of racism to divide the working class and demoralize it. A working class suffering from deteriorating conditions, immigrants being thrown out of jobs and out of the country and youth with no jobs and no futures are all feared by the ruling class as socially explosive, and so it resorts to repression. This is also why it is crucial that the working class be mobilized in defense of its more vulnerable immigrant class brothers. A union leadership worth its name would organize the power of labor to block the government's deportation trains and planes. This points to the necessity to forge a multiethnic proletarian vanguard party which fights in the interests of all the oppressed. The Ligue Trotskyste de France fights for this.

This popular-front government, an alliance of reformist workers parties with bourgeois parties, was put in place after the December 1995 strikes to contain these social struggles and demobilize the working class. We refused and we refuse to vote for this capitalist alliance of racist class collaboration, contrary to the swamp of the "extreme left" in the style of [French United Secretariat leader Alain] Krivine.

Lutte Ouvrière (LO), in spite of all its current criticisms of the now unpopular government (after having supported its election in 1997, in calling for votes to PS and PCF candidates against the [fascist National Front] FN) capitulates to the racist campaign of the government which criminalizes youth of immigrant origin. They have just published on their Internet site the speech of [LO spokesman] Arlette Laguiller in Chalons-sur-Saône on 16 February, where she joins in the disgusting outcry engineered by the government, which portrays youth as "violent," "delinquents" and "drug dealers":

"And above all, how is it that it is the gang leaders, who have always existed in the suburbs, or the dealers who impose their law, their customs, their violence in a lot of the public housing projects? Why hasn't this little minority who prefers to deal, to traffic—that is, to live as little

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Cop terror against immigrants has escalated under Socialist-led government.

Class Struggle Rocks France

In recent months, France has seen a wave of working-class struggle against the bourgeois coalition government of Socialist Party (PS) prime minister Lionel Jospin, which includes as transportation minister Communist Party (PCF) member Jean-Claude Gayssot and the bourgeois Greens' Dominique Voynet as environment minister. The following article is translated from *Le Bolchévik* No. 155 (Winter 2000-2001), publication of the *Ligue Trotskyiste de France*, section of the *International Communist League*.

LE BOLCHEVIK

JANUARY 29—The working class in France is fed up with the constant barrage of attacks leveled against it by the capitalist government of Jospin/Gayssot/Voynet. In recent months the country has seen a multitude of strike actions, mainly focused on the effects of the Aubry “35 hours” law [a scheme making working hours “flexible” in response to shifts in demand, eliminating overtime pay], and particularly against the freezing of wages. Importantly, in a number of these strikes, workers have set up picket lines with the goal of shutting down production—something that is crucial to winning a strike—only to have the capitalist state, along with the union bureaucracy which is loyal to maintaining it, intervene to remove the pickets, weakening and undermining the strikes.

The latest wave of strikes comes at a time when French capitalism is gloating over its economic boom and recent drops in the official unemployment rate. But what the bourgeoisie (and its press and its government) do not say is that the “boom” has meant savage plant closings that have thrown thousands of workers out on the street or forced them into “early retirement”—from the largely female workforces at Lacoste, Epéda, Moulinex, Cellatex and countless others to the current threats against Danone-LU workers. Nor do they say that the decrease in the official unemployment rate—which is still very high, at just under 10 percent—has come about through a huge increase in the number of part-time and temporary jobs and increased insecurity for most of the workforce. The Aubry Law has effectively frozen wages and the government has largely emptied the unemployment insurance system with the PARE plan. Many people recognize that if the MEDEF [the bosses’ association] can get away with having workers work for 45 years before they can get a full pension, public service workers are the next in line for the pension cut that they defeated in December 1995. Indeed, the private sector bosses took their inspiration from the government’s Charpin report published last year, a report which proposed sharply increasing the number of conditions required to get a full retirement pension in the public sector.

The working class of this country is showing that it is willing to fight. The fact that the union bureaucrats have felt compelled to call mass demonstrations to blow off steam, disrupting “social peace” during the lead-up to the municipal elections—the public sector demo on January 18, the mainly private sector demo on January 25, and the public sector strike on January 30—is very unusual and testifies to the deep anger at the base. But the union bureaucrats’ posture is to zero in on the justified indignation against the arrogant MEDEF while begging the bourgeois popular-front government to take a stronger stand against the bosses. In 1995 the unions’ slogans targeted the rightist Juppé government and called for struggle against it, but today



January 30: Union protest in Marseille as public sector workers staged one-day strike throughout France.

For a Proletarian Vanguard Party!

they meekly plead with the Jospin-headed government to grant concessions.

The lie that this is a “workers government” means that when the popular front attacks the workers’ gains, it triggers less resistance than governments of the right. Jospin boasts, justly, that his government has privatized far more than did that of his predecessor. And the so-called “far left” is deeply complicit. Having called for votes for candidates of the present government in the 1997 elections, the “far left” got what it wanted and has spent the last three years trying to pressure Jospin & Co. to act on behalf of the workers and oppressed.

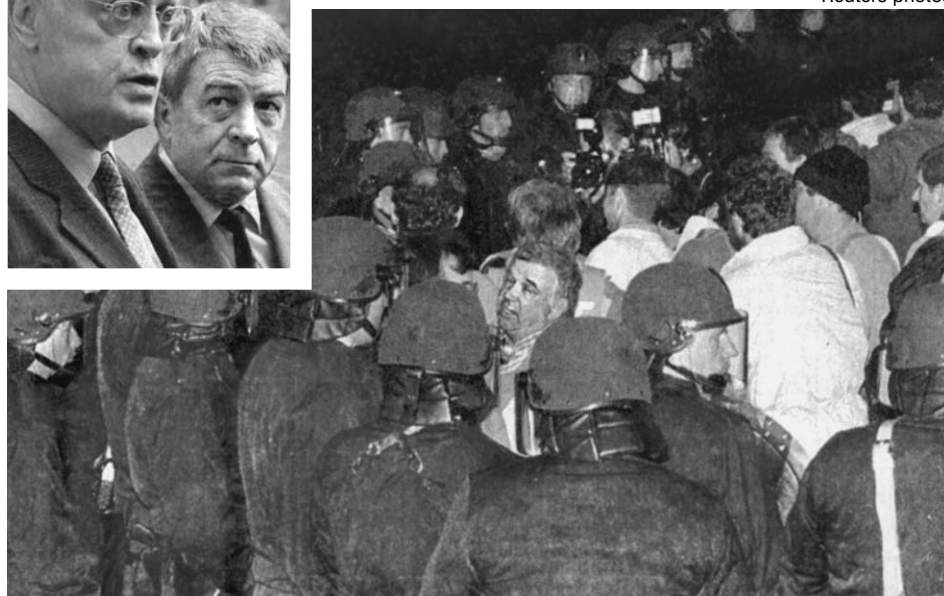
Many of the strike actions that have taken place have been very isolated. To

cite just one example, there have been over 1,000 strikes in the postal sector in the last months, each in individual post offices or sorting centers. In keeping with the government’s implementation of the Aubry Law site by site in the postal service, the union tops, instead of uniting the workers in different locations in one powerful strike action, manipulate the anger of the workers into isolated and atomized actions.

The slogan “*tous ensemble*” [everyone together] is popular because the workers feel the need for a common fightback against attacks. But “*tous ensemble*” with whom? For what purpose? For these treacherous misleaders, the felt need for unity of the working class becomes an



Socialist prime minister Jospin and Communist transportation minister Gayssot sent cops against striking truckers, November 1997.



obscene “unity” with the very forces that are launching anti-working-class attacks. At the same time, they divide the working class every way they can.

The division of unions according to the political parties they support divides and weakens the working class. As defensive organizations, the unions must be built on the broadest possible basis to maximize the *unity* of the working class against the capitalist exploiters. That is why we fight for one *industrial union* in each industry. This cannot be achieved by an amalgamation of the existing sellout union bureaucracies at the top, but must be forged in the course of class struggle. We stand for class struggle, not class collaboration, and stand for the complete independence of the working class from the bourgeois state. This includes opposition to the common practice in France of allowing cops, the enforcers of the racist capitalist order, to be “union” members. *Cops out of the unions!*

The splitting up of the working class is exacerbated by the artificial division into “public” sector and “private” sector. This is just another means to divide the working class in this country and thus weaken their struggles. During the massive strikes in the public sector in December 1995, we fought against the clause prohibiting non-French citizens from being civil servants and for the extension of the strike to the private sector, particularly the automobile industry with its powerful workforce composed heavily of workers of immigrant origin. This of course meant taking an unambiguous stand against Vigipirate, the racist military campaign targeting youth of Maghrebin origin, many of whom are the sons and daughters of private sector workers like the Renault Flins auto workers. Such a stand includes the call for full citizenship rights for all immigrants. For communists, immigrant workers are not just “victims”; they are a strategic component of the proletariat and a bridge to the working class in their countries of origin. But the chauvinist misleadership of the working class, who supported this racist dragnet, and the fake left, were obstacles to the potentially powerful unity in action of all the oppressed: they knew well that such united struggle could lead to the fight getting out of their hands.

Down With the PS/PCF/Green Bourgeois Popular-Front Government!

The “Plural Left” that governs capitalism in France today is this country’s usual mechanism for class collaboration. It is a popular front—an electoral alliance between bourgeois workers parties like the Socialist Party and Communist Party, and bourgeois parties like the Greens, the Left Radicals, or the MDC [Citizens’ Movement] of Chevènement. “Plural Left,” “Union of the Left,” “sacred union” or “popular front”: different names, same game! Faced with a sharp upsurge in working-class struggle, the bourgeoisie lets the reformist workers parties into the government in exchange for guarantees that they will protect capitalist order. This is what happened with the popular fronts of 1936 and 1944-47 which smothered pre-revolutionary situations; with the 1972 “Union of the Left” of [PS president] Mitterrand which was the result of the betrayal of the powerful workers general strike of May 1968 and the convulsive social struggles which followed it; and today with the Jospin/Gayssot/Voynet popular front which came out of the December 1995 strikes. Such a popular front is by definition bourgeois. The reformists use the pretext of “unity” with their bourgeois partners as the excuse for

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every betrayal.

Behind the mask of a “people’s” government, the popular front manages the bourgeois state and enforces French capitalism’s attacks against the working class and oppressed. At home, this means vicious austerity programs, racist war against youth largely of immigrant descent in the ghettos and deportations of *sans-papiers* [undocumented immigrants]. It means institutionalizing the superexploitation of youth through temporary jobs and “contracts of limited duration” which pay starvation wages and prohibit unionization, all in the name of “creating jobs.” It means accepting all kinds of restrictions on women’s right to abortion, capitulating to the reactionary, woman-hating “morality” of the Catholic church (see “For Free Abortion for All!” *Le Bolchévique* No. 154, Autumn 2000).

Abroad, the popular front supports bloody French imperialism. France has a long, dirty history of colonial repression in Africa led by popular-front and “right-wing” governments alike. The Algerian War was waged under several governments including the “socialist” government of Guy Mollet; the PCF voted full powers to the latter to carry out the bloody repression there. It was the current popular-front government’s troops that participated in the bloody imperialist bombings during the 1999 war in the Balkans and which still are part of the occupation force today. And more recently, it was the colonial troops of the same Jospin/Gayssot/Voinet government which brutally attacked pro-independence protesters, including unionists, in French Guiana in late November 2000. French/UN/NATO troops out of the Balkans! Down with colonial repression in French Guiana!—French troops out! For the right of independence for French Guiana and all the other remaining French colonies! Smash imperialist exploitation through international workers revolution!

Down With Repression against Picket Lines!

The recent strike by the public transportation (TCAR) workers in Rouen is an example of an originally militant strike sabotaged by the treacherous misleadership of the unions, who are all too willing to abide by the “rules” that the bourgeois state has set. When the workers began their strike on 19 December 2000, it was with massive and effective picket lines, blocking the bus depot of the Deux Rivières zone and the Métro depot of Petit Quevilly, bringing transportation in Rouen to a halt and virtually paralyzing the city. Faced with this militant class action, the Rouen bourgeoisie and its PS-led local government quickly retaliated and engaged in a wrestling match with this historically combative sector of the proletariat. They called on their court bailiff to demand the removal of the picket lines. Following suit, the CGT union bureaucrats immediately acquiesced and called on the workers to remove the pickets. A few days after

reaching a wage agreement with the strikers, the bosses fired five TCAR workers and suspended another two for “impeding the right to work.” The bourgeoisie and its government wanted to use the TCAR strike to “teach a lesson” to the working class throughout France. They were saying: Do not even try to wage a militant strike that fights to shut down production. We said: On strike means shut it down! Picket lines mean don’t cross! Down with the firings and sanctions! Victory to the TCAR strikers!

While the strike continued in defense of the victimized workers, the union bureaucracy, with the support of the so-called left in Rouen, continued to accede to the bosses' demands that scab buses and trams be allowed to run; strike "actions" became geared toward demonstrations, appeals to the PS mayor to intercede, and even a hunger strike against the firings. Beginning on January 5, six CGT activists went on a hunger strike in defense of their union brothers who were being fired, camping out inside the Rouen town hall, in an attempt to pressure the PS mayor to intercede in the fight of the transportation workers against their bosses. While this hunger strike was an act of solidarity with the victimized workers, it was nonetheless fundamentally an act of desperation. It was pre-



As militant strike pickets brought Rouen public transit to a halt in December, bosses responded with court injunctions against picket lines.

cisely the PS-led capitalist local government that handed over the Rouen transit system to the private company Vivendi in 1994. In the end, Vivendi agreed for the time being to reinstate the fired workers, though not at their previous work locations.

The so-called left in Rouen, by imploring the PS mayor to act against Vivendi, couching this in empty demands in “defense of the right to strike,” was reinforcing the illusion that the PS-led government is “pro-worker.” The reformist Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire (LCR) writes: “How are we supposed to believe that the CAR [transit authority] and the mayor don’t have enough weight to make the TCAR management listen

to reason? Who is calling the shots in this business?" (*Rouge*, 11 January). As far as Lutte Ouvrière (LO) is concerned, they also whine that "After the thirteenth day of fasting, the PS mayor did not deign to visit" the workers (*Lutte Ouvrière*, 19 January)! And they complain: "The left's elected officials in the greater Rouen area, who hold a majority in the greater Rouen community council (which gave a concession of the transit system to Vivendi), contented themselves with timid and very belated interventions" (*Lutte Ouvrière*, 26 January). Thus, for LO, the "left" government is on the right side but they just ought to be bolder about it.

The PCF, which is an integral part of the Jospin-Gayssot government, went so far as to applaud the “UDF [right-wing bourgeois party] deputy mayor of Mont-Saint-Aignan, who thinks that ‘if the strikers’ attitude is unacceptable, it remains understandable in a difficult situation’” (*L’Humanité*, 10 January). The Lambertist Parti des Travailleurs (PT) does sound radical when they say: “It is the Jospin-Gayssot government which has been the great organizer of privatization” (leaflet of 17 January). But their real policy is a petition, at the bottom of the same leaflet, appealing to Robert, Granpierre, Bourguignon and Massion—

the local PS and PCF politicians who were against the strike from the very beginning: "It is you who pay TCAR; you have all power to decide that this repression should stop immediately." The Gauche Révolutionnaire tries to sound more "left," but they have the same strategy of appealing to the PS mayor: "Those in charge of the Communauté d'Agglomération Rouennaise (CAR) could take a very simple decision. Yvon Robert, mayor of Rouen and chairman of the CAR, could take away from Vivendi the transit concession and thus reintegrate the five strikers."

In their leaflets and articles, all the local groups of the “far left” entirely disappear the important question of picket lines, accepting the bosses’ rules that the workers have the “right to strike” but picket lines—impeding scabs’ “right to work”—are not allowed. In 1986, the local leader of the current LO minority in the area actually crossed a picket line at Renault-CKD in Grand-Couronne near Rouen on 18 September, as we exposed in *Le Bolchéviek* No. 67 (October 1986); LO justified its strikebreaking by denouncing the CGT picket line: “The CGT’s action last week wasn’t taken either to convince or to draw in and unite the other workers in the zone. Rather, it had the effect of dividing them” (*Lutte Ouvrière*, 27 September 1986).

A strike is not a protest demonstration, as the labor bureaucracy would have workers believe. Rather, as Leon Trotsky, Bolshevik leader of the 1917 Russian Revolution, wrote in the midst of the tumultuous class battles in France in the mid-1930s: “The strike is the most ele-

mentary form of the class struggle that always combines, in varying proportions, 'ideological' methods with physical methods.... Basically, the picket is the embryo of the workers' militia. He who thinks of renouncing 'physical' struggle must renounce all struggle, for the spirit does not live without flesh" (*Whither France?*, October 1934).

While the “right to strike” is guaranteed under the French constitution, pickets and other militant actions are, under the law, considered means of “impeding the right to work” and are illegal. *But picket lines, plant occupations, sit-down strikes are the very methods that make a strike effective!* As any worker who has been in a militant strike knows, and as the history of the French working class attests, the only “illegal” strike is one that loses. Real pickets that shut down production are precisely the means to consolidate and extend a strike, to win over those workers who are hesitant about joining a strike, to organize the workers in action and above all, to protect the strike against scabs and cops. This is exactly how the Air France strike was won in 1993: the strikers blocked the airport runways, shut down the airports and stood their ground in resisting the attacks by the CRS [riot cops].

But this is the last thing the current leaderships of the various unions want. From the CGT, CFDT and FO [union federations] to the generally smaller unions like SUD, which is sometimes seen as being more "radical" than the "traditional" unions, the unions, like the "left" parties which lead them, are led by "leaders" who reject the perspective for the working class to seize state power and implement fundamental social change. With a perspective of working within the status quo, they become guardians of the capitalist system (this is why the bosses and the bosses' state have an interest in giving them big financial subsidies and privileges). Thus they are unwilling to fight to defend the broader social interests as well as the economic interests of the proletariat. For example, instead of fighting for the right of workers, male and female, to choose their shifts and to receive extra compensation and full transport subsidies for night work, they campaigned against the lifting of the discriminatory ban on night work for women, effectively accepting the morals of the Catholic church that women should take care of their families at night.

With such leadership, it is no wonder that only around 9 percent of the proletariat in France are union members (as opposed to 22 percent in 1970) and the CGT, which remains the most influential union in private industry, has less than one-fourth the membership it had after World War II. Historically, it's notable that union membership in France has grown during times of sharp social battles and then, after betrayal by the leaderships, union cards are torn up in droves. But it is wrong to throw the baby out with the bathwater, to reject unions because of their treacherous leaders. What is needed is a new leadership in the unions, a class-struggle leadership. But the fight to build a class-struggle leadership in the working class must link the fight to oust the treacherous union bureaucrats to the building of a revolutionary workers party. Such a workers party would fight for a workers government to expropriate capitalism, to end once and for all the hideous social system that turns the enormous industrial wealth squeezed out of the lifeblood of the working class into misery and poverty.

LO and the Popular Front

Of all the fake-Trotskyist organizations that supported the electoral victory of Jospin's popular front, Lutte Ouvrière is the one that is now most seriously trying to posture as distancing itself from the government. But this is not surprising, since LO is practiced at tailing the mood of the working class, which right now is enraged at the government. While they criticize the PCF, what they do in fact is beg the PCF—which is part of the

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Iraq...

(continued from page 1)

vice president and General Colin Powell, former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, running the State Department. This gang positively reveled in the wholesale slaughter of retreating Iraqi conscripts on what became known as the “highway of death.” While visiting the Gulf in 1991, Cheney autographed the same kind of 2,000-pound “bunker-buster” bombs—grotesquely writing “To Saddam, with affection”—which were then used to kill over 300 people, mainly women and children, huddled in a Baghdad air raid shelter.

Protests against the recent bombing were called by sections of the International Communist League in Britain and Italy and in the U.S., with the Spartacist League/Spartacus Youth Clubs organizing campus speakouts to demand: ***U.S. imperialist butchers hands off Iraq! Down with the U.S./UN starvation blockade of Iraq!***

In the Near East, thousands demonstrated in cities throughout the region, including in the Occupied Territories. One Arab official told Egypt’s *Al-Ahram Weekly* (22 February): “There is growing



Demonstrators at February 19 protest in Gaza against imperialist bombing of Iraq carry picture of 12-year-old boy murdered by Zionist troops.

pressure on Arab governments from the street, even in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, to move towards alleviating the misery of the Iraqi people.” The bombing brought to a white heat the anger of the Arab masses against the U.S., already hated for its sponsorship of the Zionist terror machine which has gunned down over 300 Palestinians in the last few months and is methodically assassinating leading members of Yasir Arafat’s Fatah and other organizations. Resorting to ever more lethal means of repression in a desperate attempt to quell the five-month-long uprising—even before newly elected prime minister Ariel Sharon, the notorious architect of the 1983 Sabra and Shatila refugee massacre, has assumed office—Israeli troops are now gassing Palestinians. After one recent gas attack,



Reuters

U.S. fighter jets enforcing imperialist-imposed “no-fly” zone.

over 150 people in Gaza’s Khan Yunis refugee camp developed muscle spasms and skin rashes.

Meanwhile, Israel is carrying out its own starvation blockade against the Palestinians. More than one million residents of the Gaza Strip are locked in behind an electrified fence built in the wake of the 1993 “peace” accord. Now the main road within Gaza itself has been shut down. Not only has the population been deprived of income from jobs in Israel, but those who work for Arafat’s Palestinian Authority are not being paid because Israel is withholding Palestinian tax monies. In the West Bank, Zionist settlers are free to travel on “strategic highways” to which Palestinians are denied access while Arab villages are sealed off. Roads into Jericho have been blocked with huge cement slabs, and the town is now surrounded by a six-mile-long, ten-foot-deep trench to prevent anything from going in or out, even through the fields. While crops rot on the ground, Palestinians are going without food.

It is perhaps not surprising that many Palestinian protesters, with the view that “the enemy of my enemy is my friend,” carry portraits of Saddam Hussein. But solidarity with the Iraqi people against the imperialists must not be confused with support for the bourgeois-nationalist regime in Baghdad. Saddam Hussein is a butcher of Iraqi leftists, workers and Kurds, who was himself sponsored by the U.S. imperialists when it suited their aims. The only road to Palestinian liberation—and the liberation of all the oppressed in the region—lies in internationalist unity of Hebrew-speaking, Arab, Kurdish and Persian workers and in socialist revolution to sweep away all the murderous capitalist regimes in the region. ***Defend the Palestinian people! All Israeli troops, settlers out of the Occupied Territories! For a socialist federation of the Near East!***

In their ongoing murder of Arab men, women and children, the American imperialists are signaling their assertion of global hegemony not only to “Third World” countries like Iraq. Days after the bombing of Baghdad, the Bush administration launched a broadside against China for supposedly supplying Iraq with fiber-optics radar equipment. An editorial in the *Washington Post* (22 February) belabored about a “deeper Chinese purpose: to thwart U.S. global leadership, seen in Beijing as ‘hegemony,’ by encouraging those who oppose it.” The same day, Bush

warned, “We are going to send a message to the Chinese.”

In the years since the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union, Washington has sharply ratcheted up economic and military pressure against China, the largest remaining deformed workers state. China is the principal target of “Star Wars II,” the so-called national missile defense, whose purpose would be to facilitate an unchallenged nuclear first strike. Intent on escalating the drive for bloody counterrevolution in China, the new Republican administration appears to be moving away from a 30-year-old policy initiated by the Nixon administration aimed at encouraging capitalist restoration primarily from within through “constructive engagement” with the Beijing bureaucracy. ***Defend China against imperialist attack and internal counterrevolution!***

It is not lost on Washington’s imperialist “allies” that its “message” in bombing and starving Iraq is aimed at them as well. In the face of growing competition from its imperialist rivals, the U.S. bourgeoisie wields its arsenal of terror, including the most massive stockpiles of nuclear and biological and chemical weapons, to guard its position as the planet’s pre-eminent power. Tensions between the U.S. and the European Union, expressed over European opposition to Star Wars and U.S. opposition to a European “rapid reaction force” outside NATO control, have come ever more to the fore. France now challenges the legality of the U.S.-dictated “no-fly” zones over Iraq and openly condemned the U.S./British attack as a violation of international law, as did Russia. Germany issued a harsh criticism, and even Turkey, whose air bases are used by the U.S. to patrol the northern “no-fly” zone of Iraq, formally rebuked Washington.

The blood of Iraqis is being spilled to cement U.S. control over vast oil and natural gas resources which are vital to Germany and Japan. An op-ed piece by academic Robert Pape in the *New York Times* (24 February) headlined “Our Iraq Policy Is Not Working” observed, “The sanctions began to unravel in the late 1990’s as Western demand for oil rose.” Earlier this year, Syria opened a 552-mile oil pipeline with Iraq. Russia, Italy, Turkey and Egypt have openly flouted the UN ban on commercial flights to Baghdad, while French foreign minister Hubert Védrine recently declared that the embargo is “not working well...and we are calling for it to end.” In the face of this growing international opposition, the U.S. is now mooted “smart” sanctions restricted to an embargo on arms.

With supreme imperial arrogance, the rapacious U.S. military behemoth asserts its right to decide who supplies arms to whom! Ten years ago, the U.S. destroyed a baby formula factory in Baghdad with the claim that it produced biological weapons, and in 1998, Clinton described a Sudanese pharmaceuticals plant hit by U.S. missiles as a nerve gas factory. Most recently, Washington charged that a castor oil factory in Iraq is a chemical weapons plant!

The death and destruction being wreaked upon the people of Iraq show what imperialism is all about, a rapacious system based on the exploitation, subjugation and murder of the workers and

semicolonial masses in order to expand the profits of a handful of filthy rich capitalists. Imperialism is, as Russian Bolshevik V.I. Lenin said, the highest stage of capitalism, marked by the domination of monopolies and finance capital and a struggle for redivision of markets and spheres of influence by the major capitalist countries that ultimately leads to world war. And as Lenin’s Bolsheviks showed in leading the October Revolution of 1917, imperialism can and must be defeated through workers revolution.

Against this, the reformist left fosters the illusion that the imperialist rulers can be pressured to adopt a more humane and peaceful policy. In Italy, the protest against the Iraq bombing by our comrades of the Lega Trotskista was in sharp contrast to the silence of reformist organizations such as Rifondazione Comunista (RC), which are firmly in the thrall of the popular-front government. Even RC’s own supporters were disgusted,



WV Photo

February 19: Spartacist contingent at NYC protest against bombing of Iraq.

with one letter to *Liberazione* (22 February) asking whether its refusal to protest the imperialist attack was the price paid “to not disturb electoral alchemies and calculations.”

In the U.S., after eight years of bombing and blockade under the Clinton administration, the reformists’ congenital appeals to the Democrats as a “lesser evil” are patently bankrupt. Seeking to hide this fact, the International Socialist Organization carried an article on the tenth anniversary of the Gulf War which uttered not a word about the Democrats (*Socialist Worker*, 19 January). Nor did a leaflet (undated) protesting the bombing issued by Workers World Party’s International Action Center (IAC). IAC-initiated demonstrations in New York City and the Bay Area aimed their fire exclusively at Bush. With the reformists now all appealing to “fight the right” (i.e., the Republicans), it is small wonder that the IAC drew so few people to protests against the bombing of Iraq, scarcely 100 in NYC and 30 in the Bay Area. Given their own not-so-implicit support to the Democrats, it would be difficult to mobilize against the *bipartisan* efforts to strangle Iraq. As the SL contingent at the NYC protest chanted: “Democrats, Republicans—parties of war! A workers party is what we’re for!” ***Defeat U.S. imperialism through workers revolution!*** ■

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Lockerbie: Imperialist Show Trial

In 1986, U.S. warplanes bombed the Libyan capital of Tripoli in a deliberate attempt to assassinate nationalist leader Muammar Qaddafi. They succeeded in killing his adopted baby daughter and wounding over a hundred other people. Two years later, the U.S. missile destroyer *Vincennes* shot down Iran Air Flight 655, sending 290 men, women and children to a fiery death. No one has ever been held accountable for this racist, imperialist mass murder. A few months later, allegedly in retaliation, a terrorist bomb brought down Pan Am Flight 103 over Lockerbie, Scotland.

On January 31, a panel of three Scottish judges presiding over a trial in the Netherlands sentenced Abdelbaset Ali Mohamed al-Megrahi to life imprisonment for the bombing deaths of the 270 passengers aboard the Pan Am flight. Based upon the exact same evidence, his co-defendant, Al Amin Khalifa Fhimah, was acquitted of all charges. This was a chemically pure imperialist show trial. The sole reason Megrahi has been condemned to a life of prison hell is that he is a citizen of Libya, declared a “rogue state” by the biggest terrorists in the world, U.S. imperialism. For Washington, the only “rogue state” is one without nuclear weapons, i.e., easy to push around. One thing Megrahi can be thankful for—he was not tried in an American court. In the U.S., dozens of people are sent to death each year on such flimsy evidence.

As the Lockerbie trial drew to a close, another show trial got under way in a federal courtroom in Manhattan, where four alleged associates of Saudi fundamentalist Osama bin Laden face the death penalty or life imprisonment for an alleged terrorist conspiracy over the last ten years, including the bombing of the U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998. Washington responded to these acts by carrying out missile strikes against Afghanistan, where bin Laden is staying, and devastating a pharmaceuticals factory in Sudan. It is notable that the terrorism charges against bin Laden go back only ten years. Before that the American imperialists were working hand in glove with



Philippot/Sygma

SL contingent at March 1986 Berkeley protest against U.S. bombing of Tripoli which killed baby daughter of Libyan leader Qaddafi, wounded over 100 others.

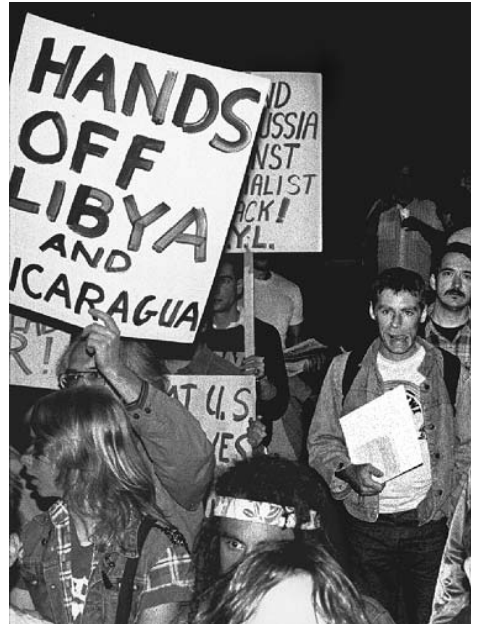
him and other *mujahedin* cutthroats in waging a bloody, reactionary war against the modernizing nationalist Afghan government and the Soviet troops that backed it. Trained, armed and funded by Washington, the *mujahedin* perpetrated mass terror against Soviet soldiers and against women and schoolteachers who attempted to teach women to read.

Customarily such “terrorism” trials serve as vehicles to attack the democratic rights of us all, and this one is true to form. In a chilling decision, the federal judge has ruled that “confessions” coerced by U.S. agents abroad in violation of the *Miranda* rule are admissible in an American court. This will only encourage the cops and Feds to extract even more “confessions” through torture and beating.

In an article on the Lockerbie conviction, the *New York Times* (2 February) reported that the defense counsel’s closing arguments described the prosecution’s case as “a cable made of frayed fibers, each a line of circumstantial evidence that could not support the conclusions suspended from it.” By the

kangaroo court’s own admission, the prosecution’s case was filled with “uncertainties and qualifications.” The prosecution theory boiled down to accusations that Megrahi was a Libyan agent. They cited Megrahi’s presence at the Malta airport at a time when the Pan Am flight was there, though they have no idea how the bomb got on the aircraft or who put it there. Mainly, Megrahi was convicted because he was supposedly seen with a Swiss dealer in bomb timers by the key prosecution witness, a former Libyan agent of whom the judges said, “We are unable to accept Abdul Majid as a credible and reliable witness.” Yet the judges concluded that “there is nothing in the evidence which leaves us with any reasonable doubt as to the guilt” of Megrahi!

Behind the frame-up is the U.S. imperialists’ arrogant crusade against nationalist strongman Qaddafi who, before being supplanted by Saddam Hussein, was vilified as Public Enemy No. 1. The 1986 air strike against Libya—followed by another three years later—was alibied as retaliation for a terrorist



Young Spartacus

attack on a West Berlin disco frequented by U.S. servicemen, with which the Libyans had nothing to do, as later came out. In 1992, the U.S. pushed through crippling international economic sanctions against Libya. The United Nations suspended the sanctions when Qaddafi agreed to a trial of the two accused Libyans three years ago. But Washington still refuses to call off its embargo even after the conviction.

Right after the U.S. bombing in 1986, we sent an international journalistic team to Tripoli in solidarity with the neocolonial victims of U.S. imperialism. Our comrades were preceded by a telegram declaring: “We deeply respect and support just cause of Libyan independence and territorial integrity against assault by U.S. imperialist aggression” (see “Under Reagan’s Guns in Libya,” WV No. 401, 11 April 1986). We fight to mobilize the working people of America to sweep away U.S. imperialism’s Murder Inc. by smashing capitalist rule and establishing working-class power. Hands off Libya! Free Abdelbaset Ali Mohamed al-Megrahi! ■

Korea...

(continued from page 12)

Federation of Korean Trade Unions sponsored by the police-state regime and set up under the tutelage of the AFL-CIO bureaucracy. Speaking of the ongoing protests in Pupyong, KCTU head Dan Byong Ho said, “The workers are the only victims of the government’s wrong economic policy. We have no choice but to fight to survive.” But the nationalist-populist outlook of the KCTU leadership led it to embrace Kim Dae Jung, who postured as an opponent of the police-state regime before coming to power and enforcing brutal IMF dictates. Despite his

nationalist and democratic pretensions, Kim has long been a loyal lackey of U.S. imperialism and a fierce enemy of the North Korean deformed workers state.

The denunciations by Daewoo union leaders of plans to sell the company to *foreign* owners echo the KCTU’s nationalist opposition to “foreign interference” by the IMF when the labor federation ran a class-collaborationist “People’s Victory 21” campaign in the 1997 presidential elections. As we wrote in “IMF ‘Bailout’ Means Misery for South Korean Workers” (WV No. 681, 2 January 1998), “The South Korean proletariat can go forward only on the basis of complete and unconditional independence from the bourgeoisie. This is all the more urgent today, as

the South Korean ruling class seeks to line the workers up to sacrifice their livelihoods and struggles in order to appease imperialist dictates.”

South Korean workers have demonstrated unparalleled courage and determination over the years. Their combativity must be directed into a fight for socialist revolution to sweep away the *chaebol* bourgeoisie and its police state. Com-

bined with proletarian political revolution against the nationalist Stalinist bureaucracy in the North, this would lead to the revolutionary reunification of the Korean peninsula. It would also act as a powerful impetus to the fight against capitalist restoration in China and to the struggle for proletarian revolution to overthrow the imperialist exploiters in Japan as well as in the U.S. and Europe. ■



AP

South Korean union “arrest squad” arrives in France with “Wanted” poster of former Daewoo CEO Kim Woo Choong.

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WORKERS VANGUARD

Protests Continue After Cops Crush Plant Occupation

Solidarity with Korea Daewoo Auto Workers!

FEBRUARY 25—Six days ago, an army of 4,000 riot cops attacked workers occupying Daewoo Motor Company's main plant in Pupyong, a section of the South Korean port city of Incheon 19 miles from the capital of Seoul. Deploying excavators as battering rams, cops stormed through plant gates and dragged out 500 workers and family members who had joined them. Workers had seized the plant on February 16 after Daewoo announced 1,750 layoffs, part of a restructuring scheme demanded by General Motors as a condition for buying out the company.

Throughout the occupation, other workers and strike supporters battled riot cops outside the plant. Protesting the crackdown, workers and students continue to engage in running battles with the cops. On February 20, cops in riot gear tried to block a march by 1,000 protesters on the plant. In one instance, a mob of police surrounded a union van, smashing the windshield with their clubs and pummeling the driver. Ten people were injured as workers and students fought back with steel pipes and firebombs. The same day, workers at two other Daewoo factories walked off the job.

The brutal attack on the Daewoo plant touched off an explosion of anger at the regime of former "dissident" Kim Dae Jung, who was elected president in late 1997 with broad support among workers. As workers marched in protest on the Incheon-Seoul highway, they carried a banner reading "Down With South Korean President Kim Dae Jung Who Is Suppressing Workers!"

A government minister told the *New York Times* (21 February) that the crushing of the occupation meant that "the obstacles have been removed" to pushing through a deal with GM. The *Times* noted, "The primary obstacle, in his view, had been the resistance of workers to layoffs." Daewoo's creditors have now started to pump more funds into the firm, which collapsed under massive debts two years ago, in preparation for the GM buyout. Despite the fabulous growth of



Workers defend themselves as cops move in to crush Daewoo plant occupation.

the *chaebol* conglomerates—of which Daewoo was the second largest—in the 1970s and '80s, the collapse of the South Korean economy three years ago and the humiliating terms of the "rescue package" dictated by international capital underscore the dependent character of the South Korean bourgeoisie.

Several strike leaders have been able thus far to elude the police, but 84 workers have been arrested. Trade unionists internationally must demand immediate freedom for all the arrested strikers! Protest strikes and other actions in solidarity with the embattled Daewoo workers are vitally necessary. And with layoffs hitting the auto industry around the world—including 26,000 job cuts at DaimlerChrysler—coordinated class struggle against the car manufacturers is in the direct interest of all auto workers. This is particularly clear in the U.S., home of the far-flung GM empire, which has just announced that workers in 14 North American plants will be hit with

rolling layoffs through the month of June. On January 25, GM workers throughout Europe walked off the job to protest layoffs, pointing to the necessity of joint class struggle across national borders. But this requires combatting the national chauvinism of the social-democratic trade-union tops, who call on their respective capitalist governments to "save" jobs at the expense of workers elsewhere.

Chauvinist protectionism is part of the labor bureaucracy's all-sided program of class collaboration, based on the embrace of the global interests of their "own" capitalist exploiters. In the U.S., this is very much linked to the anti-Communism of the AFL-CIO labor tops. The American imperialists maintain a 40,000-strong occupation force in South Korea, aimed at the North Korean and Chinese deformed workers states as well as at the militant South Korean proletariat. The "AFL-CIA" was instrumental in building anti-Communist company unions in South Korea and is currently a lead-

ing force in the drive for capitalist counterrevolution in China. The Spartacist League demands: All U.S. troops and bases out of Korea! For unconditional military defense of North Korea and China against imperialism and internal counterrevolution!

The struggle at Daewoo is the latest sign of a resurgence of the South Korean proletariat, which has been ground under by the economic crisis that broke out in 1997 and by the austerity measures dictated by the International Monetary Fund (IMF). In late December, 18,000 telecommunications workers conducted the first strike in their union's history, while 6,000 riot cops were called out to break a six-day protest by striking workers at the country's two largest banks. Reporting on Daewoo, the *New York Times* (20 February) wrote, "The response of the workers underlined the view among many Koreans that workers are being asked to make sacrifices while owners and senior executives survive on renewed loans and bond issues."

Daewoo chairman Kim Woo Choong, a crony of the old military dictatorship, fled to Europe months ago to escape prosecution on charges of embezzlement and fraud amounting to **\$33 billion**. Last week, the Daewoo Motors Struggle Headquarters dispatched a three-man union "arrest squad" to Europe to find and seize Kim. "Kim Woo Choong has been stealing money from the company, and we should not be punished for the mess he created," said one union leader. As the three South Korean unionists arrived in Paris, they were greeted by a crowd of French trade unionists.

In occupying the Pupyong plant, Daewoo workers employed a crucial weapon in the fight against mass layoffs, going "beyond the limits of 'normal' capitalist procedure," as revolutionary leader Leon Trotsky noted in the 1938 Transitional Program. Writing amid the sit-down strikes that hit American industry in that period, Trotsky explained, "Independently of the demands of the strikers, the temporary seizure of factories deals a blow to the idol, capitalist property. Every sit-down strike poses in a practical manner the question of who is the boss of the factory: the capitalist or the worker?" Plant occupations point to the need to fight for the *expropriation of the capitalist exploiters* through the proletarian seizure of state power.

To mobilize the South Korean working class behind this revolutionary perspective requires the leadership of a Leninist-Trotskyist vanguard party forged in opposition to the nationalism which binds the proletariat to the *chaebol* bourgeoisie. The Korean Confederation of Trade Unions (KCTU), which has backed the Daewoo workers, emerged from militant workers' struggles in the late 1980s that broke the stranglehold of the corporatist

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Workers protesting attack on Daewoo strikers carry banner reading: "Down With South Korean President Kim Dae Jung Who Is Suppressing Workers." Kim (at right) following his election in 1997.



AP photos