

U.S.-Backed Killers Take Kabul



AFP



Hicks/Getty

U.S./UN/NATO Out of Afghanistan and Central Asia Now!

NOVEMBER 20—Surprising even their U.S. imperialist patrons, Northern Alliance forces seized the northern Afghan city of Mazar-i-Sharif and then Kabul last week as Taliban troops retreated from one town after another. Hailed as “liberators” by Washington and the Western media, the Northern Alliance cutthroats are already displaying the internecine feuding and murderous barbarity of their four years in power in the mid-1990s. Based largely on the minority Tajik and Uzbek peoples, Northern Alliance forces have reportedly massacred hundreds of ethnic Pashtun and other Taliban prisoners.

Pentagon chief Donald Rumsfeld brags that U.S. commando units are now roaming freely through Afghanistan in a man-hunt for anyone allegedly connected to Osama bin Laden’s Al Qaeda network, while U.S. bombs rain down on Kandahar and Kunduz, where fierce fighting still rages between the Taliban and its rivals. On November 13, American missiles slammed into the Kabul office of Al-Jazeera, the Arab-language satellite channel that the U.S. leaders of the “free world” have been trying to silence since the beginning of the war for its coverage of the death and destruction wreaked by the imperialists.

The war-crazed American imperialists have already begun plotting “Phase 2” of the “war on terrorism,” which Vice President Cheney has warned “may never end, at least not in our lifetime.” The London *Guardian* (17 November) reports: “The ease with which Kabul has fallen has encouraged hawks within the US administration who are keen to extend military action, particularly against Iraq.” *U.S. hands off Iraq!*

In moving into Kabul, the Northern Alliance forces openly flouted U.S. diktat.

Red Cross warehouse in Kabul destroyed by U.S. bombing. U.S.-backed Northern Alliance troops murder wounded Taliban soldier on road to Kabul.

Now the imperialists are scrambling to conjure up a “broad-based” government under United Nations auspices, drawing in particularly the predominant Pashtun tribes. According to the London *Independent* (17 November), U.S., British and French strategists worked out a plan where “Afghanistan will be divided between the three countries into ‘zones of influence.’” Kabul is supposed to be occupied by “a strong international Muslim presence” dominated by Turkish troops, who are seasoned in the slaughter of the Kurdish national minority in Turkey. French troops are slated to move into Mazar-i-Sharif and British forces are now positioned at the Bagram air base near Kabul.

Taking hits on its own territory in the attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon, American imperialism lashed out at Afghanistan to assert its unchallenged supremacy as the world’s nuclear cowboy. Now that the U.S. and West European imperialists are in the region, they will doubtless try to grab whatever they can get their hands on, including the vast oil and natural gas reserves in Central Asia. But as one Afghan intellectual recently observed, “It is impossible to predict what is going to happen in this country in an hour.” Having stoked all manner of ethnic and regional antagonisms, the imperialists have opened up a Pandora’s box that they may not be able to seal with their schemes for “zones of influence” and the like. And whatever

they do, their presence will only deepen the misery and destruction already wreaked upon benighted Afghanistan. *U.S./UN/NATO out of Afghanistan, Central Asia, the Persian Gulf and the Near East!*

Northern Alliance: Woman-Hating Killers

Mostly in order to maintain liberal support at home for the war in Afghanistan, the imperialists and their media mouthpieces have portrayed the Northern Alliance as bearers of “freedom” for the Afghan masses, especially women. This fiction has also been promoted by the social-democratic left in Europe. In Paris in late September, the fake-Trotskyist Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire joined with the three governing parties—the Socialists, Communists and Greens—in building a rally for Afghan “women’s rights” that was shot through with portraits of assassinated Northern Alliance leader Ahmed Shah Massoud.

In the U.S., even “First Lady” Laura Bush, whose husband’s administration would be happy to see every abortion clinic in this country burned to the ground, gave a radio address on Saturday denouncing the Taliban’s “brutality against women.” CNN has been televising images of women no longer wearing the head-to-toe *burqa* in “liberated” Kabul—above a “Women’s Liberation” logo, no less! But as Maureen Dowd

noted in the *New York Times* (18 November): “Most have held off burning burkas because, as one woman put it, ‘They say the Taliban beat first and asked questions afterward. They say the Northern Alliance asks questions first and beats afterward.’”

The display of crocodile tears by American rulers for the enslaved women of Afghanistan is the most repulsive hypocrisy. The Taliban, Osama bin Laden and the rest of the Islamic fundamentalist killers are Frankenstein’s monsters unleashed by the U.S. in the 1980s against the Soviet Red Army, which brought the only hope of emancipation for the hideously oppressed women of Afghanistan (see “U.S. Imperialism and the Enslavement of Afghan Women,” page 4). The Soviet military presence there was one of the few truly progressive acts carried out by the Stalinist bureaucracy, offering the possibility of extending the social gains of the 1917 Russian Revolution to the downtrodden and impoverished Afghan peoples. When the Kremlin announced that it was withdrawing Soviet troops, we declared, “Russia Must Win Afghan War!” and warned: “The price for this obscene bid to placate U.S. imperialism is to hand over hundreds of thousands of Afghans to be tortured, flayed alive, beheaded and dismembered as infidels by the mullahs, tribal khans and feudal landlords. This is treachery!” (WV No. 444, 15 January 1988).

And the forces that make up the Northern Alliance—not least among them the late, unlamented Massoud—constituted the bulk of the anti-woman cutthroats bankrolled by the CIA to kill Soviet soldiers. During the four years those same forces ruled Afghanistan, they killed countless civilians, perpetrated mass rapes and enslaved women in the veil. After a bloody year-long civil war in which 50,000 Kabulites were slaughtered and the city reduced to rubble, Massoud’s mainly Tajik forces took control of Kabul in 1995, expelling the Shi’ite Muslim Hazara minority from the capital.

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**We Said: Hail Red Army in Afghanistan!
Defeat CIA's Islamic Cutthroats!**

**U.S. Imperialism and the
Enslavement of Afghan Women**

See Page 4



Federal Judge Bars Evidence of Mumia's Innocence Again

This coming December 9, Mumia Abu-Jamal will have been behind bars a full 20 years for a crime he did not commit, the 1981 killing of Philadelphia police officer Daniel Faulkner. On October 15, U.S. District Court judge William Yohn

Free Mumia Now!

barred for the second time the sworn testimony of Arnold Beverly, who two years ago confessed that he shot Faulkner and that "Jamal had nothing to do with the shooting," blowing the prosecution's frame-up to bits. Yohn's new order is one more brick in the wall of silence the bourgeois prosecutors, courts and media have tried to build around the explosive new evidence that confirms that Mumia Abu-

Jamal is an innocent man who should not have spent a day in prison. ***Free Mumia now!***

Much of this wealth of new evidence is detailed in the Partisan Defense Committee pamphlet published in September, *Mumia Abu-Jamal Is an Innocent Man!* This fall, Jamal filed four additional affidavits which buttress the new evidence in every respect, from exposing the glaring discrepancies in the prosecution's physical and ballistics evidence to indicting the treachery of Jamal's former lead counsel, Leonard Weinglass, who sabotaged Mumia's defense by burying the Beverly confession and other evidence of Jamal's innocence.

Yohn also ruled that Jamal is barred from raising Beverly's confession in federal court because he has not yet presented this new evidence in the Penn-

sylvania state court system. But in a vicious Catch-22, Yohn also turned down a defense motion to put the federal proceeding on hold while Mumia pursues Beverly's confession in an appeal pending before Philadelphia Common Pleas Court judge Pamela Dembe.

The fight to free Mumia is even more urgent now, as the racist rulers attack democratic rights and massively augment the bourgeois state's repressive powers in the name of "anti-terrorism," allowing wiretaps of lawyer-client communications and trials of suspected "terrorists" in military tribunals. But long before any of these new measures, Jamal was subjected to a blatant frame-up involving racist jury-rigging and the denial of his right to select his own attorney. And later, as he prepared his 1995 Post-Conviction Relief appeal, state and prison officials intercepted and opened confidential legal communications between Mumia and his attorneys.

The current "anti-terrorist" hysteria only underscores that in the fight for Jamal's freedom there can be no illusions in the capitalist courts. Mumia's frame-up reaches into the highest levels of law enforcement and government: Tom Ridge, George W. Bush's chief of "Homeland Security," signed two warrants for Mumia's execution when he was Pennsylvania governor, while during her recent re-election bid, radio ads for Philly's Democratic Party D.A. Lynne Abraham crowed about her "vigorous" opposition to Jamal's fight for freedom.

In a November 2 court filing, Jamal's defense team points to the "direct and chilling historical parallel" between Mumia's frame-up and the 1920s case of Sacco and Vanzetti. These Italian workers were convicted because they were immigrants who espoused anarchist politics, and were sent to the electric chair even after a man involved in the crime for which they were framed up had confessed and exonerated them. Hundreds of thousands were mobilized in an international campaign of protest spearheaded by the International Labor Defense (ILD), whose heritage the PDC today continues.



WV Photo

Spartacist contingent at August 18 San Francisco protest for Jamal.

As sharp turns unfolded in the legal and political battles on behalf of Sacco and Vanzetti, ILD national secretary James P. Cannon warned against all illusions in the "justice" and "fair play" of the courts and other institutions of the class enemy:

"The new developments bring out more than ever, and with crystal clearness, the class basis of this famous case. They show that it is a case of workers against exploiters—with Sacco and Vanzetti, the victims elected for the holocaust, standing out before the whole world as the representatives of the exploited class. The class-struggle policy in the fight for Sacco and Vanzetti was right from the beginning and is a thousand times right now. The power that can save Sacco and Vanzetti is the power of the masses."
—"New Developments—New Dangers" (19 August 1927), reprinted in *Notebook of an Agitator* (1973)

The forces of bourgeois "law and order" want to kill Jamal to silence forever this former Black Panther Party spokesman, MOVE supporter and journalist who is an eloquent fighter for black freedom. The reasons why are clear: even from his death row cell, Mumia Abu-Jamal continues to speak out against this racist imperialist system, denouncing the U.S. war on Afghanistan (see "In Search of a Holy War," page 3). Today we must redouble our efforts to mobilize mass protest centered on labor's power to demand: ***Free Mumia now! Abolish the racist death penalty!*** ■



TROTSKY

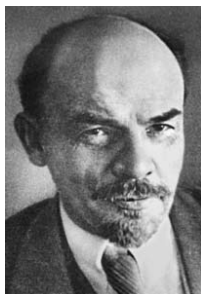
The Imperialist State: War and Repression

During and immediately after the first interimperialist world war, the U.S. bourgeoisie jailed Socialist Party leader Eugene V. Debs and other opponents of the war as well as scores of IWW labor militants (Wobblies), threw Socialists elected to Congress and state assemblies out of office for "sedition" and deported thousands of suspected radicals in the 1919-1920 Palmer Raids.

Bolshevik leader Leon Trotsky noted the tendency of all imperialist states, as seen particularly during World War I, to contract the scope of parliamentary democracy in order to defend the class interests and rule of the bourgeoisie.

"Imperialism," wrote Marx of the Empire of Napoleon III, "is the most prostituted, and, at the same time, perfected form of the state which the bourgeoisie, having attained its fullest development, transforms into a weapon for the enslavement of labour by capital." This definition has a wider significance than for the French Empire alone, and includes the latest form of imperialism, born of the world conflict between the national capitalisms of the great powers. In the economic sphere, imperialism pre-supposed the final collapse of the rule of the middle class; in the political sphere, it signified the complete destruction of democracy by means of an internal molecular transformation, and a universal subordination of all democracy's resources to its own ends.... The last great slaughter—the bloody font in which the bourgeois world attempted to be rebaptized—presented to us a picture, unparalleled in history, of the mobilization of all state forms, systems of government, political tendencies, religions, and schools of philosophy, in the service of imperialism. Even many of those pedants who slept through the preparatory period of imperialist development during the last decades, and continued to maintain a traditional attitude towards ideas of democracy and universal suffrage, began to feel during the war that their accustomed ideas had become fraught with some new meaning.... Imperialism succeeded by means of all the resources it had at its disposal, including parliamentarism, irrespective of the electoral arithmetic of voting, to subordinate for its own purposes at the critical moment the lower middle classes of the towns and country and even the upper layers of the proletariat.... In all countries the question of the control of the state assumed first-class importance as a question of an open measuring of forces between the capitalist clique, openly or secretly supreme and disposing of hundreds of thousands of mobilized and hardened officers, devoid of all scruple, and the revolting, revolutionary proletariat; while the intermediate classes were living in a state of terror, confusion, and prostration. Under such conditions, what pitiful nonsense are speeches about the peaceful conquest of power by the proletariat by means of democratic parliamentarism!

—Leon Trotsky, *Terrorism and Communism* (1920)



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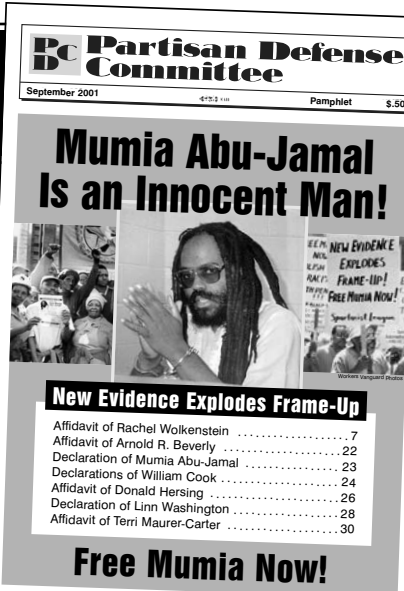
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WORKERS VANGUARD

Marxist Working-Class Biweekly of the Spartacist League of the U.S.

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PRODUCTION MANAGER: Susan Fuller

CIRCULATION MANAGER: Irene Gardner

EDITORIAL BOARD: Karen Cole (managing editor), Bruce André, Ray Bishop, Jon Brule, George Foster, Liz Gordon, Walter Jennings, Jane Kerrigan, James Robertson, Joseph Seymour, Alison Spencer

The Spartacist League is the U.S. Section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist).

Workers Vanguard (ISSN 0276-0746) published biweekly, except skipping three alternate issues in June, July and August (beginning with omitting the second issue in June) and with a 3-week interval in December, by the Spartacist Publishing Co., 299 Broadway, Suite 318, New York, NY 10007. Telephone: (212) 732-7862 (Editorial), (212) 732-7861 (Business). Address all correspondence to: Box 1377, GPO, New York, NY 10116. E-mail address: vanguard@tiac.net. Domestic subscriptions: \$10.00/22 issues. Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *Workers Vanguard*, Box 1377, GPO, New York, NY 10116.

Opinions expressed in signed articles or letters do not necessarily express the editorial viewpoint.

The closing date for news in this issue is 20 November.

No. 769

23 November 2001

From Death Row, This Is Mumia Abu-Jamal

In Search of a Holy War

“Fervor is the weapon of choice of the impotent.”
—Dr. Frantz Fanon

Throughout American history, one thing has remained constant; the continuous effort of the state, and its ruling elites, to demonize some person, or some group, as a predicate for war. We are all in the midst of but the latest expression of this exercise. This was visible in the very first hours after the suicide bombings and destruction of the twin towers of the World Trade Center in New York City, and the aerial strike against the Pentagon in Washington, D.C. Remember when the politicians lectured the nation about, “This is a battle between good and evil”? How about, “This is against those who oppose civilization itself”? There is a close tie, but the latest figures for global demonization are Usama bin-Ladin and the ruling clique in war-ravaged Afghanistan, the Taliban.

What is interesting, when you look back a few years, is the similarity with other historical figures, like Saddam Hussein, or Manuel Noriega of Panama.

Why are these disparate figures similar?

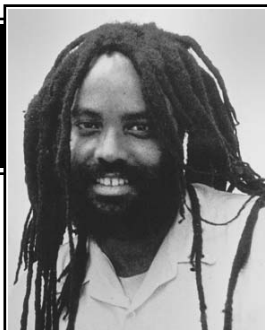
Well, before the U.S. media machine assured us they were devils incarnate, they boasted of their friendship with the Americans. Messrs. bin-Ladin,

Hussein and the forerunners of the Taliban were armed, and/or trained by the CIA, or directly by the military industries, to fight against the Russians (then the Soviets) and the Iranians under the late Ayatollah Khomeini.

General Noriega was best buds with George I (the former President) Bush, as long as he was helping U.S. efforts to destabilize the Sandinistas when they ran Nicaragua. When he got tired of playing along with Washington, the media began its drumbeat against the General. “He’s dealing in drugs!” “His government isn’t democratic!”

The Taliban’s biggest exposure, before 11 Sept., 2001, was the destruction of ancient Buddhist shrines in Afghanistan. When I heard of it, I could not help but think of the acts of Pope Gregory I, of whom it is said:

Marble statues of ancient Rome were torn down, most notably by Gregory the Great, and made into lime. Architectural marbles and mosaics were either made into lime or went to adorn cathedrals all over Europe and as far away as Westminster Abbey in London. The ravaging of marble works accounts for the thin ornate slabs WITH ANCIENT INSCRIPTIONS STILL FOUND IN MANY CHURCHES



TODAY. (H. Ellerbe, *The Dark Side of Christian History*, [1995], p. 50)

Are the Taliban unique in their aversion to women? The great Church Father, Tertullian once said of women: You are the devil’s gateway: you are the unsealer of that tree: you are the first deserter of the divine law: you are she who persuaded him (Adam) whom the devil was not valiant enough to attack. You destroyed so easily God’s image, man. On account of your desert—that is, death—even the Son of God had to die. (Ellerbe, p. 115).

The 6th Century Christian philosopher, Boethius once wrote, in his *The Consolation of Philosophy*, “Woman is a temple built upon a sewer.”

Few are the writers and historians who point to such Christian historical figures and label them as “religious fanatics.”

And before some wag claims I am an apologist for the Taliban, I need only point out that it was the U.S. CIA, who paved the way for them to come into being, by their support of the destruction of the Soviet-backed Najibullah government. Afghanistan is the way it is today, because the American CIA, and Pakistani intelligence wanted it that way.

Let us beware of religious wars. Being human, we have more than enough madness to go around.

27 September 2001

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Send urgently needed contributions for Mumia’s legal defense, earmarked “Mumia Abu-Jamal,” to: Humanitarian Law Project, 8124 W. 3rd Street, Suite 105, Los Angeles, CA 90048.

If you wish to correspond with Jamal, you can write to: Mumia Abu-Jamal, AM8335, SCI Greene, 175 Progress Drive, Waynesburg, PA 15370.

Afghanistan 1979

CIA Provocations, Islamic Reactionaries and Soviet Intervention

When the Soviet Union moved troops into Afghanistan on 27 December 1979 to defend its southern flank against a U.S.-backed Islamic insurgency, the imperialist rulers seized the occasion to launch a renewed Cold War offensive aimed at destroying the homeland of the October Revolution. For Marxists, there was nothing tricky about the war pitting the Soviet degenerated workers state and its left-nationalist allies in Kabul against a reactionary cabal of CIA-financed *mujahedin*, mullahs and tribal chiefs committed to the enslavement of Afghan women. The gut-level response of any leftist should have been the fullest solidarity with the Red Army. However, virtually every fake-revolutionary group internationally echoed the imperialists’ howls about Soviet “aggression” against “poor little Afghanistan” and joined in demanding, “Soviet troops out!”

In fact, Soviet forces intervened in Afghanistan only after repeated requests by the Kabul regime and well after the U.S., as well as Iran and Pakistan, had started funneling aid to the *mujahedin*. A posting on the George Washington University National Security Archive Web site, “Afghanistan: The Making of U.S. Policy (1973-1990),” reports: “Starting in April 1979, eight months before the Soviet intervention...the United States had, in fact, begun quietly meeting rebel representatives.” Among those was Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, a *mujahedin* cut-throat then in Pakistan who was notorious for throwing acid in the faces of unveiled women at Kabul University. In July 1979, Democratic president Jimmy Carter signed a secret CIA directive officially launching what would become the biggest covert operation in the CIA’s history. Carter’s national security adviser, Zbigniew Brzezinski, later gloated in an interview in *Le Nouvel Observateur*



Ledru/Sigma

Cold Warrior Brzezinski at Khyber Pass overlooking Afghanistan, 1980.

(15 January 1998): “That secret operation was an excellent idea. It had the effect of drawing the Russians into the Afghan trap.”

The Soviet bureaucracy initially resisted intervening militarily in Afghani-

stan, even as the People’s Democratic Party (PDPA) regime in Kabul proved unable to stem the rising fundamentalist threat stoked by the U.S. This comes through clearly in a series of Soviet documents from 1979, recently posted in English translation on the National Security Archive Web site. A number of the documents are from the period following a March 1979 uprising by fundamentalists in the Afghan city of Herat, in which hundreds of government officials and Soviet advisers were massacred. The Soviet Politburo debated desperate requests by PDPA prime minister Noor Mohammed Taraki for an immediate Soviet military intervention. In a phone conversation with Soviet premier Alexei Kosygin, Taraki pleaded:

“Why can’t the Soviet Union send Uzbecks, Tajiks and Turkmens in civilian clothing?... We want you to send them. They could drive tanks, because we have all these nationalities in Afghanistan. Let them don Afghan costume and wear Afghan badges and no one will recognize them.”

Repeatedly, Politburo members declared: “Under no circumstances may we lose Afghanistan.” Yet Soviet foreign minister Andrei Gromyko, arguing against

sending troops into Afghanistan, sounded for all the world like a trade-union bureaucrat recoiling at the prospect of upsetting cozy relations with the capitalists by calling a strike:

“All that we have done in recent years with such effort in terms of détente, arms reduction, and much more—all that would be thrown back.... From a legal point of view too we would not be justified in sending troops. According to the UN Charter a country can appeal for assistance, and we could send troops, in case it is subject to external aggression. Afghanistan has not been subject to any aggression.”

Though aware of the fact that both Pakistan and Iran had provided arms and training to the fundamentalist insurgents in Herat, the Politburo rejected Taraki’s pleas for an immediate military intervention.

What finally compelled Moscow to pour troops into Afghanistan was the fear that the PDPA regime, with Taraki assassinated and his successor, Hafizullah Amin, reportedly making approaches to Washington, was about to collapse in the face of the reactionary Islamic *jihad* (holy war). Moreover, the Soviet high command anxiously watched as U.S.

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Socialist Worker

Troops out of Afghanistan!

12 January 1980 (British SWP)

CHALLENGE

The Revolutionary Progressive Labor Party

February 1980

Crush U.S. & Soviet Imperialism

REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNIST YOUTH

AFGHANISTAN—SOVIETS INVADE, U.S. PLAYS “INNOCENT PEACELOVER”

16 January 1980

British SWP, U.S. Progressive Labor Party and Revolutionary Communist Party youth group: lining up behind imperialist anti-Communism against Red Army in Afghanistan.

We Said: Hail Red Army in Afghanistan! Defeat CIA's Islamic Cutthroats!

U.S. Imperialism and the Enslavement of Afghan Women

We print below edited excerpts from a presentation by Spartacist League spokesman Carla Norris at an October 25 New York SL forum.

As we meet tonight, cruise missiles, cluster bombs and mortar shells are raining down on Kabul, Kandahar and other parts of Afghanistan, killing hundreds of defenseless women, children and men and driving many others into disease-infested refugee camps. What few hospitals exist in that benighted country are being flattened and roads and other infrastructure destroyed in what U.S. president Bush promises will be a “sustained and relentless” military assault. Against such high-tech barbarism, the Spartacist League—U.S. section of the International Communist League—stands for the defense of Afghanistan against imperialist attack, and for class struggle here at home against the bloodthirsty U.S. capitalist class.

So all of a sudden, there are all these articles in the capitalist press about the need to save Afghan women. It’s one of the ways the U.S. imperialists and their liberal supporters are justifying this one-sided war. There has been a spate of articles and documentaries on the horrible conditions that women suffer in Afghanistan under the Taliban’s savage and backward regime. And the plight of Afghan women is dire. Women are hideously oppressed: forbidden to even show their faces, stifled in 30 yards of dusty fabric, prey to high levels of tuberculosis as a result.

The veil is a physical symbol of the subjugation of women. They are forbidden to learn to read and write, to work, to walk too loudly or laugh, or to leave their house unaccompanied by a male relative. For some 30,000 widows in Kabul, begging is the only way to earn a few coins for their children, and widows are permitted to beg on the street only between dusk and the 9 p.m. curfew. Medical services are essentially unavailable to women, since there are hardly any women medical workers and male doctors are prohibited from touching women.

But the media’s sudden attention to the women of Afghanistan is tailored to suit the aims of the U.S. bourgeoisie. For one thing, although the oppression has certainly intensified in the last several years, it didn’t start with the Taliban in 1996. In 1992, three years after Soviet leader



Saeed Khan

Kabul, 1993: *mujahedin* forces that now make up U.S.-backed Northern Alliance enslaved women in head-to-toe veil.

Mikhail Gorbachev betrayed the Afghan people—and the USSR—by withdrawing Soviet military forces, the U.S.-backed, -trained and -financed Islamic fundamentalists took power in Kabul. The recently killed leader of the U.S.-allied Northern Alliance, Ahmed Shah Massoud, became, as defense minister, the strongman of this fundamentalist regime, which lasted until the Taliban drove it out of the capital. The main division between the various fundamentalist groups has always been defined along ethnic and tribal lines: the Northern Alliance is based largely on the Tajiks and Uzbeks; the Taliban is based mainly on the Pashtun people, the largest ethnic group in Afghanistan and one which extends well into Pakistan.

In power, Massoud’s forces carried out mass slaughter, torture and rape of rival ethnic populations. Massoud’s *mujahedin* regime decreed that the country would be governed by Islamic *sharia* law. All workers were required to observe fixed prayer times. Books deemed anti-religious were burned in the streets. A series of ordinances were decreed governing the behavior of women, including that a

woman must cover her whole body, that she must not leave the house without her husband’s permission, that she must not look upon strangers, and that women wearing perfume were to be considered adulteresses (a “crime” punishable by being stoned to death).

Where were all the defenders of women’s rights when this was happening? Here we get to the crux of the matter: the U.S. had spent billions to arm, train and fund the *mujahedin* cutthroats in order to kill Soviet troops and pro-Soviet Afghans in the 1980s, during the first war ever sparked by the question of women’s rights. The feminists as well as virtually every left group in this country besides the Spartacist League lined up with the U.S. government’s anti-Soviet crusade in Afghanistan.

In December 1979, the Soviet Union sent 100,000 troops, mainly from Soviet Central Asia, into Afghanistan in order to stem an insurgency of *mujahedin* fighters, mullahs and landlords against the left-nationalist People’s Democratic Party (PDPA) government, which had requested the Soviet aid. We forthrightly declared: “Hail Red Army in Afghanistan! Extend the social gains of the Russian Revolution to the Afghan peoples!” These slogans expressed our recognition that despite its degeneration under a Stalinist bureaucratic caste, the Soviet Union remained a workers state embodying the historic gains of the October Revolution of 1917—centrally the planned economy and collectivized property. These were enormous gains not least for women and the historically Islamic peoples of Soviet Central Asia (what is now Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan). Within weeks of the Soviet troops going in, the international Spartacist tendency, now the International Communist League, held demonstrations calling for military

defense of the USSR and for victory to the Red Army.

Compare the abysmal conditions under which women in Afghanistan live now with some facts from 1988, before Soviet forces were withdrawn. Then there were 245,000 women workers, while 15,000 women served as soldiers and commanders in the army. Women made up 40 percent of the doctors and 60 percent of the teachers at the University of Kabul; 440,000 female students were enrolled in educational institutions and 80,000 more participated in literacy programs. The All-Afghanistan Women’s Council had 150,000 members. Western dress was common in the cities and women enjoyed some real measure of freedom from the veil and subjugation, for the first time in Afghanistan’s history.

Despite the zillions of dollars of aid and weapons provided for the *mujahedin* by the U.S. and its allies, the Soviet Union was not militarily defeated in Afghanistan. Over ten years of war, the USSR lost some 13-15,000 soldiers. By way of comparison, the U.S. lost 50,000 soldiers in Vietnam. But in a vain attempt to placate U.S. imperialism, the Kremlin Stalinists had pulled Soviet troops out by early 1989, handing over hundreds of thousands of Afghan women, leftists and workers to be tortured, flayed alive, beheaded and dismembered as “infidels.”

We denounced this betrayal. In solidarity with the Afghan masses, who were waging a bitter struggle for survival in the wake of the Soviet withdrawal, we formally proposed to the Afghan government, in a letter dated 7 February 1989, the following: “To organize an international brigade to fight to the death” to defend “the right of women to read, freedom from the veil, freedom from the tyranny of the mullahs and the landlords, the introduction of medical care and the right of all to an education.” And we were dead serious about this.

Although the Afghan government declined our offer, at its request the Partisan Defense Committee (the class-struggle legal and social defense organization associated with the Spartacist League) and the PDC’s fraternal organizations around the world raised over \$44,000 for the civilian victims of the *mujahedin* offensive against Jalalabad. This is the Afghan city closest to the CIA-sponsored guerrilla bases in Pakistan. The people of Jalalabad drove back attack after attack. The PDPA government held out against the *mujahedin* for almost three years.

Anti-Communism was the bond between U.S. imperialism and the mullahs in Afghanistan. Ronald Reagan called these cutthroats “the moral equivalent of the founding fathers of this country.” While I’m not a big fan of the slaveholders Jefferson, Monroe et al., I think they would be appalled at being compared to a bunch of feudalistic religious fanatics. In 1996, after four years of the horrific rule of the Northern Alliance types I mentioned before, who had already brought Kabul to the point of famine and devastation, the capital of Afghanistan fell to the Taliban. One of the Taliban’s first acts was to grab former president and Soviet ally Najibul-



Cloviss/Indymedia

Paris, September 29: Government-backed rally for “women’s rights” in Afghanistan hailed assassinated Northern Alliance cutthroat Massoud.

lah, who was castrated and hanged from a lamppost in downtown Kabul for three days. The Taliban killers proceeded to wreak bloody vengeance against any remaining vestige of social progress.

Fake Leftists: Hate the Soviet Union, Hail the Mujahedin

So why did almost every leftist and feminist group oppose the Soviet intervention, which alone raised the possibility of social liberation in that wretchedly backward country? The majority of the U.S. left succumbed to the Carter government’s anti-Soviet propaganda barrage, which was unleashed in the name of “human rights.”

The various Maoist groups, of which there were many during the 1960s (until China’s alliance with the U.S. made them irrelevant), all lined up against so-called “Soviet social-imperialism.” Of these, only Bob Avakian’s Revolutionary Communist Party is still around. Likewise, the Progressive Labor Party at the time denounced the Soviet Union as imperialist. The United Secretariat, the fake-Trotskyist international outfit supported today by Socialist Action and some members of the group Solidarity, condemned the 1979 Red Army intervention and one year later openly joined the imperialists in demanding the withdrawal of Soviet troops.

The Socialist Workers Party (SWP), which had left Trotskyism far behind in the 1960s when it sought to attract Democratic Party liberals and pacifists to its anti-Vietnam War protests, had completely given up on working-class revolution. Instead, they engaged in cheer-leading for bourgeois-nationalist forces and even Islamic fundamentalists, such as in Iran in 1979 when Khomeini took power—in fact, they still think that the “Iranian Revolution” was some sort of anti-capitalist revolution. The Spartacist League, in contrast, said: “Down with the Shah! No to the mullahs! For workers revolution in Iran!” In regard to Afghanistan, the SWP at first pretended that “the issue is not Soviet intervention, but a growing U.S. intervention” (*Militant*, 15 February 1980). But as everyone knows, the issue *was* Soviet intervention, so a year later they changed their line to call for “Soviet troops out” like the rest of the fake left.

The most repulsive form of tailing the imperialist anti-Soviet crusade was probably represented by the International Socialist Organization (ISO), at that time affiliated with Tony Cliff’s British Socialist Workers Party. The Cliffites openly embraced the *mujahedin* hailed by Reagan as “freedom fighters,” screaming “Troops Out of Afghanistan!” (*Socialist Worker* [Britain], 12 January 1980). They made it clear that only meant Soviet troops. A short time later in Poland, they supported the reactionary, anti-Semitic so-called “union” Solidarność, which was funded by the CIA and Vatican for the sole purpose of spearheading capitalist counterrevolution. The ISO justified all this by asserting that the Soviet Union was “state capitalist,” which they evidently consider even worse than real capitalism. At the start of the Korean War in 1950, the Cliffites broke with the Trotskyist movement over their refusal to defend the North Korean and Chinese deformed workers states against U.S. imperialism.

Another organization that labeled the USSR “state capitalist” as an excuse to avoid defending it against U.S. imperialism is the League for the Revolutionary Party (LRP). In a 13 September statement, the LRP correctly notes Osama bin Laden’s “leading role in Afghanistan’s mujahedin” when they were waging war against the Soviet-backed regime and that these Islamic reactionaries “received massive organizational, military and financial backing from the U.S. government.” But at the time, the LRP ludicrously claimed that the Soviets “hail Islam and crush women’s gains” and argued that “to support the Russian military intervention is to line up with the side of imperialism, stability and counterrevolution” (*Socialist Voice*, Summer 1980).



Smolan/Contact

When the Kremlin Stalinists began withdrawing Soviet troops, the ISO’s *Socialist Worker* (May 1988) cheered: “We welcome the defeat of the Russians in Afghanistan. It will give heart to all those inside the USSR and in Eastern Europe who want to break the rule of Stalin’s heirs.” It sure did “give heart” to the forces of capitalist counterrevolution that in the next few years succeeded in destroying the Soviet Union and the deformed workers states of East Europe, driving the working class of those countries back into massive unemployment, homelessness, hunger and misery, as well as ethnic slaughter. Some of the blood of every unveiled woman butchered by the Afghan fundamentalists is on



Humbert-Droz Archives

Baku Women’s Union in Soviet Azerbaijan marched with banner linking “liberation of women” with “liberation of the world’s toilers,” 1920.

the hands of every leftist and feminist organization internationally that lined up behind U.S. imperialism’s anti-Soviet dirty war in Afghanistan.

The October Revolution and Central Asia

For decades prior to the outbreak of the civil war launched by the *mujahedin* after the PDPA came to power in 1978, Afghanistan was a client state of the Soviet Union. A large fraction of the small educated stratum was trained in the USSR, and much of the intelligentsia regarded the Soviet Union as a source of social progress. In 1973, officers loyal to the PDPA played a major role in overthrowing the monarchy and participated in the bourgeois-nationalist Daud government. Subsequently, Daud moved to the right and attempted to crush the PDPA. Mass demonstrations of mostly students and government workers ensued. The PDPA military faction outgunned Daud’s forces and he was killed. This was the April 1978 “Revolution”—essentially a left-wing military coup with some popular support among intellectuals.

I gave you some statistics from 1988. To give a sense of the country’s backwardness before the Red Army moved in, according to the UN’s *Statistical Year-*



no credit

Left: Kabul demonstrators greet arriving Soviet troops, 1980. Right: Afghan women take up arms to join fight against CIA-backed Islamic reactionaries.

book for 1978, only 35,000 people were employed in manufacturing out of a population of 17 to 20 million. At the same time, there were a quarter of a million mullahs, paid by the government—an enormous parasitic caste sucking the blood from a desperately poor people. There were no railroads, very few highways, primitive sanitation and widespread malnutrition. Average life expectancy was 40 years, infant mortality was at least 25 percent, and half of all children died before age five. The rate of illiteracy was more than 90 percent for men and 98 percent for women. Almost all women, save members of a tiny Westernized urban middle class, were imprisoned in the veil and sold like chattel under the

bourgeois-democratic reforms is strong.

While not repudiating Islam, the PDPA regime sought to modernize the country along secular lines. One of the more popular measures was to cancel the debt that poor and landless peasants owed to the powerful moneylenders. The landlords and tribal khans held the power of life and death over the mass of peasants, controlling 42 percent of arable land and the associated irrigation systems. Though the PDPA government proposed a sweeping land reform program, they were stopped in their tracks by landlord economic sabotage and terror combined with a mass reactionary insurgency aided by Pakistan’s military.

But what really drove the mullahs into a frenzy and propelled them to take up arms were the government’s limited measures of equality for women, reducing the bride price to a nominal sum and introducing compulsory education for girls and voluntary literacy programs for adult women. Even the *New York Times* in February 1980 admitted: “It was the Kabul revolutionary government’s granting of new rights to women that pushed Orthodox Moslem men in the Pashtoon villages of eastern Afghanistan into picking up their guns.”

In any given society, as Karl Marx, quoting the French utopian socialist Charles Fourier, maintained, “The degree of emancipation of woman is the natural measure of general emancipation” (*The Holy Family* [1845]). Central to the oppression of women in class society is the institution of the family, which takes different forms depending on the demands of the social system. In areas such as Central Asia, there was a complex relationship between the bride price and polygamy, primitive agricultural production, sheepherding, land and water rights. A woman was her father’s means of economic exchange and her husband’s chattel; the right to control and inherit property was only for men. Most variants of local law gave a man access to land and water rights only if he married; more than one wife meant more land and water. On the other hand, marriage was so expensive because of the bride price that many poor men could never marry at all, and others turned to abduction and rape to get a wife.

With Afghanistan’s social development

continued on page 8

Trotskyist League/Ligue trotskyste Forum

Defend Afghanistan Against Imperialist Attack!

For Class Struggle Against Capitalist Rulers at Home!

Down With Ottawa’s “Anti-Terror” Law!

TORONTO

Saturday, December 1, 7:30 p.m.
Trinity-St. Paul’s Centre, 427 Bloor St. West
(west of Spadina)

For more information: (416) 593-4138 or e-mail spartcan@on.aibn.com

Young Spartacus

Trotskyism vs. Anarchism

Barricada: Which Side of the Barricades Are You On?

The following leaflet by the Boston Spartacus Youth Club was distributed on November 10 at an antiwar teach-in organized by anarchists, including the Barricada Collective, at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). Spartacist comrades intervened in the conference despite bombastic pronouncements by organizers that “absolutely no party groups” would be allowed. During the previous week, the SYC also spoke out at a New England-wide anarchist book fair in Amherst and at a lecture on Emma Goldman at Boston’s Lucy Parsons bookstore, where we counterposed our Marxist politics to anarchism. Reeling from these interventions, the organizers sent us an e-mail warning we would be excluded if we tried to “hijack” their teach-in, and went on MIT radio whining about trouble with us Spartacists.

When our team arrived at MIT they were greeted with shocked faces and murmurs of “I can’t believe the Sparts are here!” Believe it! Unable to defend their rotten politics, fake leftists like the International Socialist Organization are well practiced at excluding revolutionary Marxists from their events. Now it looks like the anarchists are taking a cue from their would-be coalition partners in the stinking swamp of the liberal-reformist “antiwar movement.” In opposition to the fake lefts and their anarchist “shock troops of reformism” we fight to win youth to the program of international socialist revolution.

* * *

“Anarchism, if it does not live within the four walls of intellectuals’ cafes and editorial offices, but has penetrated more deeply, translates the psychology of despair in the masses and signifies the political punishment for the deceptions of democracy and the treachery of opportunism,” wrote Leon Trotsky, co-leader with Lenin of the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution (“The Strangled Revolution,” February 1931, in *Leon Trotsky on China* [1976]). Today, anarchism is again fashionable among young radicals. As befits a trendy college town, Boston has more than its share of such tendencies—everything from pompous old windbags like Noam Chomsky, whose “anarchist” veneer is an excuse for vicious anti-Communism and egotistic lust to be a foreign policy adviser to the U.S. and its creature the UN, to far more radical-sounding “revolutionary anarchists” like the Barricada Collective, which claims to reject reformism in all its forms.

The counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union a decade ago and the imperialist rulers’ triumphalist, lying “death of communism” propaganda has obviously had its stupefying effect on left consciousness. It was the Russian Revolution which swept aside anarchism as a serious contender for political allegiance among militants, winning over the best



WV Photo

San Francisco: October 20 antiwar protest. Marxists call to defend Afghanistan from imperialist attack through class struggle at home; anarchists of Barricada refuse to defend Afghanistan, equating victims with their oppressors.

syndicalists and anarchists of the time to the red banner of international Communism, by showing in the real world how a revolutionary vanguard party of the working class could seize and hold power, abolishing exploitation and establishing its own class dictatorship over the bourgeoisie. Today, those lessons must be relearned if radicals are to find the road from militant protest to working-class power.

Boston’s Barricada Collective has done us the favor of publishing a journal presenting a very left-sounding anarchist worldview. For example, they write: “unlike many other anarchists today, we have no interest whatsoever in reformism.... An ‘anti-globalization movement’ does not appeal to us. We are not interested in trying to find the (non-existent) human face of capitalism.” They write that they want “a movement...satisfying itself with nothing less than the total destruction of capital and the state” (“Lessons of Genoa,” *Barricada* No. 8, September 2001). However, in concrete struggles of the working class and oppressed, the question of which side of the barricades Barricada finds itself on is not so clear-cut, as we will see.

Defend Afghanistan Against U.S. Imperialist Attack!

A key question today for revolutionaries is the current U.S. war against Afghanistan. We Marxists say, “For class struggle against U.S. capitalist rulers—Defend Afghanistan against imperialist attack!” In contrast, Barricada and other anarchists refuse to take sides. In Boston protests against what Barricada calls “America’s New War,” Boston Anarchists Against Militarism (BAAM, in which Barricada is active) carried banners reading, “Neither State Terrorism nor Relig-

ious Terrorism: Against Bush and Bin Laden” and “No War Between Nations, No Peace Between Classes!” While superficially this may seem rather radical, it’s an excuse for neutralism, a confession of impotence in the face of imperialist onslaught, and as a political program is fully compatible with mainstream liberalism.

We say it is the simple duty of revolutionists to stand in military defense of small countries like Afghanistan against the most deadly imperialist power on the face of the planet, not to equate the already devastated victims with their oppressors. We would welcome a defeat of U.S. imperialism as a victory for the oppressed of the world, while giving no political support to the reactionary, women-hating Taliban murderers.

Barricada states: “We are opposed to nationalism and other artificial divisions of the working class. However, we are also anti-imperialists and as such support oppressed peoples in their struggles of national liberation providing that they

Italian riot police attack Genoa protester, July 2001. Police attacks in Genoa illustrated repressive force of capitalist state; rejecting vanguard party, anarchists have no program to smash capitalist state.



AFP

maintain a revolutionary leftist character” (“Barricada Collective Statement,” *Barricada* No. 9, October 2001). This statement collapses the difference between military defense of a people from imperialist subjugation and political defense of a particular regime. What this means on the ground is that they will politically support the nationalist leaders of some movements and abandon the rest to military repression by the imperialists. Marxists on the other hand understand the difference between military and political support, for instance, we have consistently defended the anarchists against state terror from Gothenburg to Genoa, but anyone reading this leaflet can tell we don’t share their politics.

Spartacists Said: Hail Red Army in Afghanistan!

Showing their contempt for the gains made by the working people of the world, Barricada explains the resurgence of anarchism in the misery brought by the counterrevolution in the Soviet Union. “We as anarchists are being presented, thanks to the current global situation, the decay of the welfare state, and the bankruptcy of authoritarian and statist alternatives to capitalism, with yet another opportunity to present people with the possibility of a different world,” they write (“Lessons of Genoa,” *Barricada* No. 8, September 2001).

Far from a “statist alternative to capitalism,” the Russian Revolution was the first, and to date only, successful workers revolution in history. By taking Russia out of World War I and expropriating the Russian capitalists as a class, it was also the greatest anti-imperialist action ever undertaken (a point that could be learned by many of today’s “anti-globalization” protesters!). The Russian Revolution not only meant the liberation of the myriad of oppressed peoples in the former tsarist empire, but also the birth and growth of a genuine and revolutionary communist movement in the “third world.” In China and elsewhere, not only the advanced workers but also anti-colonialist students, emancipated



VAAP

December 1917
Russian workers demonstration banner includes call: "Long Live Soviet Power Which Has Paved the Way for Peace Among Nations." Bolsheviks led workers to power in greatest victory for proletariat ever.

Barcelona, July 1936 (right): During Spanish Civil War, anarchists joined coalition government with bourgeoisie, betraying revolutionary workers.



AK Press

women and leftist intellectuals saw for the first time a way forward from the hopeless perspective of looking to the backward, imperialist-dependent colonial bourgeoisies as a force for liberation.

Among those who rallied to Bolshevism were many of the best left-wing anarchists of the time. Although hostile to this trend, Barricada still has to admit it. For instance, in an article on early Argentine anarchism they write, "Sadly, with the rise of Lenin and his authoritarian brand of communism in Russia, so called anarcho-bolshevik groups formed all around Argentina, advocating for the dictatorship of the proletariat and justifying the state as a vehicle to an anarchist society" ("Anarchism in Early 20th Century Argentina," *Barricada* No. 9, October 2001).

Even as degenerated as the Soviet workers state became under the misrule of Stalin and his heirs, it continued to obsess the imperialist powers because it ripped whole swaths of the globe from their hands. Not least of these were the various deformed workers states that arose in this period and continue to exist—China, North Korea, Vietnam and Cuba—states whose very existence has become increasingly threatened after the fall of Soviet power in Russia, whom many, in particular Cuba, were dependent on for aid. The Soviet Union also gave some modicum of maneuverability to nationalists in the "third world," who were able to jockey for position between the world's two "superpowers."

In contrast, the imperialist ruling class cements its rule through supporting the most reactionary tinpot dictators and religious fanatics the world over. The U.S. armed and funded the *mujahedin* during their dirty proxy war against the USSR in the late seventies and eighties. The best hope Afghanistan had at modernization (especially for its horribly oppressed women) was the Soviet Red Army intervention in 1979. The USSR gave women not only the ability to read and write, but weapons and training in order to defend themselves. So we uniquely said: "Hail Red Army in Afghanistan!" and "Extend Social Gains of October Revolution to Afghan Peoples!" In contrast, the social-democratic reformists around the world and their left tails, like the ISO, SWP, etc., joined in the imperialist crusade against the USSR.

By 1988 in Afghanistan 15,000 women served in the armed forces. Forty percent of doctors and 60 percent of teachers at the University of Kabul were women, and 440,000 female students were enrolled in educational institutions. That's all shattered today. When in 1989 the Stalinist bureaucracy betrayed the Afghan peoples by pulling the Red Army out, we offered to raise an international brigade to fight to the death against the U.S.-backed *mujahedin* scum. Most anarchists at the time in practice abandoned Afghan women to the mercies of the U.S.'s murderous "freedom fighters" in the name of fighting "Soviet imperialism." Why? Because anarchists share the anti-Communist hostility of the bourgeoisie to these "authoritarian" states. If your

only criteria are "authority" and "democracy" as abstract phrases floating above social reality, you end up in the camp of the "democratic" imperialist ruling class. As opposed to this "radical democratic idealism," Marxists, as materialists, understand that class struggle is the motor force of history.

We Trotskyists unconditionally militarily defended the Soviet Union, as we continue to defend the remaining deformed workers states of China, Cuba, North Korea and Vietnam against imperialist attack and internal counterrevolution, because of the gains made by these states in overthrowing capitalism and establishing collective property forms. We call for the overthrow of the venal and brutal Stalinist bureaucracies through proletarian political revolution, because Stalinism, in pursuit of the illusion of peaceful co-existence with imperialism, undermines the gains of those social revolutions. Stalinist bureaucracies must be replaced by workers political rule in order to defend these revolutions and extend them throughout the world.

The "Anti-War Movement": Liberal Reformism or Class Struggle?

Noting the opportunism of much of the so-called "left" in the face of renewed patriotic frenzy and domestic repression, Barricada asks in "Cowering in the Wake" (*Barricada* No. 9, October 2001): "should we as anarchists cut off our links to groups that display these attitudes?... A possible answer might be that, we should not for the moment, as an objective observation of North American anarchism would most likely reveal a movement still too weak to stand on it's [sic] own.... unsettling attitudes of others aside, how do we, as anarchists react in a positive and constructive manner to this new situation?"

The first point here is that, independently of anarchists' attitude, the reformists have already given their answer. From attempts to harass the anarchist contingent at the Boston September 20 march to the Workers World/ANSWER organizers' attempts to play off the police provocation against anarchists in Washington on September 29 as an attempt by anarchists to join "their" march, the reformists and their liberal masters will alternately attempt to co-opt radicals as a "left" cover for their rotten politics and then offer them as cannon fodder to the capitalist state and disown them. The latter point was most brutally brought home in the blood-drenched streets of Genoa.

The real question here is what attitude should would-be revolutionaries take toward them, and this is not an organizational question, but a political one. Immediately after Genoa, Barricada wrote: "we have no interest whatsoever in reformism," noting, correctly, that "we do not believe...that a collection of groups, organizations, parties, and whatnot, whose only common bond is the opposition to a certain facet of capitalism... qualifies as a 'movement'" ("Lessons of Genoa"). Fine, but now BAAM, Barricada, et al. find themselves again immersed in precisely

such a "movement." Despite Barricada's admission of the "unpleasantness of a lot of the attitudes of the WWP (and a fair amount of the politics as well)" ("Thousands Demonstrate Against Capitalism and War in Washington, D.C.," *Barricada* No. 9, October 2001), it ends up acting as a left cover for reformism, praising the WWP demo for its "extensive outreach work" and for creating "the basis for a strong and combative anti-war movement." But the only real "anti-war" movement is one that aims at overthrowing capitalism, the basis for wars in the imperialist epoch. Barricada shares the reformists' belief that the capitalist state can be pressured to end the war, if only enough people fill the streets. They simply want these to be more "militant" demonstrations.

So it's no accident that anarchists are being sucked into the orbit of the liberal-reformist "anti-war movement." Barricada's latest issue ("Opposition to 'America's New War' Grows in Boston," *Barricada* No. 10, November 2001) approvingly notes that "the groundwork is certainly present for a strong anti-war movement in Boston. It is now simply a matter of learning to accept some of the differences and working together." Meanwhile, on the very same page, Barricada advertises an "Anti-War Teach In" at MIT presenting "Anarchist and Radical Perspectives" on the war which snarlingly concludes with "Absolutely no party groups." So, anarchists, while you project "working together" with reformists in a red-white-and-blue "antiwar" movement, you suggest that you're going to practice the same political censorship against communists that they do?

The job of revolutionists is to politically struggle against these reformist tendencies by exposing their rotten class-collaborationism and counterposing a strategy of class struggle. A revolutionary movement is not built by seizing on the existing consciousness of the class in times of crises, it is built by exploding this consciousness and instilling revolu-

tionary consciousness, the consciousness of the working class as a class for itself with its own interests and power diametrically opposed to that of the ruling capitalist class. This means organizing the working class independently of the capitalist class. Does this sound like a vanguardist approach? It should! This is the essence of the vanguard party, to bring consciousness to the working class.

Class Struggle in the U.S.: The Fight for Black Liberation and Socialist Revolution

Barricada is for "class war," yet its concept of this reduces itself to individualistic protest, not a struggle for power: all that's offered is "direct action, workplace sabotage, property damage, mass confrontation, and civil disobedience" ("Barricada Collective Statement"). "When 'social turbulence' becomes strong enough to topple the status quo, revolutions occur" ("Cowering in the Wake"). Revolutions do not just occur; they must be made by a working class conscious of its historic mission of liberating all of humanity. Barricada writes in "Lessons of Genoa" that they want to create "anarchist alternatives" to "parties, NGOs, and unions" in order to "render the NGO/party/boss union apparatus irrelevant."

But trade unions are not "irrelevant," they are in fact the first line of working-class defense against capitalist exploitation. Anarchist dismissal of unions as "irrelevant" essentially leaves the most organized sector of the proletariat in the hands of the pro-capitalist trade-union bureaucrats. The main obstacle to revolutionary consciousness in the U.S. is the AFL-CIO bureaucracy which ties workers to their enemies in the capitalist Democratic Party. The Barricada Collective "opposes electoral politics, [and] the party system" but does nothing to concretely overcome this because it refuses to engage in political battle with the current misleaders of the working class.

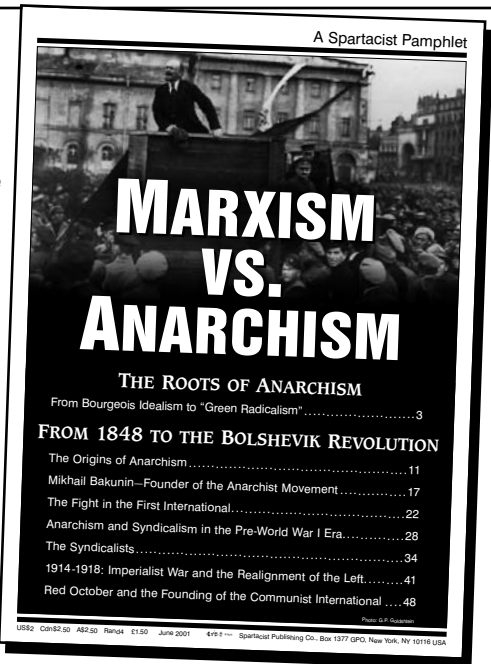
No one seeking to be a revolutionary
continued on page 11

This pamphlet presents a comprehensive historical analysis of the origins of anarchism and the views of its leading figures through the 1871 Paris Commune and the split in the First International. Later articles discuss the pre-World War I period and the impact of the war, the 1917 October Revolution and the founding of the Communist International on the anarchist and syndicalist movements.

The first article addresses radical youth today who, in an ideological climate conditioned by the so-called "death of communism," are drawn to all variants of anarchism, Green radicalism and left liberalism. The pamphlet is dedicated to the fight to win a new generation to revolutionary Marxism, the communism which animated Lenin and Trotsky's Bolshevik Party.

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Women...

(continued from page 5)

somewhere between tribalism and feudalism, there was no internal social base for the relatively minimal reforms pursued by the PDPA, much less for proletarian revolution. Conditions were much the same in Soviet Central Asia at the time of the 1917 Russian Revolution. That area, like Afghanistan, was so economically underdeveloped that it did not have a working class capable of serving as the motor force for social change. The revolution was brought to Central Asia by the revolutionary proletariat in the form of the Red Army, supported by those forces locally who embraced the liberating ideals of the Russian Revolution—notably women who rejected the veil.

Like the U.S. did in Afghanistan 60 years later, Britain, the dominant imperialist force in the region in the 1920s, armed and funded reactionary revolts led by the mullahs, who were enraged above all by the threat of equal rights for women. In a sense, the tragedy of Afghanistan is that when the Russian Revolution arrived in Central Asia, the Soviet Red Army was obliged, because of the British presence in colonial India (including what is currently Pakistan), to stop at the border of Afghanistan.

The Russian Revolution brought to Central Asia an immense leap in social progress unimaginable in any backward country under capitalism. Despite the inequalities and bureaucratic oppression that Soviet citizens suffered under Stalinist rule, the status of women in Soviet Central Asia was not only higher than in any Islamic bourgeois country, let alone Afghanistan, but in some areas (e.g., representation in government) compared favorably with advanced bourgeois countries.

A couple of comrades who visited Soviet Central Asia in the late 1980s observed the spectacular gains that had been achieved, despite the corruption and cynicism of the Stalinist regime then in the process of disintegration. In more than a week of travel throughout Uzbekistan, they did not see a single veil—to say nothing of the dreadful *burqa*, the stifling head-to-toe shroud that imprisons Afghan women. They attended a party at which young women and men were dancing freely to rock ’n’ roll—including mixed couples of Uzbeks, Tajiks and Russians. Health care was free and readily available, including for women. There were no visible extremes of poverty; most homes had a television, many had a car. The population was well-educated, with many people speaking at least one European language (in addition to Uzbek and Russian). Even elderly women dressed in brightly colored dresses and spoke in a relaxed fashion with strangers. Asked

about the war in Afghanistan, one woman declared: “We will fight to the death before we will put on the veil again.”

The CIA’s Afghan Connection

Now the Soviet Union of 1979 was not at all the dynamic workers state of the late ’teens and early ’20s. In the period immediately following the October Revolution, no one in the Bolshevik Party—not even Stalin—thought that the Soviet Union,



Paris Match

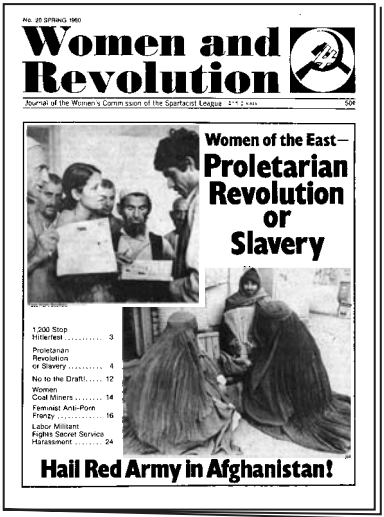
Troops from Soviet Central Asia made up large component of Red Army in Afghanistan. We called to extend social gains of October Revolution to Afghan peoples.

a backward country with a small working class, could stand on its own without the spread of socialist revolution to the more advanced capitalist countries. A huge revolutionary wave swept Europe after the Russian Revolution. But because the revolutions in other countries were defeated—and that’s a subject for a whole other forum—the young workers state was isolated, encircled by hostile capitalist nations. By the end of the Civil War of 1919-1921 against a range of counterrevolutionary and imperialist armies, Soviet Russia was impoverished, its working class decimated and exhausted.

These factors opened the door for a conservative bureaucratic layer within the Bolshevik Party, of which Stalin came to be the leader, to usurp political power from the working class in 1923-24. As a result of that political counterrevolution, the Soviet Union became a degenerated workers state, with a foreign policy motivated by the nationalist dogma of “building socialism in one country,” which meant seeking illusory “peaceful coexis-

tence” with imperialism. Leon Trotsky fought against this political counterrevolution, and that’s our heritage. Until the day he was assassinated by Stalin’s agent in 1940, Trotsky fiercely fought to defend the Soviet Union against capitalist attack and internal counterrevolution and for a political revolution to oust the bureaucracy and return the Soviet Union to the road of Bolshevik internationalism.

So the conservative Kremlin bureauc-



racy did not pour troops into Afghanistan in 1979 with the intention of carrying out a revolution, as the Bolsheviks had done in Central Asia in the 1920s. Rightly worried about the threat of a hostile Islamic fundamentalist government taking power, the bureaucracy sought simply to secure its unstable Afghan client state. Nevertheless, we recognized that an extended Soviet occupation of Afghanistan would open up the possibility of transforming that country along the lines of Soviet Central Asia. The threat of a CIA-backed Islamic takeover on the USSR’s southern flank posed pointblank the need for unconditional military defense of the USSR.

Lashing out against so-called “Soviet expansionism,” Democratic Party president and born-again Christian Jimmy Carter launched Cold War II against the Soviet Union over Afghanistan. Like the first Cold War beginning in the late 1940s, this anti-Soviet war drive was accompanied by a massive increase in military spending, in this case a five-year, trillion-dollar program. At the same time, under first Carter and then Reagan, billions of dollars began flowing to the Islamic fundamentalists in Afghanistan in the biggest covert operation in the CIA’s history. From 1980 to 1990, the CIA’s “black budget” quadrupled, from an estimated \$9 billion to \$36 billion. Some of this was used to fund a war of terror by the *contra* mercenaries against the left-nationalist Sandinista government in Nicaragua. But most went to an array of *mujahedin* groups based in Peshawar, Pakistan and to that country’s ISI secret service. By the mid-’80s, the *mujahedin* were getting 65,000 tons of war matériel annually.

In 1986, Congress approved a three-pronged plan by CIA director William Casey to step up the U.S. proxy war in Afghanistan. Initially, the Afghan reactionaries were supplied only with Soviet and Chinese-made weapons purchased from Egypt, China, Israel and South Africa, so that the U.S. could “plausibly deny” a direct role in the war. But now the CIA began delivering Stinger surface-to-air missiles, along with American military trainers. Secondly, the CIA, the ISI and Britain’s MI-6 plotted the launching of guerrilla attacks into the Soviet Union

itself, targeting the Central Asian republics of Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, which supplied many of the Soviet troops for duty in Afghanistan.

As we detailed in our article “The Afghan Connection” (WV No. 761, 6 July), the CIA also joined in the campaign initiated by the ISI to recruit zealots from throughout the Muslim world to join the *mujahedin*. According to the CIA’s own estimates, as many as 70,000 Islamic fundamentalists from more than 50 countries—the so-called “Arab Afghans”—were trained at the “*jihad* universities,” or *madrassas*, which still flourish in Peshawar and elsewhere. Among those who flocked to Peshawar to enlist in the U.S.-sponsored “holy war” against Communism was Saudi millionaire Osama bin Laden. Another of Washington’s firm friends was Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, who got his start as a “holy warrior” by throwing acid at unveiled women university students in Kabul.

So there was no outcry from Washington against “Islamic terror” when *mujahedin* in Khost used a U.S. Stinger in March 1987 to shoot down a civilian airliner taking Afghan children to study in the USSR, killing all 52 aboard. And there wasn’t a peep of criticism from the American government when the Taliban forced thousands of girls to leave school after capturing Herat in 1995, or when it seized Kabul a year later and subjected women to the virtual house arrest of *pardah* (seclusion). On the contrary, the Assistant Secretary of State for South Asia at the time stated that “it is not in the interests of Afghanistan or any of us here that the Taliban be isolated.” Besides, the U.S. oil company Unocal was seriously considering building a pipeline through Afghanistan to exploit the rich natural gas and oil fields being opened up in post-Soviet Central Asia.

For Workers Revolution to Sweep Away Imperialism!

The U.S.-backed war of terror against the Red Army in Afghanistan forced five million people to flee the country, devastated what economy and infrastructure had been built up during the Soviet presence and led to the re-enslavement of Afghan women. From the Algerian Armed Islamic Group to the Islamic Jihad in Egypt, the “Arab Afghans” spawned and nurtured by the anti-Soviet war went on to foment reactionary movements elsewhere, capitalizing on popular hatred for brutal nationalist regimes and the imperialist-dictated austerity measures they impose.

As is usual with Washington, it was only once such Islamic reactionaries had served their purpose that they were denounced as terrorists. This shift in U.S. policy was signaled in late 1997 when Madeleine Albright cynically chastised the Afghan rulers for their treatment of women. Also in this period, the Taliban refused to hand over Osama bin Laden, and the economics of the Unocal deal no longer added up. By this time as well, the plight of Afghan women under Taliban rule had become something of a cause among American liberals and feminists.

A group that has been getting a lot of press is the Revolutionary Association of the Women of Afghanistan (RAWA). Their Web site proclaims that “if you are freedom-loving and anti-fundamentalist,” you belong with RAWA. RAWA members do sometimes carry out courageous actions in Afghanistan and Pakistan, exposing the atrocities of the Taliban and supporting victimized women. And they issued a statement against the U.S. bombing of Afghanistan, although they think that there exists some mythical “Afghan nation” that is going to rise up and throw out the Taliban. But RAWA also brags about how *they fought on the side of the mujahedin* against the Soviet troops, despite its current denunciation of its erstwhile allies as fundamentalists. RAWA’s idea of “freedom” is the same as that of the CIA’s Radio Free Europe: bring back King Zahir Shah and his “tribal council.”

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Dock Workers...

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port truckers. But the Teamsters bureaucracy’s chauvinist opposition to allowing Mexican truckers on U.S. roads is counterposed to the internationalist working-class solidarity needed to win union rights for the heavily Latino port truckers. The ILWU tops are themselves spewing this chauvinist poison, with Spinosa complaining in his September column that performing “security checks” on port truckers “would be a logistical nightmare” made worse by “NAFTA, with its provisions to allow truckers from Canada and Mexico to drive across the borders directly to our ports.” Spinosa vituperates, “Why are hard-working, productive longshore workers being targeted for extensive security clearances while unknown truck drivers are being allowed free access to our work environment?”

Such chauvinism plays right into the capitalists’ divide-and-rule schemes aimed at pitting white against black and American-born against foreign-born workers. This undermines union power and strikes back against all the oppressed. Black support was instrumental in pushing through California’s anti-immigrant Proposition 187 in 1994; that measure paved the way for the passage of Prop. 209 abolishing affirmative action in the state. Many black people perceive that light-skinned immigrants can come to this country and advance up the ladder in a way barred to the black masses. At the same time, many immigrants are taught to believe that the desperate conditions faced by much of the black population are “their own fault.” Such backward prejudices are promoted by black and Latino Democratic Party “ethnic politics.”

The idea that immigrants, the majority of whom labor in the most demeaning, poorly paid jobs, are to blame for keeping black people at the bottom of American society is reflective of a false consciousness. But it is one born of resentment against the very real color bar in this country which acts as a key prop for obscuring the *class* divide between labor and capital. Labor must be in the forefront of the fight for black freedom and against anti-immigrant bigotry, championing all the exploited and oppressed. As a strategic component of the multiracial proletariat, black workers have the potential power to smash racial oppression and capitalist exploitation. And far from being helpless victims, many immigrant workers have infused the American labor movement with traditions of class struggle in their homelands.

Break with the Democrats—Unchain Labor/Black Power!

As quoted in the *Oakland Post* (4 November), the *Local 10 Longshore Bulletin* noted pointedly that “the politicians are saying—hey, if we can’t get Bin Laden, Longshoremen with criminal records will have to do!” Yet an “Open

Today, the U.S. bourgeoisie cynically declares war on “Islamic terror” in order to impose its will on oppressed peoples around the world. While bin Laden and his ilk are plenty sinister, the most dangerous terrorists on the face of the planet are America’s capitalist rulers. Indeed, mass terror to suppress any semblance of social revolution by the worker and peasant masses is integral to the defense of a system based on the exploitation of the many by the few. The task of revolutionaries is to oppose the bourgeoisie’s “national unity” campaign, to fight for class struggle against the capitalist rulers at home, to organize and build a workers party that fights for a socialist revolution to sweep away the entire system of capitalist imperialism.

Instead, the American reformist left, such as the Workers World Party and the ISO, has thrown itself into “coalition” building, which always means building a base for capitalist forces willing to profess support for peace, racial harmony or

A Victory for Labor

State Drops Vendetta Against Charleston Five

“The Charleston Five are finally free,” said Kenneth Riley, president of International Longshoremen’s Association (ILA) Local 1422. “This is a tremendous victory for the labor movement in South Carolina.” Prosecutors have dropped bogus felony riot charges against five longshoremen, who were under house arrest for a year and a half and faced up to five years in prison for defending their union picket line against a massive police assault. The longshoremen—Kenneth Jefferson, Elijah Ford Jr., Peter Washington Jr., Ricky Simmons and Jason Edgerton—were allowed to plea-bargain “no contest” to reduced misdemeanor charges of “engaging in a riot where a weapon was not used,” which carries no jail time.

The charges stemmed from a waterfront battle on 20 January 2000, when Locals 1422, 1422A and 1771 mobilized to stop the Nordana shipping company’s use of the non-union Winyah Stevedoring outfit to unload one of its ships. The unionists were met by an army of 600 municipal, county and state police, including prison guards, clad in riot gear and backed up with armored vehicles and helicopters. Firing tear gas, shock grenades and pellet bags, the cops waded into the largely

black union picket swinging long wooden clubs (see “Charleston ILA Battles Racist Union-Busting Assault,” WV No. 728, 28 January 2000). Workers defending their rights provoked the ire of South Carolina’s bourgeois establishment, for whom the fight for unions is tantamount to terrorism. This was made clear by state attorney general Charles Condon when he said on TV following the attack on the World Trade Center: “I’m against forcing people to join unions in order to get a job. And so this whole idea of ends justifying the means, as we know these terrorists that killed so many people, that’s exactly their argument.”

At the heart of this case is that hard class struggle backed off a vicious union-busting attack, as Nordana replaced Winyah with a union stevedoring company, returning the jobs to the ILA. The defiant stand of the Charleston ILA inspired broad layers of the working class in “right to work” South Carolina, across the country and internationally. The Charleston *Post and Courier* (9 November) reported, “Bright yellow ‘Free the Charleston 5’ signs, billboards, and bumper stickers popped up across the region and ILA officials raised more than \$400,000 for a legal defense fund from other unions around

the world.” Rallies and meetings have been held throughout the U.S. and in other countries.

The ILA bureaucracy has diminished the real story of what happened on the Charleston waterfront—class struggle against the employers and the capitalists’ armed police thugs—while concentrating on lobbying so-called “friends of labor” in the Democratic Party. Nonetheless, this case was the first nationwide labor defense campaign in this country in decades, starkly illuminating the link between the fight against racial oppression, the cornerstone of American capitalism, and the interests of the entire working class.

Riley stated, “We will build on this victory to bring greater attention to the plight of working men and women in our state,” which had the second-lowest percentage of union workers in the country. However, organizing the racist, “open shop” South will not be achieved by relying on the Democrats or any other capitalist politicians but through waging class struggle. The ultimate defense of the working class is the abolition of the capitalist system of exploitation and racial oppression through proletarian revolution. This requires the leadership of a workers party that champions all the exploited and oppressed.

Letter to Barbara Boxer” (31 October) by the ILWU Longshore Legislative Action Committee buys into the anti-terrorist hysteria and offers up the union ranks to police the docks as finks for the bosses. Declaring that “port security is an important concern in the fight against terrorism,” it goes on to state that “maritime workers can be one of the country’s first lines of defense at ports because they...*can report anything suspicious.*” Meanwhile, the union tops are participating in “security task forces” alongside business and police representatives. The number of security guards in the ports has also increased sharply. These unarmed “watchmen,” who bear the metal stars and military green uniforms typical of sheriffs, serve as adjuncts to the capitalist cops. Yet they are members of the ILWU. The job of these private police is to break strikes, bust up picket lines and spy on union members. They are not part of the working class and have no place in the labor movement. Cops and security guards out of the unions!

Beneath the ILWU tops’ “progressive” image stands the same pro-Democratic Party class collaboration that defines the rest of the labor officialdom. Last month, Local 10 adopted a resolution commend-

other good things. In this country, that means the Democratic Party. At this juncture, such “antiwar” Democrats are few and far between. But this hasn’t changed the outlook of the reformists, who seek to build an “antiwar movement” ready and waiting for any class enemy of the workers who may apply. By pushing pacifism in the face of U.S. imperialism’s war of terror against Afghanistan, the reformists sow illusions that capitalism can be rational, benevolent and peaceful—if only the right politicians were elected to administer that system!

Wars of aggrandizement and plunder are *inherent* to the capitalist system. Burgeoning interimperialist competition over markets, spheres of influence and natural resources—not least oil—will ultimately lead to a new world war and a nuclear holocaust if the proletariat does not first seize power. Thoughtful workers and youth already see that they are being asked to sacrifice in the interests of Bush and Wall Street. But what is lacking is a

ing Oakland Democrat Barbara Lee for her sole vote in Congress against giving Bush unlimited war powers. Despite the lockstep alliance between the Democrats and Bush on the war nationally, it is more acceptable in the Bay Area, a stronghold of Democratic Party liberalism, and in heavily black Alameda County especially, to criticize the bombing of Afghanistan. While Lee simultaneously voted *for* appropriations to fund the U.S. “war against terrorism,” her show of opposition reflected deep distrust of the government particularly among black people, a fault line in “national unity.” At the same time, she and like-minded liberal Democrats strive to seal that breach.

To maintain their image as the “friends” of labor and blacks, the Democrats are obliged to keep around suitable radical-liberal types who can be paraded as showpieces of the ultimate justness of the capitalist order. Lee’s predecessor and mentor, Ron Dellums, played this role in previous decades. Such types serve as an insurance policy for the bourgeoisie. For example, if the U.S. were to find itself bogged down in an Afghan quagmire, Lee would be deemed “prescient” by a wing of the ruling class pushing for a withdrawal in order to cut American imperial-

revolutionary leadership. The Spartacist League and Spartacus Youth Clubs are fighting to win students, youth and workers to build the revolutionary workers

ism’s losses. The black Democrats and “progressive” union tops are positioning themselves to get ahead of and contain the increasing discontents that the capitalists’ war at home and abroad will generate among workers and minorities.

For decades, the AFL-CIO leadership has tied workers to their class enemy through support to the Democrats, part of an all-sided program of collaboration with the bosses that has crippled the ability of the unions to defend themselves. The ILWU was not created and built up as the core of union power on the West Coast through lobbying the capitalist Democratic Party for occasional, equivocal favors, but through hard class battle, including the 1934 San Francisco general strike. As a Spartacist League spokesman said at a recent Charleston Five defense meeting at the ILWU Local 10 hall:

“We believe it is necessary to wage a political struggle within the unions to forge a revolutionary workers party that will fight for black freedom, for immigrant rights and for our class brothers and sisters abroad against U.S. imperialism. Such a party will lead the fight to get rid of the capitalist order and create a workers government and a new society without exploitation. This is the only road to end racism and war forever. Those who labor must rule!”■

party under whose leadership the working class will sweep this system of capitalist exploitation and imperialist plunder into the dustbin of history. Join us!■

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Afghanistan...

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Matching the speed of their current military advances is the rapidity with which this makeshift “alliance” is splintering into mutually hostile tribal armies and regional warlords who have little love for each other and even less for foreign troops. Meanwhile, former Taliban commanders are now proclaiming their hatred for the “terrorist” Taliban and reverted to being simply Pashtun tribal leaders. Mazar-i-Sharif is the fiefdom of Abdul Rashid Dostum, an ethnic Uzbek. Logar Province has reportedly been claimed by the Pashtun Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, a fanatical woman-hater who got most of the U.S. largesse doled out to the *mujahedin* in the 1980s and has now returned from exile in Iran. Herat is in the hands of Tajik warlord Ismael Khan, who has warned the British to pull out of Bagram and declares, “People are very sensitive about the presence of foreigners in Afghanistan. We don’t need them.” Announcing that Britain may not deploy the 6,000 troops it was planning to send in after all, Blair government spokesman Geoff Hoon said of the looming chaos in Afghanistan, “It sounds pretty dangerous.”

As correspondent Robert Fisk noted in the London *Independent* (19 November), “Ethnic groups and tribes and villagers don’t take orders from foreigners. They do deals.” The imperialists think they can cobble together a “national” government in Kabul by putting enough *baksheesh* in the pockets of local khans and tribal chiefs. But Afghanistan is not a nation; it is a region of several nationalities and of little coherent economy. There is little likelihood of stability there in any case.

For Permanent Revolution in Central Asia!

Indeed, the imperialist military presence will only sow further instability throughout this volatile region. The borders separating Afghanistan from its neighbors, drawn by the imperialists in the 19th century to create a buffer state between British India (which included Pakistan) and tsarist Russia, also carved up the peoples of the region. Afghanistan has barely half as many Pashtuns and Tajiks as Pakistan and Tajikistan, respectively, and only a small percentage of the number of Uzbeks living in neighboring Uzbekistan.

Afghanistan’s bloody tribal and ethnic

conflicts have always spilled over into the surrounding region. As Tim Judah noted in an article in the *New York Review of Books* (15 November):

“Iran has helped the Hazaras. Tajikistan and Uzbekistan have helped the Tajiks and Uzbeks, and still do. And of course Pakistan wants to support the Pashtuns. Russia too has its interests; its chief concern had been to stop the spread of Islamic fundamentalism. Iran has made it clear it wants a weak and divided Afghanistan which could not threaten it. Pakistan has wanted Afghanistan to have a strong central government, dominated by Pakistan of course, which would then ensure open trade routes to Central Asia and allow the building of valuable gas and oil pipelines across Afghanistan and then into Pakistan.”

At the same time, it is the proletariat of countries like Pakistan and Iran that today holds the key to the social liberation of the peoples of Afghanistan, which has no working class and hence no possibility of social revolution from within. Pakistan, in contrast, has a proletariat numbering nearly ten million in manufacturing, transport and other industries, and millions more agricultural laborers. Iran, likewise, has a sizable proletariat that was, until the 1979 victory of the Ayatollah Khomeini’s “Islamic Revolution,” historically pro-Communist. The despotic bourgeoisies that rule these countries are beholden to the imperialist exploiters, whose dictates they enforce. To achieve social and national justice requires the seizure of power by the proletariat, standing at the head of all the oppressed and led by internationalist revolutionary vanguard parties. As Leon Trotsky stressed in

advancing the perspective of permanent revolution, only proletarian revolution can break the imperialist yoke over such countries and, with the spread of workers rule to the advanced capitalist countries, end imperialism forever.

For Workers Revolution to Sweep Away Imperialist Rule!

In practice rejecting the struggle to render the proletariat in either the backward or advanced capitalist countries conscious of the need for socialist revolution, the centrist British Workers Power group and its League for a Revolutionary Communist International, in a 9 October statement on the war, instead concocted fantasies of “united action of all Afghan forces—including Islamist forces—to repel the imperialist assault.” Although refraining in print from explicitly echoing Workers Power’s deranged proposal for “anti-imperialist” unity of the Taliban and the myriad U.S.-backed rival warlords who are now trying to slit each other’s throats, the Internationalist Group (IG) has also conjured up the spectre of a U.S. military defeat in Afghanistan, pointing to the example of the defeat of French imperialism in its eight-year-long colonial war in Algeria (Internet posting reprinted in *Internationalist*, Fall 2001). But what does this have to do with a situation in which the U.S. is carrying out a military adventure largely from the air against tribal forces in one of the world’s most backward countries?

In addressing the IG’s fevered denunciations of our supposed “opposition to

calling for the defeat of ‘their own’ bourgeoisie in an imperialist war,” we wrote: “The call for a U.S. military defeat is, at this time, illusory and the purest hot air and ‘revolutionary’ phrasemongering—and one which derives from forsaking the mobilization of the U.S. proletariat with the aim of the conquest of state power” (“No to Bosses’ ‘National Unity’! For Class Struggle at Home!”), WV No. 768, 9 November). Pandering to “Third World” nationalists and all manner of alien class forces, the IG elevates military struggle against imperialism (including by former creatures of U.S. imperialism like the Afghan Islamic fundamentalists) over and above the political struggle to mobilize the proletariat to smash imperialist rule from within.

The “revolutionary” rhetoric spewed by such centrists is strictly for cyberspace. On the ground, the Australian Workers Power marched in an October 13 Melbourne protest with a placard pleading, “No to Ground Troops—Yes to Aid.” Indeed, Washington is currently playing up its “humanitarian” food aid to Afghanistan as a weapon to win “hearts and minds.” It was in the guise of distributing food to famine-stricken Somalia that the U.S. launched its bloody neocolonial adventure there in 1992. In pleading to the imperialist butchers who have presided over the starvation of over one and a half million Iraqis through the UN blockade, Workers Power demonstrates that far from fighting for the defeat of imperialism, it has a touching faith in the imperialist rulers to act in the “humanitarian” interests of the oppressed.

We Trotskyists of the International Communist League recognize that every military defeat for imperialism weakens the class enemy; correspondingly, we warn that a victory for U.S. imperialism will mean even more intense racist oppression, union-busting and all-sided reaction at home. The social power to sweep away the imperialist system that breeds war and misery resides in the multiracial proletariat, which must be broken from the misleaders who tie it to the capitalist exploiters. That is why we have emphasized the political struggle to break the workers from the jingoist “national unity” promoted by the bosses and their labor lieutenants in the trade-union bureaucracy. Every national section of the ICL has raised the call: “For class struggle against capitalist rulers at home! Defend Afghanistan against imperialist attack!”

Some elemental labor struggles against the war have broken out, such as the one-day protest strike called by the COBAS unions in Italy earlier this month. Now Japanese dock workers at Sasebo Port in Nagasaki are refusing to load military goods onto Japanese warships as a protest against resurgent militarism. And in the U.S., there are some fissures in the front of “national unity,” as the military adventure in Afghanistan is brought home in escalating attacks on the livelihoods of the working class and a domestic “war on terror” targeting immigrants, black people and labor. The crystallization of new “anti-terror” laws by the right-wing Bush administration, marking a sharp diminution in civil liberties, is aimed at regimenting and intimidating the population as millions more face unemployment, misery and hunger.

Unlike the “revolutionary” phrasemongers of the IG, we fight to awaken class combativity in the proletariat, to break the chains forged by the labor bureaucracy that currently shackle the workers to the parties of the class enemy, particularly the Democrats. Our task in the bastion of world imperialism is the construction of the multiracial revolutionary workers party that can, through education and in the course of class struggle, infuse the working class with the consciousness that it has the social power and historic interest to shatter the rule of American imperialism, expropriate the bourgeoisie as a class and establish proletarian rule as the first step toward the creation of an egalitarian socialist society.■



Soviet...

(continued from page 3)

warships were positioned in the Persian Gulf in the fall of 1979 and reports appeared of preparations for a possible American invasion of Ayatollah Khomeini’s Iran. In his 1995 book *The Tragedy and Valor of Afghanistan*, Russian general Alexander Lyakhovsky describes some of the concerns expressed at a Moscow leadership meeting in early December 1979 that finally convinced the Stalinist bureaucracy of the need to intervene in Afghanistan. Among these were U.S. plans “for creating a ‘new Great Ottoman Empire,’ which would have included the Southern republics of the USSR”; “the absence of a reliable air defense system in the South, so that in the case of stationing of the American missiles of the ‘Pershing’ type in Afghanistan, they would threaten many vital Soviet objects”; and the possible “establishment of opposition regimes in the Northern areas of Afghanistan and annexation of that region by Pakistan.”

The Soviet military intervention cut against the grain of the nationalist Stalinist dogma of “socialism in one country.” The prolonged occupation of Afghanistan by Soviet forces opened up the possibility of social revolution through the integration of that country into the Soviet system, which would have represented a tremendous gain for the Afghan people. Moreover, a Soviet military victory there

could have forestalled capitalist counter-revolution in the USSR itself, undermining the Stalinist bureaucracy’s program of “peaceful coexistence” with imperialism and pushing forward the struggle for proletarian political revolution.

Preoccupied above all with its vain pursuit of appeasing U.S. imperialism, in the late 1980s the Kremlin bureaucracy under Mikhail Gorbachev decided to pull out of Afghanistan even as a military victory over the *mujahedin* was within reach. This betrayal of Afghan women and leftists ultimately set the stage for the seizure of power by the Islamic fundamentalists in Afghanistan and for capitalist counterrevolution in East Europe and the USSR itself. In his 1998 interview, Brzezinski crowed, “What is most important to the history of the world? The Taliban or the collapse of the Soviet empire? Some stirred-up Moslems or the liberation of Central Europe and the end of the cold war?”

A gamut of fake Marxists marched in lockstep behind Brzezinski & Co. at the time of the Soviet intervention. The International Socialist Organization, Progressive Labor Party and the Revolutionary Communist Party tried to justify their capitulation to imperialist anti-Communism by claiming that the Soviet degenerated workers state was itself imperialist (or “social-imperialist”). Can you imagine an imperialist ruler asking the sort of question Kosygin posed to Taraki in 1979: “Do you have support among the workers, city dwellers, the

petty bourgeoisie, and the white collar workers in Herat?” Or making the sort of statement Soviet Politburo member Yuri Andropov did in opposing Soviet military intervention:

“It’s completely clear to us that Afghanistan is not ready at this time to resolve all of the issues it faces through socialism. The economy is backward, the Islamic religion predominates, and nearly all of the rural population is illiterate. We know Lenin’s teaching about a revolutionary situation. Whatever situation we are talking about in Afghanistan, it is not that type of situation.”

What comes through clearly in the recently published Soviet documents is the class nature of the Soviet Union as a workers state, albeit bureaucratically degenerated. The Stalinist bureaucracy was a contradictory caste whose whole outlook subordinated the interests of the international proletariat to the defense of its own privileged position as a parasitic layer resting on the collectivized economy. We fought to defend and extend the gains of the October Revolution, stressing that to carry out what many in the Soviet Union rightly saw as their internationalist duty in Afghanistan required a political revolution to oust the Stalinist bureaucracy and return the Soviet Union to the road of Lenin and Trotsky. As opposed to the reformists and centrists who lined up behind the CIA’s reactionary “freedom fighters” in Afghanistan, we fight for new October Revolutions to liberate the working people and oppressed masses of the world.■

Barricada...

(continued from page 7)

in the United States can succeed without understanding the strategic nature of the fight for black liberation, about which Barricada has basically nothing to say. Ever since the defeat of Reconstruction in the 1870s, U.S. capitalism has been based on the special oppression of black people, who today form a race-color caste, economically integrated into strategic sectors of the working class but socially segregated at the bottom of American capitalist society. This racist oppression of the black population is a foundation stone of capitalist exploitation, as the rulers have long played the race card to obscure the class divide between labor and capital. We agree with Marx that “labor cannot emancipate itself in the white skin where in the black it is branded.” We call to finish the task of the Civil War through putting the working class in power: black liberation through socialist revolution. If labor is to free itself from the chains of capitalist exploitation, it must champion black freedom.

The capitalist rulers also seek to pit all “native” workers against their desperate immigrant brothers and sisters—we fight for full citizenship rights for all immigrants as a basic democratic demand. Especially in the current climate, it is the duty of proletarian revolutionaries to oppose anti-immigrant repression. Many immigrant workers bring with them the class-struggle traditions of their homelands. Rather than being helpless victims, black and immigrant workers

will be central leaders of the revolutionary fight for the emancipation of the working class as a whole and all humanity.

From Protest to Power

In “Lessons of Genoa,” Barricada states of other “left” groups: “All others, being in authoritarianism and/or reformism are bound to sooner or later betray us, either due to pure ideological incompatibility or for political gain.” By dismissing all parties as “authoritarian,” they miss the key difference between Stalinists and reformists of all stripes on the one side and revolutionary Trotskyism on the other—which is implacable hostility to capitalist class rule. We of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist) have never flinched from our duty to defend all leftists against state terror—from the Weathermen of the 1960s/1970s to Black Bloc activists today. In the immediate aftermath of the brutal police killing of Carlo Giuliani, the ICL issued an urgent call for “workers protest strikes in Italy and beyond against the bloody state repression,” in contrast to reformist and centrist “left” groups who sold their souls to the rotten Social Democratic-run capitalist governments now ruling most of Europe and joined the capitalist state’s vicious, deadly vendetta against the Black Bloc anarchists. We defended the Black Bloc because we understand that all such attacks are aimed at stifling any and all extra-parliamentary dissent and struggles on behalf of the oppressed.

Again in the “Lessons of Genoa,” Barricada admits: “the anarchist movement lacks the collective strategy, organizational capacity, and structures to attempt anything beyond a massive riot



WV Photo

NYC, 23 October 1999: PDC/SL-initiated mobilization of integrated workers stopped KKK from marching. Fight for black liberation—a question generally ignored in Barricada’s press—is key to socialist revolution.

on a large scale.” Well, chaos and ineffectuality are the inevitable results of disdaining the need for an organized political movement to fight for state power. Barricada further writes: “The police presence [was] too large and the reaction too forceful” at Genoa to accomplish some anarchists’ goals. Young protesters were deeply shaken by the murder of Carlo Giuliani, by the live ammunition fired at them in “socialist” Sweden, by the mass arrests and torture of militants, by the trail of smashed bones, teeth and blood left by police raids into supposedly “safe zones” in Genoa.

As Marxist communists, not idealists, we know revolution is no game, and

we know we cannot create “autonomous” or “safe zones” in a world dominated by capitalism. Genoa revealed the murderously efficient force of the bourgeois state as an instrument of repression. That force is being shown in much bolder relief in Afghanistan today. Young activists today who are serious about prevailing against that might must break from petty-bourgeois individualist heroics that lead only to victimization. We Marxists offer a strategy for victory, through forging the most organized and disciplined vanguard party to mobilize the power of the one class that can defeat capitalist rule, the working class. Forward to the world socialist revolution! ■

ISO: When Will They Ever Learn? (Never)

“War puts political principles to the test,” observes the International Socialist Organization (ISO) in an article titled “Where Have All the Liberals Gone?” (*Socialist Worker*, 19 October). The ISO has amply displayed just how far their principles are from socialism and how close they are to liberalism. In the weeks after the September 11 attacks, the ISO advanced the demand in meetings and through its coalitions for an international tribunal to bring the perpetrators to justice. The “San Francisco Town Hall Committee to Stop War and Hate,” which includes prominent members of the ISO, wrote a leaflet stating that the U.S. should “work with the international community to identify & locate all responsible & bring them before a court of law.”

This position so cravenly gives license to the imperialist rulers’ war that it drew heat even from their fellow reformists of the Workers World Party (WWP), who at a meeting in New York ridiculed the ISO on this point by asking who the ISO looked to for “justice.” This posture of WWP is utter hypocrisy coming from a party that for years has called for a “new trial” for black death row political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal, pushing the lie that Jamal could find justice in the very capitalist courts that condemned him to death!

Under pressure, the ISO changed its line on the question of an international

Where have all the liberals gone?

WAR PUTS political principles to the test.

And sadly, many of the country’s best-known liberal figures have failed.

Take Molly Ivins, for example, once one of George W. Bush’s sharpest critics.

more than half of its laser-guided “smart” weapons missed their targets during the 1991 Gulf War against Iraq.

And never mind that hundreds —perhaps thousands—of Afghan civilians have already been killed by U.S. bombs.

ror attacks here at home.”

Never mind the fact that the right is already on the offensive.

And never mind that even Attorney General John Ashcroft admits that U.S. military strikes will

provoke more attacks, making people in the U.S. less, not more, secure.

But the pressure of war reveals just how much liberals agree with the critics.

Socialist Worker

19 October 2001

tribunal. Sharon Smith writes in *Socialist Worker*: “Those who rightfully reject an all-out war in Afghanistan but seek justice through an international tribunal of some kind must face the fact that no international body exists to impartially dispense justice” (12 October). But on the ground, the ISO continues to counsel the imperialists on how to achieve their purported aims. In the Bay Area on November 7, the ISO held a forum entitled “Alternatives to War—You Can’t Fight Terror with Terror.” They say “there have to be solutions other than war” and advise the bourgeoisie that “peaceful solutions are possible.”

The ISO’s program has always been to court bourgeois liberals. A graphic case in point is their support to Ralph Nader. In an article in the October 19 *Socialist Worker*, the ISO’s Todd Chretien expressed disappointment with Nader’s praise of Colin Powell and his calls for a “constitutional way” of waging war on Afghanistan. However, Chretien says he found it fortunate that Nader “condemned the U.S. bombing” at a “super rally” the ISO helped build, declaring “‘We can’t just bomb our way to justice.’” Nader’s position is quite logical, given his defense of the capitalist system and its ruling class, but the purported socialists of the ISO have the same position, reinforcing Bush’s own claims that the murderous rampage in Afghanistan is being done in the name of “justice.”

The ISO has a gaping hole between what they nominally stand for as supposed “socialists” and their actual politics on the ground. They can’t deal with the

arguments of genuine Marxists so they substitute the fist for the brain—resorting to gangsterism and exclusion. At an October 11 public event at New York University, the ISO had an NYPD cop and a campus security official outside of the room *for the purpose of preventing the Spartacist League from entering*. They were on such good terms with the gendarmes that they just nodded at them to

come over when our comrade attempted to enter. The cops are part of the capitalist state, which exists to defend the interests of the bourgeoisie against workers and the oppressed. Having cops patrol a leftist meeting only invites repression against the entire left—not to mention that any immigrant student would think twice about attending!

War does put political principles to the test, and the ISO has amply proven that their loyalty is on the wrong side of the class line. To end imperialist war, the exploitation of the working class and the oppression of the masses, only a workers revolution is the answer—building the revolutionary workers party that can lead it is what the Spartacist League and Spartacus Youth Clubs fight for. ■

Spartacus Youth Club Class Series

CHICAGO

Alternate Thursdays, 6 p.m.

November 29:

For Women’s Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!

University of Illinois at Chicago
Behavioral Sciences Bldg., Room 215
1007 West Harrison Street
Information and readings: (312) 563-0441

BAY AREA

Tuesdays, 7 p.m.

November 27: **Women’s Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!**

December 4: **The Fight for a Revolutionary Workers Party**

UC Berkeley, 155 Kroeber Hall
Information and readings: (510) 839-0851

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

MADISON

Saturday, 2 p.m.

December 1: **Defend China Against Imperialism, Counterrevolution! For Workers Political Revolution!**

Univ. of Wisconsin, Memorial Union
(see Today in the Union for room)
Information and readings: (312) 563-0441

LOS ANGELES

Alternate Saturdays, 2 p.m.

December 8: **Imperialism and War**

3806 Beverly Blvd., Suite 215
Information and readings: (213) 380-8239

NEW YORK CITY

Tuesday, 7 p.m.

November 27:

For a Workers Party that Fights for Socialist Revolution!

Columbia University (116th and Broadway) Hamilton Hall, Room 302
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WORKERS VANGUARD

Down With “Maritime Security” Bill!

Bosses Target Dock Workers

SAN FRANCISCO—Wielding the deaths of thousands of innocent people in the World Trade Center attack as a bloody shirt, America’s capitalist rulers are perpetrating imperialist butchery against the people of Afghanistan while attacking democratic rights at home in the name of a “war on terrorism.” Targeting immigrants, especially those of Near Eastern descent, in the first instance, the government seeks to regiment the entire population and especially the working class. Alongside the recently enacted “USA-Patriot Act 2001,” which allows for imprisonment of non-citizens without charges and defines as a “terrorist” anyone deemed an opponent of the government, a sinister new measure would specifically target port, maritime and rail workers for victimization and union-busting.

Introduced in July by Democratic Senator Ernest Hollings of South Carolina, the “Port, Maritime and Rail Security Act” is now being speeded through the Senate in the wake of September 11. For years, the maritime bosses have tried to use the anti-drug witchhunt as a means of weeding out union militants and intimidating the workforce as a whole in order to push through speedup and attack hard-won union gains. Now they are using the pretext of “national security” to the same end; indeed the Hollings bill was initially proposed in the name of the “war on drugs.” Whatever the pretext, the capitalists and their government are launching a frontal assault on the longshore unions, a historic bastion of labor power on the waterfront.

The capitalist battle cry against waterfront workers can’t be separated out from the imperialist bombing of Afghanistan, as the crazed American behemoth asserts its intention to dominate the world. In their escalating rivalry with the German and Japanese imperialists, the American rulers are intent on reducing the cost of doing business at the ports, the gateway of world trade. Moreover, the bourgeoisie

sees the ports as key to “national defense.” Historically, the government has moved to “clean up” the docks as part of regimenting the waterfront for war. The 1936 Merchant Marine Act, passed just as the West Coast International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) won the union hiring hall, was designed to prepare for World War II, which in the Pacific pitted the U.S. against Japan for control of the markets of the Pacific Rim. (The Maritime Security Act is in fact an amendment of the 1936 law.)

Racist “Profiling” on the Waterfront

The Hollings bill calls for “background checks” of waterfront workers, who could be fired on the basis of a conviction in the past ten years on any of 20 felony offenses, including minor drug charges like “distribution of, or intent to distribute, a controlled substance.” To widen the swath of the bill’s firepower, workers could also be fired on the basis of vague, catch-all “conspiracy” charges related to the above offenses or “any other offense” the Feds decide to add to the list. Local and federal task forces on “port security” are also debating industrywide ID systems and increased surveillance to police the docks, while the proposed bill stipulates a “credentialing process” for the purpose of limiting access.

Especially at risk on the West Coast are the largely immigrant port truckers, owner-operators who transport cargo to and from the docks. “Arab-looking” truckers are already being targeted for harassment by waterfront security. Recently, an army of cops from the California Highway Patrol, U.S. Customs Service and U.S. Coast Guard descended on cargo trucks at the Port of Oakland, where many truckers are of Near Eastern or South Asian origin, looking for “terrorists” (*San Francisco Chronicle*, 29 October).

“Background checks” are a dagger aimed at anyone who grew up in the barrios and ghettos of this country. Given the systematic racist cop harassment carried out against minority youth, many a black or Latino man has gotten a police sheet. Throughout urban America, as many as one in three young black men is in the clutches of the criminal justice system—either in jail, on probation or on parole—at any given time. In California, census figures showed that as of 1 April 2000 one out of every 33 black people and one in every 122 Latinos was in jail or prison, compared to one in every 205 whites (*San Francisco Chronicle*, 9 August).

The “port security” measure is part of a direct attack by the capitalists on the union hiring hall, the heart of the longshore unions’ power and the source of their strong control over job conditions. With the ILWU contract due to expire next year, the Pacific Maritime Association



Macor/SF Chronicle

Customs agents stop Latino truck driver at Port of Oakland for ID check. Proposed legislation would mean increased victimization of port workers.

Chiu/SF Chronicle

tion aims to scrap the hiring hall altogether in favor of a “call-in or Internet-based system they hope would boost productivity by 30 percent” (Associated Press, 3 September). The *Wall Street Journal* (9 July) calls outright for the elimination of “rigid union-labor rules” that have “hobbled” major U.S. ports and contributed to their “losing the battle to keep up with the brisk growth in world trade.”

In his column in the ILWU *Dispatcher* (September 2001), International president James Spinosa makes clear the union’s opposition to the proposed waterfront legislation, as well as the broader “anti-terrorism” law. But the only strategy he puts forward is to raise the union’s “serious concerns...in the halls of Congress.” Spinosa as much as admits that the ILWU tops will not fight to stop the proposed union-busting law, writing, “Some kind of bill will pass and the best we can do is to blunt the targeting of longshore workers as much as possible.” What he offers is the promise of a union vote at the polls for the Democrats in exchange for a few paltry amendments.

Waterfront labor *can* prevail against this all-out anti-union onslaught, but only to the degree that the longshore unions, in alliance with the Teamsters, mobilize labor’s social power in an across-the-board fight to defend *all* workers at the ports—union and non-union, black and white, Latino and Asian, “legal” and undocumented immigrant. Such struggle has to start from the understanding that, far from the “national unity” jingoism being promoted by the U.S. capitalist class, the interests of the bosses and the workers are irreconcilably counterposed.

In this fight, indisputably, union rights and black and immigrant rights will march forward together or fall back separately. This is underlined by the fact that the author of this bill is a Senator from racist, “open shop” South Carolina, where the Charleston Five, members of

the International Longshoremen’s Association, were kept under house arrest for *one and a half years* on trumped-up charges for defending their union against the use of scab labor (see “State Drops Vendetta Against Charleston Five,” page 9).

Government Hands Off the Unions!

There is a long history of government persecution of union militants as “criminals.” As Bay Area ILWU Longshore Local 10 secretary-treasurer Clarence Thomas told the *Oakland Post* (4 November), “This is not the first time the government has gone after longshoremen. It happened during the 1950s Red Scare—which many who [sic] are too young to remember—that saw anyone affiliated with the Communist party not being able to work government cargo.” The government repeatedly tried to deport former ILWU International president Harry Bridges, an Australian national and Communist Party supporter.

While rightly recalling the use of anti-Communism against the unions, the ILWU brass has *ignored* the racist content of the bosses’ current attacks targeting the largely immigrant port truckers and black and Latino longshoremen. For the ILWU tops, such racism is no doubt a “hot potato.” But to not take up the defense of black and Latino workers effectively demobilizes the union rank and file in the face of the Maritime Security Act, which attempts to insert the federal government into the hiring process and drive minority workers out of their jobs. It is particularly poisonous that in their recent statements on the Maritime Security Act, the longshore union tops—including left-talkers like ILWU Local 10 executive board member Jack Heyman—ignore the critical question of the defense of the port truckers.

The Teamsters have officially launched a drive to unionize the country’s 40,000

continued on page 9



WV Photo

Port of Los Angeles: Latino truckers protest anti-immigrant Prop. 187 in 1994.