

Mass Protests in South Korea—U.S. Troops Out!

Reuters



Nordell/JB Pictures



U.S. Imperialism Hands Off North Korea!

JANUARY 13—In the face of Washington's diktats, as revolutionary Marxists we call on the international proletariat to stand for the unconditional military defense of the North Korean deformed workers state against imperialism. This crucially includes the right of North Korea to develop nuclear weapons to defend itself against the American nuclear cowboys. With the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union in 1991-92, which removed a vital military counterweight to U.S. imperialism, America's rulers feel free from all constraints to strut around like the unchallenged masters of the world. Had the former Soviet Union not possessed its

Defend North Korea's Right to Nuclear Weapons!

nuclear arsenal, the U.S. imperialists could very well have turned countries like North Korea and China—countries where capitalist rule has been overthrown—into irradiated rubble.

Last year, Bush declared that North Korea was part of an "axis of evil," and a few months later the Pentagon published a "Nuclear Posture Review" that openly

targets that country along with China, Iraq and others for a potential nuclear first strike. It was patently clear that North Korea was next on U.S. imperialism's hit list after Iraq. After the Pyongyang regime pulled out of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty earlier this month, demanding that Washington resume suspended shipments of fuel oil and begin

talks on a "non-aggression" treaty, the London *Financial Times* (12 January) quoted a South Korean official who aptly noted: "North Korea is clearly signalling that it wants the US to address these issues now before an Iraqi war starts. The North realises that if the US succeeds in Iraq, it could confront a more aggressive US."

At the same time, we note that the Bush administration's stated intention of pursuing "peaceful diplomacy" with North Korea exposes the utter hypocrisy of its pretext for war against Iraq. While North Korea has kicked out arms inspectors and openly proclaims its right to develop

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West Coast Longshore Contract: Threat to Union's Future

OAKLAND—On November 23 the negotiating committee for the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) accepted a contract deal with the shipping bosses of the Pacific Maritime Association (PMA). Under the guise of an attractive pay and pension package, the contract provisions continue the erosion of the hiring hall and

further promote the deterioration of the ILWU from an industrial powerhouse into a craft-based, skilled labor aristocracy. Throughout the seven months of negotiations, the PMA, in league with the Bush administration, sought to cripple or destroy the West Coast dock workers union. This assault included threats to militarize the docks in the

event of a strike, an 11-day employer lockout and an injunction under the union-busting Taft-Hartley Act.

From the beginning, the showdown on the docks was a concrete demonstration that the "war on terror" and war on the unions are one and the same. Well before the contract deadline last July, Homeland Security chief

Thomas Ridge called ILWU International president James Spinosa, warning that a longshore strike could "threaten national security." Then in October, George W. Bush responded to the PMA's lockout of the union by forcing the longshoremen back to work under conditions dictated by the bosses. The union negotiating team agreed to the proposed contract just two weeks before the terms of Taft-Hartley would have required the union to vote on the PMA's last best offer in an election conducted by the National Labor Relations Board.

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**Break with the Democrats—
For a Workers Party!**
For a Class-Struggle Union Leadership!

Free the Detainees! No Deportations!

Feds Expand Anti-Immigrant Dragnet

In a classic Catch-22, the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) threatened detention and deportation for male immigrants from Iran, Iraq, Sudan, Syria and Lebanon who failed to register by December 16 under the Feds' "National Security Entry-Exit Registration System." But hundreds who did were interrogated, arrested and thrown into detention centers anyway in a stark escalation of racist state repression under the rubric of the "war on terror." The government also required immigrants from Afghanistan, Algeria, North Korea and ten other countries to register by January 10; those from Saudi Arabia and Pakistan must do the same by February 21.

The initial roundups sparked protests across the U.S., with more than 3,000 people, predominantly Iranian Americans, demonstrating outside the Federal Building in Los Angeles on December 18. As we reported in "Hundreds Arrested in Racist INS Roundup in Los Angeles" (WV No. 794, 3 January), protesters raised placards reading "What Next? Concentration Camps?" and compared

the mass roundups of Near Eastern immigrants with the internment of Japanese Americans in World War II. Reports emerged of teenagers torn from their mothers at INS centers; of prisoners strip-searched, hosed down with cold water, forced to sleep on floors or even outside; of some shipped hundreds of miles to out-of-state detention centers. While the INS eventually allowed most detainees to return home, dozens still remain in detention and face deportation. We demand: Free the detainees! Stop the deportations!

A good number of the Iranian immigrants swept up in the Southern California roundups last month were Jews, many of whom fled Iran following the 1979 "Islamic revolution." But this evoked only the mildest of objections from the Zionist Anti-Defamation League (ADL), which no doubt feels these people should have gone to Israel and not the U.S. in the first place. In a 20 December press release, the ADL called for an "investigation" into "allegations of discrimination" against the detainees. The statement made clear that

"we do not question the right of the INS to investigate expired visas or other immigration law violations." To say the least. The ADL is among the most avid proponents of the roundups of Arab and Muslim immigrants in the "war on terror," which the Zionists embrace as a cover for ratcheting up the murderous repression of the Palestinians in the Occupied Territories. In the U.S., the ADL is in the thick of a campaign to vilify student groups and academics who have spoken out in defense of the besieged Palestinians, slandering all opponents of Zionist terror as "anti-Semitic."

The ADL's tepid protest of the treatment of Iranian Jews in the U.S. stands in stark contrast to the Zionists' rabid campaign in the 1970s and '80s to "Free Soviet Jewry," which played a front-line role in U.S. imperialism's drive to destroy the Soviet degenerated workers state. The Bush administration is rife with Zionist hawks like Pentagon aide Richard Perle and Reaganite Contragate felon Elliott Abrams who cut their political teeth in such anti-Soviet campaigns, often as acolytes of the late Democratic Senator Henry "Scoop" Jackson.

The hundreds of people arrested in the dragnet since last month add to the many still in custody stemming from the roundups of at least 1,200 mainly Muslim immigrants following the criminal attack on the World Trade Center. The kind of hell they have been put through was described by Ayub Ali Khan, who was arrested along with Mohammed Jaweed Azmath while traveling by train to Texas the day after the World Trade Center attack. Seized as "terror suspects" for possessing a boxcutter and black hair dye, Khan and Azmath spent over a year in jail. Interviewed in India by the *Washington Post* (10 January), Khan told of months of "maltreatment, denial of rights, no lawyer, no court date, no respite from the solitary cell, severe incarceration in shackles and repeated questioning." At interrogation sessions, "five to six men would pull me in different directions very roughly as they asked rapid-fire questions.... Then suddenly they would brutally throw me against the wall." Even after the government acknowledged it had no evidence linking the men to 9/11, they were indicted on charges of credit card fraud and deported.

Untold numbers of such immigrants have been targeted for detention on the most spurious grounds. Shortly after the December roundups, the FBI issued a nationwide alert for five Near Eastern "terrorists" who had supposedly "infiltrated" the U.S. from Canada. Day after day, the Feds and the capitalist media stoked fears in the population of a vague but imminent danger in a transparent effort to bolster support for the increase in state repression. Last week, the Feds admitted this was a hoax perpetrated by a jailhouse tipster seeking to ingratiate himself with authorities.

Now, as the *Los Angeles Times* (5 January) reports, Attorney General John Ashcroft has initiated a massive speedup in deportations by ordering the Board of Immigration Appeals—often the court of last resort for immigrants facing deportation—to clear its backlog of 56,000 cases by March 25. The article states, "As the number of cases decided by the board has soared, so has the rate at which board members have ruled against foreigners." Noting that last October the board rejected 86 percent of appeals, up from 59 percent the year before, the article describes one board member who on one day "signed more than 50 cases—a decision nearly every ten minutes if he worked a nine-hour day without a break."

In a 22 December letter to the INS demanding an end to the racist roundups, the Partisan Defense Committee, a legal and social defense organization associated with the Spartacist League, wrote that the anti-immigrant campaign "is but the domestic reflection of the imperialist war drive now targeting neocolonial Iraq. The drumbeat of brutal aggression against a more or less defenseless country reverberates in transparent assaults on the civil rights of vulnerable immigrants immediately. But the ultimate target is the rights of all, especially workers and the oppressed."

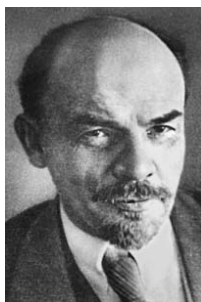
The extent to which the racist U.S. rulers can get away with trampling immigrant rights and the rights of us all will be determined by the level of class struggle. The labor movement and all opponents of imperialist war and racist repression must mobilize in defense of immigrants against the racist dragnet. Full citizenship rights for all immigrants! ■



TROTSKY

The Struggle Against Imperialist War

The struggle against imperialist war demands a struggle for workers revolution to root out the capitalist system that breeds war. This was the central theme in a 1936 pamphlet issued by the Workers Party, then the Trotskyist organization in the U.S., and authored by James Burnham (under the pseudonym John West), a leading Trotskyist publicist before his defection from the Marxist movement in 1939-40.



LENIN

The most common mistake made in the attempted struggle against war comes from the belief that this struggle is somehow "independent" of the class struggle in general, that a broad union of all sorts of persons from every social class and group can be formed around the issue of fighting war, since—so the reasoning goes—these persons may be all equally opposed to war whatever their differences on other points. In this way, war is lifted from its social base, considered apart from its causes and conditions, as if it were a mystic abstraction instead of a concrete historical institution. Acting on this belief, attempts are made to build up all kinds of permanent Peace Societies, Anti-War Organizations, Leagues Against War, etc....

War is not the cause of the troubles of society. The opposite is true. War is a symptom and result of the irreconcilable troubles and conflicts of the present form of society, that is to say, of capitalism. The only way to fight against war is to fight against the causes of war. Since the causes of war are part of the inner nature of capitalism, it follows that the only way to fight against war is to fight against capitalism.

But the only true fight against capitalism is the revolutionary struggle for workers' power. It therefore follows that the only possible struggle *against* war is the struggle *for* the workers' revolution....

To suppose, therefore, that revolutionists can work out a common "program against war" with non-revolutionists is a fatal illusion. Any organization based upon such a program is not merely powerless to prevent war; in practice it acts to promote war, both because it serves in its own way to uphold the system that breeds war, and because it diverts the attention of its members from the real fight against war. There is only *one* program against war: the program *for* revolution—the program of the revolutionary party of the workers.

—"John West" (James Burnham), *War and the Workers* (1936)

WORKERS VANGUARD

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



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17 January 2003

Spartacist Forums

Leninist Opposition to Imperialist War Lessons of the Vietnam Antiwar Movement

- For Class Struggle Against U.S. Capitalist Rulers!
- Defend Iraq Against U.S. Imperialist Attack!

- Down With UN Starvation Blockade
- Down With the Anti-Immigrant Witchhunt!

Sunday, January 26, 6 p.m.

Mount Hollywood
Congregational Church
4607 Prospect Ave.

(Vermont/Sunset Red Line station)

For more information: (213) 380-8239
or e-mail slsycla@cs.com

LOS ANGELES

Saturday, February 1, 6 p.m.

University of Chicago
5706 S. University Ave.
Reynolds Club, South Lounge

For more information: (312) 563-0441
or e-mail spartacist@iname.com

CHICAGO

Trotskyist League/Ligue trotskyste Forum

"War on Terror" = War on Immigrants, Workers For Class Struggle Against Imperialist War!

Saturday, January 25, 6:30 p.m.

Ontario Institute for Studies in Education
252 Bloor Street West, Room 8200

(St. George subway station)

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

TORONTO

Young Spartacus

ISO: On Their Knees for Anybody

The International Socialist Organization (ISO) is always willing to crucify the socialist cause upon the cross of “unity.” In an article titled “The Antiwar Movement: A Great Beginning” (*International Socialist Review*, November/December 2002), the ISO argues for building the broadest possible “movement based upon uniting disparate forces” under the liberal/pacifist demands of “no war, no sanctions” against Iraq. They state that antiwar “committees should be able to embrace anyone who supports these demands, whether they are socialists who oppose U.S. imperialism in principle or Democratic Party sympathizers who believe that the UN can be a force for peace.” But these ISO “socialists” do not oppose U.S. imperialism “in principle” or in practice, as is shown precisely by their eagerness to get together with imperialist agents and spokesmen like Democratic Party politicians or the United Nations.

In an apparent attempt to remain critical, the article gives the reader a history lesson, admonishing that “it’s worth remembering” what happened to the antiwar coalitions during the 1991 Gulf War. In this lesson they wag their fingers sternly at the liberals of the National Campaign for Peace in the Middle East, stating that “in the name of building the ‘broadest’ movement, the Campaign insisted on demanding an Iraqi pullout from Kuwait, and pandered to organizations...that supported UN sanctions against Iraq as an ‘alternative’ to war.” After the fact, now that a million and a half Iraqis have already been killed by those UN sanctions, the ISO grants that “unity” with anyone and everyone may not be the road to “peace.” But when it counted, the ISO *endorsed the Campaign’s march*, which included demands *supporting UN sanctions!* Today the ISO is again ready to build a “movement” with the enemies of workers and minorities, which can only mean blocking the development of a movement to end imperialist war the only way it can be ended—by ending the capitalist system that breeds it.

At San Francisco State University, where the ISO supports and builds a group called the Students Against War (SAW), it opposed one SAW member’s proposal to adopt an explicitly anti-imperialist stance. Indeed, the ISO helped distribute a flyer calling for unity of



WV Photo

ISO at pro-Gore rally in Chicago’s Daley Plaza, November 2000. Now ISO laments Gore’s withdrawal from 2004 presidential race.

“Republicans, Democrats, Libertarians, communists...leftists, rightists...pro life, pro choice, cops...blue-collar workers, business persons...cat-lovers...” Such an appeal to cops and right-to-lifers may seem ludicrous, but the real program being pushed is no joke. During the Vietnam War, the ISO’s precursors and counterparts worked overtime to corral antiwar youth into a “peace movement” alongside capitalist politicians and preachers, who *supported the aims of U.S. imperialism* but questioned whether that war was really in “America’s best interests.” Huge demonstrations were mobilized to listen to speeches by Democratic “doves.” Finally the U.S. was driven out of Vietnam but the deep social fissures provoked by that losing imperialist adventure were contained within “the system.”

Sure enough, today the ISO is reaching out to...Al Gore! So they publish a “What We Think” column in *Socialist Worker* (3 January), titled “The Dead-End Democrats,” that bemoans the withdrawal of the former vice president as a presidential candidate. The ISO writes that “he was getting interesting for the first time in his political life. In early December, Al Gore announced that he wouldn’t run for president in 2004.” Gore, we are now told, has “newly discovered liberal positions [which] would have opened up the discussion in mainstream politics—and given ordinary people more confidence to speak

up.” If this ruling-class war criminal were to change his mind and run, would the ISO sloganize for “Gore in ’04”? Well, why not—in the last election, they called on people to vote for Ralph Nader, candidate of the capitalist Green Party.

The ISO gives their game away with headlines like “Will the Democrats Ever Fight?” (*Socialist Worker*, 18 October 2002). The ISO wants “to put pressure on all the politicians in Washington.” It’s

UN starvation sanctions and the imminent American war, this demand is not “broad” by the definition of the ISO and other reformists because it would cut them off from their real hoped-for constituency, the “peace” Democrats. Of course, right now, capitalist politicians willing to make even the most timid “peace” noises are few and far between. So in the meantime, the ISO will make do with that other mainstay of “respectable” protest movements, the preachers.

Along with the ISO, the National Council of Churches (NCC) belongs to the “United for Peace” coalition. On 4 December 2002, the NCC, which represents the mainstream religious establishment in this country, took out a full-page ad in the *New York Times* begging Bush not to go to war against Iraq: “Jesus changed your heart. Now let him change your mind.” Immediately, the ISO embraced the churchmen, penning an article in the 13 December issue of *Socialist Worker* to address “the perennial question, ‘What would Jesus do?’” about Iraq. In the article, the ISO “exposed” George W. Bush for using Christianity and the Bible as a cover for a (surprise!) conservative agenda which includes launching a war of conquest. They wrote: “With Christmas approaching, Bush seems to have forgotten all about ‘Blessed are the peacemakers’ as he plans a war that will take thousands of Iraqi lives.”

ISO newspaper prays that the words of Jesus can convert Bush into “peacemaker.”

Socialist Worker
13 December 2002

Was he calling for armed rebellion or preaching obedience?



absurd to imagine that the ruling class can be “pressured” to act against its own interests! We fight for a socialist system that will defend *our* interests—the interests of the working people here at home and our class brothers and sisters oppressed by U.S. imperialism all over the world.

One demand that the ISO’s supposedly all-inclusive “peace coalitions” will never include is the demand, “Defend Iraq against U.S. imperialism!” Though millions of people all over the world want to stand in solidarity with the victims of the

We’ll leave it to the ISO to try to teach George Bush the true meaning of Christmas, alongside the clergymen whose main job is to preach “turn the other cheek” pacifism to the oppressed so as to leave them defenseless before their class enemy. As for us, the Spartacus Youth Clubs will continue to win young workers and students to the understanding that those who hate war must organize to take the means of production and the means of mass destruction out of the blood-drenched hands of the capitalist class, through socialist revolution. ■

Spartacus Youth Club Class Series

CHICAGO

Tuesday, 7 p.m.

**January 21: Marxism:
A Guide to Action**

University of Chicago, 5811 S. Ellis
Cobb Hall, room to be announced
Information and readings: (312) 563-0441
or e-mail spartacist@iname.com

LOS ANGELES

Saturday, 2 p.m.

**February 1: Marxist Economics:
From the Dictatorship of the
Proletariat to Communism**

3806 Beverly Blvd., Room 215
(Vermont/Beverly Red Line station)
Information and readings: (213) 380-8239
or e-mail slycla@cs.com

TORONTO

Wednesday, 6:30 p.m.

**January 29: Defend the Palestinians!
For a Socialist Federation
of the Near East!**

University of Toronto, Sidney Smith,
Room 2129, 100 St. George St.
Information and readings: (416) 593-4138
or e-mail: spartcan@on.aibn.com

VANCOUVER

Tuesday, 5:30 p.m.

**January 21: For Class Struggle
Against Imperialist War**

University of British Columbia
Student Union Building, Room 211
Information and readings: (604) 687-0353
or e-mail tlit@look.ca

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Marxism, War and the Fight For Socialist Revolution



Imperial War Museum, London
Mass slaughter of first imperialist world war. Right: Revolutionary Karl Liebknecht, who raised slogan "The main enemy is at home," addresses Berlin workers, January 1919.



Willy Römer

We publish below, slightly edited, the first part of an internal educational presentation given at a Spartacist League meeting in New York City this month by Alan Wilde, editor of Workers Vanguard.

Karl Marx's 1845 "Theses on Feuerbach" is generally considered one of the

PART ONE OF TWO

founding documents of Marxism. Feuerbach was a German materialist philosopher. In one of his works, he wrote, as an expression of his materialist outlook, that for philosophy "the truth is not that which has been thought, but that which has been not only thought, but seen, heard and felt." Marx challenged the insufficiency of such an outlook, declaring: "The philosophers have only *interpreted* the world, in various ways; the point is to *change* it."

As Marxists today, our starting point remains the same as that of Marx and Engels. And this is shown in our approach to the question of war. It is not enough to analyze and explain, as important as that may be. What we have to put forward is a program, based on material reality, to fundamentally change the nature of things, necessarily including a political/economic system that breeds imperialist war. Everything else—from our understanding of the working class as the only revolutionary force in modern society, to our understanding of the reactionary nature of capitalist imperialism, to the need to build a Marxist workers party—flows from the question of *how* to change the world.

The U.S. is currently gearing up for a war with Iraq, which is all but inevitable. Some 100,000 American troops and support personnel are already assembled in the Persian Gulf region. The trepidation about war that was recently expressed by America's imperialist rivals melts away as the insatiable appetites of the world's only superpower, which outguns them all combined by orders of magnitude, confront them. The Arab regimes—venal, pathetic and bloody hacks that enforce imperialism's dictates upon their populations—only beg for a UN cover for U.S. imperialism's designs. Israel could well be planning to drive most of the Palestinians out under the cover of war.

Saddam Hussein is a dangerous man with weapons of mass destruction, says the U.S. government. Never mind that his armies are a third of what they were during the time of the 1991 Gulf War, and never mind the bloody UN sanctions that have killed more than a million and a half Iraqis and have deprived the regime of any material to upgrade its military. Never mind that all the crimes that the U.S. accuses Hussein of carrying out were carried out before the 1991 Gulf War, prior to which he was an ally of the Americans. It was the U.S. that helped provide him with biological and chemical weapons to be liberally used against the Iranians during the Iran/Iraq War in the 1980s.

Most of all, never mind the fact that no one possesses more weapons of mass destruction than the American imperialists, who have not only enough nuclear weapons to destroy the world several times over but the world's largest stockpile of biological and chemical weap-

ons. The U.S. was the only country in the world to ever use nuclear weapons, against Japan during World War II, and it has repeatedly seriously contemplated using them, as during the Vietnamese and Korean wars. And the only thing stopping them was the Soviet Union's own nuclear arsenal which is a very good reason why we defend nuclear arms in the hands of the workers states, regardless of how badly bureaucratically deformed they may be, as in the case of North Korea. North Korea's recent actions, and the U.S.'s guarded response, underline our point that the only real measure of sovereignty left is possession of nukes. It also indicates how the post-Soviet one-superpower world is far more dangerous than what was before. With Bush now declaring the right to carry out "pre-emptive" strikes against any perceived enemy, not only the deformed workers states, but every tinpot capitalist dictator who doesn't want to be on the receiving end of American "liberation" will probably do everything they can to get a nuclear arsenal.

We oppose U.S. imperialism's war against semicolonial Iraq. But our opposition differs greatly from the liberal and pacifist opposition of the reformist left, which has organized mass demonstrations against the potential war. The International Socialist Organization, Workers World Party, Revolutionary Communist Party, etc. have as both their starting and finishing points simple opposition to the war. This is an expression of pacifism because what they don't express is any military solidarity with Iraq against the United States—i.e., they don't take a side. As Marxists, we understand that there is a vast difference between the pacifism of the masses—of the workers or, say, the majority of youth who come out to the antiwar protests, who are in a deformed way expressing distrust in imperialism—and bourgeois pacifism (or for that matter the pacifism promoted by fake-leftist outfits that serves to reinforce in the consciousness of workers and radical youth the political outlook of the ruling class).

As Marxists we reject pacifism because in the end, regardless of what motivates it, it can only serve to disarm workers and the oppressed in the face of a well-armed and very brutal ruling class that recognizes none of the constraints of pacifism. Today, any American war against Iraq would be reactionary, unjust

and predatory. Our opposition to this war is not based on a general opposition to *all* wars. In the opening lines of *Socialism and War* (1915), written in the midst of World War I, Bolshevik leader V.I. Lenin underlines that Marxists must assess each war independently. Our line on particular wars is determined by our programmatic opposition to the imperialist order and our struggle in the interests of the working class internationally. That all wars are bloody and barbarous does not determine our political attitude toward them. Look at the American Civil War, the bloodiest war of the 19th century. Only the most philistine pacifists and outright racists could possibly oppose this war on the part of the North against the Southern slavocracy.

In the current conflict, the U.S. is likely to win against Iraq rather easily. But occupation of that country, with its conflicting ethnic groupings and well-developed civil society, could spark massive resistance. And regardless of how bloody, brutal or barbaric that resistance is in its methods, it would be just and defensive. Any move by Iraq to defeat or kick out the imperialist invaders is something any revolutionary would welcome wholeheartedly. Lenin addressed this very point in *Socialism and War*: "If tomorrow, Morocco were to declare war on France, or India on Britain, or Persia or China on Russia, and so on, these would be 'just,' and 'defensive' wars, *irrespective* of who would be the first to attack; any socialist would wish the oppressed, dependent and unequal states victory against the oppressor, slaveholding and predatory 'Great' Powers."

Revolutionary Defense of Iraq Against U.S. Attack

In a conflict between the U.S. and Iraq, we are revolutionary defensists—i.e., we have a military side with Iraq against U.S. imperialism. We want U.S. imperialism to lose and Iraq to win. There are two questions here: how and why. Certainly any military resistance by the Iraqi people to the imperialist invaders is something we'd defend. But let's look at reality here. We've noted several times in *Workers Vanguard* that Iraq hasn't the military might to defeat an American imperialist invasion. Therefore, the main weapon, the main method of defending Iraq, lies in the pursuit of the class struggle in the imperialist countries, especially the U.S.

Centrist outfits like the Internationalist



CNN

1983: Current Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, then an emissary of Reagan administration, greets Saddam Hussein in Baghdad. In 1980s, U.S. imperialists armed his regime as a key ally in the Near East.

Group (IG) and Workers Power scream to “defeat” U.S. imperialism. Bear in mind that they scream mainly in cyberspace, hardly ever when intersecting workers. But be that as it may, we, too, are for the defeat of U.S. imperialism, in this particular war and generally. But you cannot just wave reality away. How do you defeat U.S. imperialism? Is that going to be the work of Iraq, on a military plane? The point that we emphasize in our polemics against the IG about hot air and empty phrasemongering is that what is disappeared or minimized in their writings is the instrumentality to bring about the defeat of U.S. imperialism, not just in a particular war on the military plane, but politically—domestically and internationally. The IG denounces our call for class struggle at home as nationally narrow and as “counterposed to the call to defeat the imperialists *abroad*” (*Internationalist*, Fall 2001). This is in fact a position that runs counter to the ABCs of Marxism.

Capitalism, by its very exploitative nature, creates its own gravediggers in the proletariat, which alone has the social power to bring about the downfall of capitalism—by virtue of the fact that it has its hands directly on the means of production—and the objective class interests to do so. Military defeats abroad certainly help to bring about an extreme sharpening in the class contradictions of a particular country—war is the mother of revolutions. But it is fundamentally the working class that has the power to accomplish this historic task. We do not raise the call for class struggle at home with the pollyannaish belief that this particular war is going to meet its end in immediate social revolution in the U.S. We raise it in order to cut through the “national unity” mongering of the ruling class, to bring the working class to the understanding that it alone has the power to defeat the American imperialist system through workers revolution. Out of working-class and social struggle and through the intervention of revolutionary Marxists, the workers party essential for workers to take power will emerge.

Now, why do we fight for the defeat of U.S. imperialism in this and all its military adventures? Because every setback, every military defeat the U.S. encounters would serve the interests of the international working class. And in that sense, with that appraisal, we stand on fundamentally different ground than pacifism and reformism.

Our starting point is how to further the struggles of the working class internationally. A defeated or weakened U.S. imperialism would mean more room for class struggle to emerge at home. It would be accompanied by a major moral, political and economic shakeup. Weakened U.S. imperialism would mean *less* U.S. interventions against peoples of the world, as the example of U.S. imperialism’s defeat in Vietnam has shown. Imagine how much good that would do the Palestinians in their struggle against Israeli occupation. It would mean more room for struggles by working people in the semicolonial world and the opportunity to build revolutionary parties in the course of sharpened struggles in such backward regions. Also, a weakened U.S. imperialism would mean that workers in Europe and Japan would not as easily perceive U.S. imperialism as the main enemy, i.e., it would cut some ground out from under appeals to their capitalist rulers to stand up to the American behemoth. And this would allow for a greater development of the class struggle there. For all these reasons, we say that the international proletariat, everywhere, has a stake in defending Iraq and siding with it against U.S. imperialism.

That’s the defensism part of revolutionary defensism—now for the revolutionary part. Our defense of Iraq does not mean any support to the Hussein regime, which is savage, bloody, dictatorial and all the rest. In fact, defense of Iraq demands the sharpest political opposition to the bour-

geoisie in Iraq, because it is precisely bourgeois rule that subordinates a country like Iraq to imperialism. Try to look at it from the point of view of an Iraqi Marxist. A revolutionary party in Iraq would demand and agitate for a revolutionary war to defend the country from imperialism. Such a party would demand the arming of the people, would seek to do revolutionary work in the military. It would fight for full rights for the oppressed peoples of Iraq, like the Kurds and Shi’ites, and seek to win them over to the struggle against the invaders. It would make absolutely clear that the venal Iraqi bourgeoisie in fighting the U.S. is not leading some kind of anti-imperialist struggle, but simply had a falling out with its former patron, and that the very system of capitalist imperialism means that the local bourgeoisie is tied to and subordinated to the imperialists—i.e., that so long as capitalism remains in the country, Iraq will be subjugated by foreign imperialism, regardless of the outcome of this particular war. Such a party would not lose sight for a moment of the fact that while the imperialist invaders are the main enemy, the bourgeoisie at home is also an enemy. At the same time, such a party would issue proclamations of solidarity with the international working class, especially in the U.S., in order to spur them to oppose the onslaught by the American invaders through concrete class-struggle actions.

For the Political Independence of the Working Class

Last year, the centrist League for the Revolutionary Party (LRP) wrote an article on Israel where, speaking of the Arab bourgeois regimes, they declared: “The Arab masses must challenge them to put up or shut up—*send arms to the Palestinians!* The street protests in support of the intifada are vital, but they need to be joined by massive general strikes in Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Jordan, Iraq, Lebanon, and the other countries of the Middle East demanding arms for the Palestinians” (*Proletarian Revolution*, Spring 2002). Now, we and LRP have fundamental differences on the Near East, but I want to address this one question because it’s relevant. As a rule, it’s very rare that Marxists raise positive demands on a capitalist state—demands that the capitalist state *do* something; usually we stick to negative demands—demands that the capitalist state stop doing something.

Lenin speaking in 1918 on first anniversary of Russian Revolution. Bolsheviks under Lenin’s leadership successfully mobilized workers’ opposition to World War I, leading socialist revolution and establishing Communist International.

Panorama



The problem is that if you ask the capitalist state to do something, you might actually get it. Except that you’d get it on their terms.

If the Arab bourgeoisies were to send arms to the Palestinians, it would be to pursue their own aims, not the struggle for Palestinian self-determination. And if you call on them to send arms, then you’re placing confidence in their ability and willingness to wage a fight against Zionism, becoming politically responsible for whatever outcomes such a policy might produce. This is not Marxism. It is capitulation to Arab nationalism. It simply amounts to trying to fashion capitalism—and in this case, some of the most obscene, pitiful and pro-imperialist bourgeoisies—to serve your interests. It doesn’t work.

Having said all that, if Egypt or Iran



Kuwait: U.S. forces prepare for imperialist attack on Iraq. Revolutionaries take a side in coming war, defend semicolonial Iraq against predatory U.S.

or whoever were to send arms to the Palestinians—or Iraq for that matter—we would not oppose that. As explained in a 1941 article in the *Militant*, newspaper of the then-Trotskyist Socialist Workers Party: “There’s a difference between not raising any objection, when a capitalist government sends aid, and *agitating* for such aid. The key to the whole question consists in the understanding that we cannot rely on bourgeois governments to aid our cause. Neither can we take any responsibility for bourgeois governmental policy.” Bolshevik leader Leon Trotsky addressed this point quite powerfully

in his 1938 essay “Learn to Think”:

“Let us assume that rebellion breaks out tomorrow in the French colony of Algeria under the banner of national independence and that the Italian government, motivated by its own imperialist interests, prepares to send weapons to the rebels. What should the attitude of the Italian workers be in this case?... Should the Italian workers prevent the shipping of arms to the Algerians? Let any ultra-leftists dare answer this question in the affirmative. Every revolutionist, together with the Italian workers and the rebellious Algerians, would spurn such an answer with indignation. Even if a general maritime strike broke out in fascist Italy at the same time, even in this event the strikers should make an exception in favor of those ships carrying aid to the colonial slaves in revolt; otherwise they would be no more than wretched trade unionists—not proletarian revolutionists. “At the same time, the French maritime workers, even though not faced with any

strike whatsoever, would be compelled to exert every effort to block the shipment of ammunition intended for use against the rebels. Only such a policy on the part of the Italian and French workers constitutes the policy of revolutionary internationalism.”

This statement by Trotsky captures the gist of the question of revolutionary defensism: that the international proletariat must do all it can to aid the oppressed country against imperialist attack while maintaining complete political independence from the bourgeoisie.

Revolutionary Defeatism in First World War

The position of revolutionary defensism in this U.S. war against Iraq and similar wars by an imperialist or predatory power against a dependent, colonial or semicolonial country should be contrasted with the Leninist position of revolutionary defeatism worked out in the course of the First World War. When World War I erupted, it was not a surprise to most socialists. For years, there had been a mad struggle for colonies between the great powers, a mad struggle that could easily—and eventually did—spill over into a great war for colonial possessions and spheres of economic influence. Socialists recognized this before 1914, when the war broke out. In 1907, the Second International had its conference in Stuttgart, which passed a resolution on war, written in part by Lenin and Rosa Luxemburg, which stated:

“If a war threatens to break out, it is the duty of the working class and of its parliamentary representatives in the countries involved, supported by the consolidating activity of the International Socialist Bureau, to exert every effort in order to prevent the outbreak of war by means they consider most effective, which naturally vary according to the accentuation of the class struggle and of the general political situation.

“Should war break out none the less, it is their duty to intervene in favor of its speedy termination and to do all in their power to utilize the economic and political crisis caused by the war to rouse the people and thereby to hasten the abolition of capitalist class rule.”

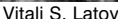
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The North Korean deformed workers state emerged following the liberation of the northern half of the Korean peninsula from 35 years of Japanese colonialism. Following World War II, Korea was partitioned between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in the north and the Republic of Korea in the south, a capitalist police state under American military occupation. Before the outbreak of the 1950-53 Korean War, the South was swept by massive peasant revolts, and when North Korean forces moved in to reunify the country in 1950, they were greeted as liberators. In a failed attempt to destroy North Korea as well as the 1949 Chinese Revolution, U.S. imperialism devastated the peninsula in the Korean War, killing *more than three million people* and obliterating whole cities, including Pyongyang. Following Chinese military intervention, the war ended in a stalemate at the 38th parallel, and ever since the U.S. has maintained a massive military presence in the South, while North Korea has been subjected to decades of imperialist military encirclement and a starvation embargo.

The disastrous situation in the North has been compounded by the extreme form of economic autarky pushed by the North Korean bureaucracy under the rubric of *Juche* (self-reliance). The political outlook of the bureaucracy was and is rooted in the Stalinist lie that socialism—a classless, egalitarian society based on material abundance—can be built in one or even half a country. This anti-

Today, North Korea is ruled by a particularly cultish, nepotistic and bizarre Stalinist regime centered on "Dear Leader" Kim Jong Il. The only road forward for the beleaguered working masses of the North is through the perspective of international socialist revolution. Capitalist counterrevolution can only bring even more extreme hardship and misery to the people of North Korea. Anyone who doubts that can cast a glance at the devastating statistics of life in post-Soviet Russia. By every measure of human



North Korean capital of Pyongyang devastated by U.S. bombing during 1950-53 Korean War.

A central aim of America's rulers remains the restoration of capitalism in those countries where it was overthrown—mainly China but also North Korea as well as Vietnam and Cuba. For its part, China's ruling bureaucracy has repeatedly emphasized agreement with the imperialists' demands for a "non-nuclear Korean peninsula," and has sought

Imperialist belligerence against North Korea is hardly exclusive to the Republicans. It was Democratic president Harry Truman who launched the Korean War. And it was Bill Clinton who in the midst of the 1994 Korean nuclear crisis moved stealth bombers into South Korea. As he boastfully recalled last month: "We actually drew up plans to attack North Korea and destroy their reactors, and we told them we would attack unless they ended their nuclear program" (*New York Times*, 19 December 2002).

“North Korea has few cards in its pack. The nuclear one has been its joker for at least a decade. It should be recalled that the country is well acquainted with nuclear terror, having been at its receiving end for over half a century. In the winter of 1950 General MacArthur sought permission to drop ‘between thirty and fifty atomic bombs,’ laying a belt of radioactive cobalt across the neck of the Korean peninsula. During the Korean War the Joint Chiefs of Staff deliberated about using the bomb, and came close to it several times. In Operation Hudson Harbour, late in 1951, a solitary B52 was dispatched to Pyongyang as if on a nuclear run, designed to cause terror—as it undoubtedly did. From 1957, the Americans kept a stockpile of nuclear weapons close to the Demilitarized Zone, designed to intimidate the then non-nuclear North. It was only withdrawn in 1991, under pressure from the South Korean peace movement; but the US continued its rehearsals for a long-range nuclear bombing strike on North Korea at least up to 1998, and probably to this very day....

“North Korea knows that the world is full of nuclear hypocrisy. Non-nuclear countries bow to the prerogative of the great powers that possess the bomb, while resenting their monopoly. They recognize that entry into the ‘nuclear club’ paradoxically earns the respect of current club members—at the same time as it threatens annihilation for those outside.”

South Korea: Mass Protests Against U.S. Troops

Increased American belligerence toward North Korea comes in the context of unprecedented mass demonstrations in South Korea against the presence of 37,000 American troops in that country. The protests were touched off after soldiers driving an American armored per-

The substantial U.S. military presence in South Korea is not only a dagger aimed at the North Korean and Chinese deformed workers states but an assertion of American interests in the region against potential rivals in Asia, chiefly Japan. It also serves as a warning to South Korea's combative union movement, threatening to drown in blood any challenge to the capitalist order. From its suppression of the "autumn harvest" rising in 1946 to orchestrating the bloody Kwangju massacre of 1980, in which some 2,000 people were killed to put down an insurrectionary revolt, the U.S. military has been a key force for counterrevolutionary repression on the peninsula.

According to press reports, the recent wave of demonstrations in South Korea has been accompanied by a growing sympathy for the North. A *New York Times* (28 December 2002) article quoted one protester saying, "If North Korea would be threatened by the United States with nuclear weapons, North Korea can also have them." But it is vital to distinguish between solidarity with North Korea on a *class* basis—defense of the deformed workers state against South Korea and the U.S. and Japanese imperialist powers—and solidarity on the basis of Korean *nationalism*.

Much of the radical student movement in South Korea has supported the North Korean regime as the most consistent purveyor of Korean nationalism against the U.S. and Japanese imperialists. However, nationalist ideology serves to tie the potentially powerful South Korean proletariat to its own ruling class, buttressing the latter's aspirations for a united *capitalist* Korea.

The combativity of the working class has been demonstrated repeatedly, not least in the enormous struggles of the 1970s and '80s which broke the stranglehold of the CIA-sponsored, corporatist Korean Federation of Trade Unions and gave rise to independent unions, now grouped in the Korean Confederation of Trade Unions (KCTU). These struggles also helped put an end to open military rule in the late 1980s. But the KCTU leadership has increasingly sought to channel the militancy of the workers into support for political representatives of the rapacious South Korean bourgeoisie.

U.S. imperialist belligerence toward North Korea nearly capsized the “Sunshine Policy” of South Korean president Kim Dae Jung, whose attempts at “engaging” Pyongyang were aimed at undermining the deformed workers state through capitalist economic penetration. But Roh won the presidential election vowing to continue Kim’s policy.

For their part, the North Korean Stalinists have long called for “peaceful reunification” with the South. This is a recipe for reunification on the basis of capitalist wage slavery and the annexation

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of the North by the *chaebol*, the giant conglomerates that dominate South Korean capitalism. In an attempt to attract capital investment from South Korea and elsewhere, the Pyongyang regime is now promoting the construction of two large free-trade zones and has made other moves toward Chinese-style “market reforms.” Despite continuing severe food shortages, rationing was abolished and housing rents and utility charges have been introduced. Meanwhile, Pyongyang’s pleas for the U.S., Japan and other imperialist powers to adopt policies of “non-aggression” foster dangerous illusions that these imperialists can be appeased.

Western left groups like the U.S. Workers World Party (WWP) which act as cheerleaders for the North Korean regime also play into the hands of the South Korean bourgeoisie and U.S. imperialism. *Workers World* (9 January) hails the Pyongyang rulers’ “skill at defending the socialist base of their society even while opening political and commercial relations with the south.” Meanwhile on the ground in the U.S., WWP fosters illusions that the Democratic Party is in some way a progressive alternative to the Republicans, most recently by building platforms for Democratic politicians at rallies against Bush’s threatened war on Iraq. Yet if anything, the Democrats today have a **harder** posture toward North Korea than Bush’s Republicans. Thus Warren Christopher, former secretary of state in the Clinton administration, recently called on Bush to “step back from his fixation on attacking Iraq” because “the threats from North Korea and from international terrorism are more imminent” (*New York Times*, 31 December 2002).

Democratic Labor Party: Left Cover for Korean Nationalism

During last month’s South Korean elections, various left groups in South Korea and abroad touted Kwon Young Kil’s new Democratic Labor Party (DLP) as an alternative to both the traditional right wing and bourgeois liberals like Kim Dae Jung and Roh Moo Hyun. In the 1997 elections, Kwon, a former KCTU leader, ran for president under the rubric “People’s Victory 21.” This was a class-collaborationist lash-up with various liberal groups that promoted nationalist opposition to “foreign interference” and similar rhetoric seeking to deflect class anger away from the domestic exploiters. This time, Kwon won 3.9 percent of the vote as the DLP’s presidential candidate. While the DLP is based in large part on the KCTU union federation, Kwon from the outset defined it as a “party of progressives” which sought to create a “coalition of liberal forces” with groups such as the Green Party (*Joong Ang Ilbo*, 29 June 2002).

Echoing the reformist verbiage traditionally associated with West European social-democratic parties, the DLP’s fundamental role is to act as a pressure group on the “liberal” wing of the South Korean bourgeoisie. Thus, Kwon saluted former president Kim Dae Jung’s “Sunshine Policy,” saying: “He achieved historic feats such as reducing military tension on the Korean peninsula and setting the foundation for a peace regime between the two Koreas.” The DLP also cosigned a June 2002 “Solidarity Message for Peace from Korean Peace Groups” which stated that “North Korea’s nuclear and missile development must be settled to build [a] peaceful Korean Peninsula.” Such calls for disarmament of the North and “peaceful relations” ultimately reflect the interests of South Korea’s *chaebol* bourgeoisie and its drive for capitalist reunification.

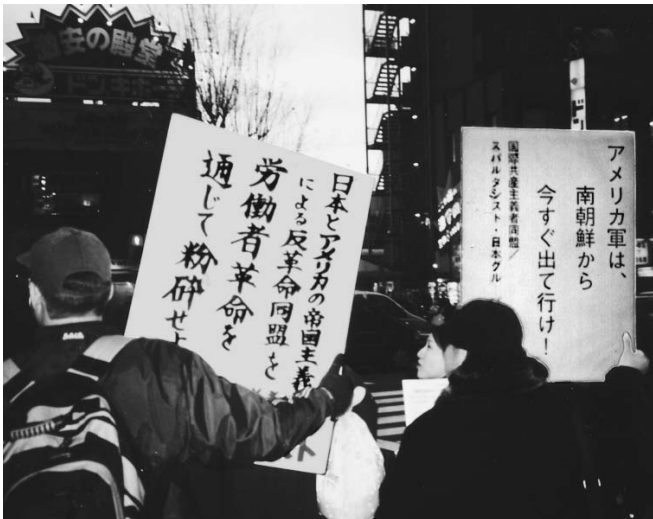
The International Socialists of South Korea (ISSK), affiliated to the late Tony Cliff’s Socialist Workers Party in Britain, supported Kwon’s 1997 candidacy and has more recently liquidated its forces into the DLP. An article on the South Korean elections in the 11 January British *Socialist Worker* (which is entirely uncritical of Roh) states: “The division of the Korean peninsula into two states is a relic of the Cold War.” And the Clif-

fites would like nothing more than to get rid of that “relic” through “democratic” counterrevolution.

In fact, the origins of the Cliffite tendency lie in its refusal to defend the North Korean workers state against the counter-revolutionary invasion by U.S., British and other imperialist troops in 1950-53, for which it was rightly expelled from the Trotskyist movement. Under the rubric “Neither Washington nor Moscow,” the Cliffites went on to embrace every conceivable CIA-backed anti-Soviet force, from Lech Walesa’s Solidarność in Poland to the Islamic fundamentalist *mujahedin* who fought the Red Army in Afghanistan to the Yeltsin-led counterrevolution in the Soviet Union itself.

In South Korea, the Cliffites have long gone out of their way to make clear that they share the *chaebol* bourgeoisie’s hatred for the North Korean deformed workers state. The ISSK demonstrated this in 1993 even as their own comrades were dragged off to prison under the National Security Law (see “Free Choi Il Bung and All South Korean Class War Prisoners!” WV No. 574, 23 April 1993). They assured the deeply anti-Communist regime that ISSK leader Choi “had not broken the National Security Law by reading banned literature from the North or belonging to a foreign organization. On the contrary, he had published books critical of regimes like North Korea” (*Socialist Worker* [U.S.], February 1993).

Striking a much more left posture is the British Workers Power (WP) group. While also presenting support for the DLP as a “positive development,” WP calls “for the immediate withdrawal of the USA’s troops and for scrapping all military treaties with it,” and states that “revolutionaries should stand for the unconditional defence of North Korea.



Spartacist Japan

December 31 Tokyo protest against U.S. troops in Korea. Spartacist Group Japan sign on far left reads: “Smash Counterrevolutionary Alliance Between Japanese and American Imperialism Through Workers Revolution!”

This includes its right to possess nuclear reactors and to develop nuclear weapons, if it can” (*Workers Power Global*, 22 December 2002). This principled defensist position on North Korea stands in sharp contrast to WP’s refusal to defend China, whose fate is of even greater significance for the international proletariat. WP declared “Capitalist Restoration Triumphs in China” (*Workers Power*, November 2000). Despite massive inroads by overseas Chinese and imperialist capital, encouraged by the venal Stalinist bureaucracy, China remains a deformed workers state based on a collectivized economy. It must be defended against capitalist counterrevolution.

In fact, far from having a principled Trotskyist position in regard to the deformed and degenerated workers states, WP has a history of sashaying back and forth across the class line depending on the prevailing political climate and its own political appetites. With widespread popular opposition among South Korean workers and youth to the American military presence and significant sympathy for the North, WP today calls for defense of North Korea. At the time of the Soviet intervention into Afghanistan in 1979, WP took a step to the left, breaking with its Cliffite origins and acknowledging that the Soviet Union was a degenerated workers state. But in the end what was definitive for WP was the anti-Soviet political climate at home. Thus, WP simultaneously joined with the Cliffites

and other social-democratic apologists for imperialism in denouncing the Soviet military intervention. By the late 1980s, WP was apologizing for anti-Soviet Baltic nationalists and touring Russian fascists in Britain. At the time of Yeltsin’s pro-imperialist power grab in August 1991, WP **boasted** that one of its supporters stood on the barricades of counter-revolution outside Yeltsin’s headquarters in Moscow.

Well to the right of WP’s current stance on Korea is an Internet statement by the International Bolshevik Tendency (IBT) titled “South Korean Presidential Election: Vote for the DLP!! Oust Its Reformist Leadership!!” (18 December 2002). The IBT was formed two decades ago by a handful of defectors from the Spartacist tendency who couldn’t stomach our hard Soviet-defensist line at the height of Ronald Reagan’s Cold War II. In its lengthy treatise, the IBT nowhere calls for U.S. troops to get out of South Korea or for the right of North Korea to possess nuclear weapons!

The IBT admits that the DLP’s stand for “reunification of the fatherland” would mean capitalist reunification. But this doesn’t stop the IBT from giving “critical support” to a party that advocates capitalist counterrevolution. The IBT has a *pro forma* paragraph saying that reunification of Korea under capitalism “would be a defeat for the proletariat internationally” and noting that “the working class should defend North Korea against the designs of the South Korean and international bourgeoisies to plunder the deformed workers’ state.” At the same time, the IBT waxes eloquent about the supposed virtues of the South Korean rulers’ “Sunshine Policy”: “The realization of the ‘Sunshine policy’ would have removed a major justification for the



Reuters

Seoul: Militant rally last February in support of electrical utility workers strike against privatization threat.

attempts to broker a “normalization” of relations does not mean that the Japanese bourgeoisie’s approach is in any way “peaceful.” This was underlined when the Japanese coast guard one year ago sank a North Korean ship in Chinese waters. While certainly not excluding military confrontation, Tokyo is today concentrating on economic penetration of North Korea. Japan is North Korea’s second-largest trading partner, and Japanese capitalists are increasingly entrusting production to North Korean plants, where labor costs are low and the quality of work is high.

The right-wing Koizumi government used North Korea’s recent admission of the bizarre and senseless kidnapping of Japanese citizens years ago to whip up an atmosphere of anti-Communist, chauvinist hysteria. Revolutionaries in Japan have a special duty to defend the North Korean deformed workers state and to oppose growing Japanese militarism and the bourgeoisie’s persecution of Japan’s ethnic Korean minority. On December 31, our comrades of the Spartacist Group Japan (SGJ) joined with other Japanese and Korean leftists at a Tokyo demonstration against the U.S. troops in South Korea. Our comrades raised placards calling for U.S. troops out of South Korea, for the right of China and North Korea to have nuclear weapons, for the unconditional military defense of China and North Korea against Japanese imperialism, and for citizenship rights for Koreans, Chinese and all foreign workers in Japan.

Fundamentally, the defense of those states where capitalism has been overthrown requires the extension of proletarian rule to the advanced capitalist countries. Yet it is this perspective that is not only alien but anathema to the nationalist bureaucratic castes that rule in North Korea and China. The Stalinist bureaucrats in Pyongyang and Beijing fear that socialist revolution in South Korea and Japan would quickly inspire proletarian political revolutions that would result in their forced evacuation from their positions of privilege and power. Likewise, a political revolution in China or North Korea would have an enormous impact on South Korea and Japan, the industrial powerhouse of Asia.

What is needed above all is the forging of internationalist proletarian parties around the world. Our comrades of the SGJ are committed to the struggle to forge a Leninist vanguard party to lead the fight for proletarian revolution in Japan. For our part, the Spartacist League/U.S. fights to build a revolutionary workers party—part of a reformed Fourth International—that can lead the multiracial proletariat in socialist revolution to sweep away U.S. imperialism, the most dangerous force on the planet. **U.S. troops out of South Korea now!** ■

(continued from page 1)

The proposed contract was negotiated with a gun held to the union's head by a viciously right-wing government, determined at all costs to enforce labor peace as it prepares to launch war against Iraq. But the ILWU is saddled with a leadership that was predisposed to backing down from any struggle in the face of a mere water pistol. Before the fight could even begin, the leadership's allegiance to the capitalist order undermined the capacity of the union to defend itself and the livelihoods of the membership.

How was the union to combat the government's attacks, waged in the name of "national security," when its leadership had already signed on to the "war on terror," endorsing calls for increased security on the waterfront and proposing that the ILWU ranks be the policemen? The ILWU bureaucracy pledged its allegiance to the bloody aims of U.S. imperialism by promising to keep military cargo moving. How could the power of the union have been mobilized to fight the capitalists of the PMA when its leadership was mobilizing to round up votes for the capitalists of the Democratic Party? As the ranks slaved on the docks under Taft-Hartley, 30 ILWUers were dispatched across the country to campaign for a vote to the Democrats on November 5—this despite the fact that Senator Dianne Feinstein and other Democrats supported the use of Taft-Hartley against the ILWU.

PMA head Joseph Miniace was out to break the union's control over work at the ports. But it appears that the PMA and the Bush administration decided, for the time being, to reach a truce with the ILWU leadership with a contract offer that widens the gap between the ranks on the docks and the increasingly highly skilled and highly paid "steady men," who bypass the union hiring hall and report directly to their employer.

Two roads lie before the ILWU. There is the bureaucrats' program of class collaboration which has seriously undermined the union's strength and now threatens its potential destruction as an industrial union. Or there is the road of class struggle. As we wrote in the midst of the ILWU contract negotiations ("ILWU Threatened by 'National Unity' Crusade," WV No. 785, 9 August 2002):

"In the midst of an economic recession and with an aggressively hostile government, the longshoremen are indeed in a tough position. But it is false to think that if you just keep your head down, they'll leave you alone. There's no hope if the union surrenders its power in advance. Every concession won by the workers took hard struggle against the bosses and their government. A prerequisite is to remove the roadblocks to class struggle, beginning by waging a political fight against the present labor leadership, which sees the world through the same lens as the ruling class and whose purpose is to ensure the subordination of the workers to the 'national interests' of the enemy class."



WV Photo

L.A. port truckers protest anti-immigrant Prop. 187, November 1994.

Restoring the ILWU as an industrial power on the West Coast docks must begin by bringing all "steady men" back to the union hiring hall, with equal pay for equal work at the highest rate of pay, and demanding a return to the six-hour day at eight hours' pay. Such steps would strengthen the union for future strike action and greatly improve safety. Essential for building up the union's strength is the fight for the unionization of the largely immigrant port truckers who are crucial to the movement of cargo in and out of the ports. Such organizing efforts, together with the fight for a shorter workweek with no loss in pay, would make a critical link to the masses of black and Latino poor by opening up more union jobs. But to realize even such an elementary program for restoring the fighting strength of the longshore union requires a leadership that will fight in opposition to the aims and interests of the capitalist class enemy, its government and political parties.

The entire working class, immigrants, black people, the poor, the aged—the overwhelming majority of this society—face an all-sided assault by the obscenely wealthy U.S. rulers, aimed at further enriching themselves off the backs of labor as they squelch any resistance. But this too stokes the explosive class contradictions building up in this country. The current reactionary climate can change rapidly under the impact of the class struggle at home and imperialist war abroad. ILWU members demonstrated their capacity to struggle when in September the union stopped renewing the contract on a daily basis and began to observe safe work practices in self-defense against lethal employer speedup. In the ensuing conflicts on the docks, union members applied both ingenuity and solidarity in the face of continuous employer provocations. During the lock-out, the union acted decisively to prevent the use of IAM mechanics to operate longshore equipment. But to effectively struggle against the U.S. bourgeoisie in the future means evaluating and learning the lessons of this period of confrontation with the bosses.

Defend the Hiring Hall— Recall the “Steady Men”!

The proposed settlement was brokered by federal mediators, with help from Richard Trumka, No. 2 man in the AFL-CIO bureaucracy. Spinosa hailed it as “a win-win for business, labor and our national economy” (ILWU press release, 23 November 2002). On December 12 the ILWU Coast Caucus overwhelmingly endorsed the contract, over the notable opposition of delegates representing maritime clerks’ locals from San Francisco northward, whose jobs are directly threatened by its provisions. Now union members are faced with a bitter choice. They can accept a contract which leaves them in a worse position to fight further encroachments by the state and the maritime bosses. Or they can vote it down. This would leave them pitted against a right-wing, labor-hating government intent on destroying any obstacle in the way of its war drive—including the ILWU—while

saddled with a union leadership that acts as a junior partner of those who have declared war on the labor movement. If workers in one of the most powerful unions in the country feel they have little choice but to vote for this contract, it is a searing indictment of the labor bureaucracy, from the ILWU to the AFL-CIO.

The proposed contract's six-year term is a big concession to the employers, and the capitalists' mouthpiece, the *Wall Street Journal* (26 November 2002), made it clear that in the introduction of technology, "the ports won." The contract outlines a framework for introducing new



UP

During 1971 strike, ILWU “progressive” Harry Bridges ordered longshoremen to load military cargo for U.S. war against Vietnam.

WV Photo

technology that will initially eliminate a projected 400 maritime clerk positions through attrition by redefining and reorganizing their work, and by introducing computer scanning of cargo data, including from remote terminals. Future technological innovations are to be decided by arbitration. Significantly, the PMA will be able to implement such proposals over the union's objection before the arbitration stage. While for the moment only the clerk jobs are affected, these provisions set a deadly precedent for substantially reducing the longshore workforce generally. And the union has renewed the "no-strike" clause, a major barrier to the ILWU using its muscle in disputes with the PMA over technology for the next six years.

A whole series of new provisions in the contract proposal add up to a big pay increase for skilled equipment operators, largely steady men, while tossing a measly average annual increase of 50 cents per hour to less skilled longshoremen. It also formalizes sizable wage incentives that are paid to steady men. An unprecedented pension increase—up to \$63,000 in the last year of the contract for those who can survive 35 years in this dangerous industry—is included to mollify the most senior layer of the workforce. As an additional sweetener, the PMA agreed to a modest extension of the ILWU's already good health care benefits.

The PMA's contract offer aims to

intensify craft divisions within the union, taking a major step further down a path that undermines the union hiring hall. Forged in the 1930s when work on the docks still consisted of gang labor, the hiring hall gives the ILWU a decisive say over who works, where they work and how they work on the waterfront. Historically the hiring hall prevented the bosses from pitting skilled workers against unskilled, from discriminating by race, sex or politics, and from victimizing union militants. For the PMA the hiring hall has become an anachronism with the advent of highly automated containerized shipping, but it remains the core of union power on the docks and must be consciously defended. A vivid demonstration was given last September when ILWU officials called steady men back to the hall, infuriating the PMA.

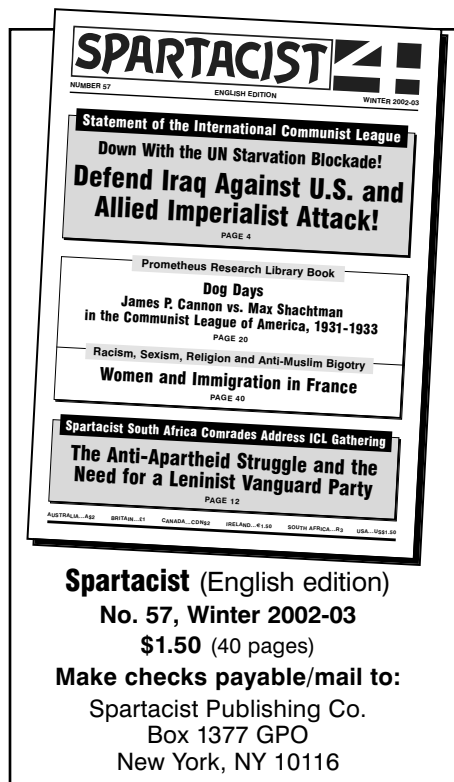
The category of steady man was created in the 1960s. Called “company men” by longshoremen, the highly paid steady men develop loyalty to the shippers and terminal operators that hire them. In contrast, some senior workers refuse to accept company offers of “steady” status and the accompanying higher wages because they understand the threat to the hiring hall.

Steady men have already become the dominant force in the longshore division of the ILWU, based on their numbers and leadership role in Los Angeles/Long Beach Local 13, which is larger than all the rest of West Coast longshore. The proposed contract gives even more pay incentives exclusively to senior longshore-

men in the port of L.A./Long Beach. Such divisions between the ports undermine the historic coastwide organization of the union into a single bargaining unit, a crucial source of its power.

In 1959, under the pressure of Taft-Hartley, the workforce was divided into "A-men" and "B-men," weakening the union's integrity as an organization of all workers in the industry. The workforce is further divided by two categories of "casuals"; like the B-men, they have no union status, while doing most of the same work as the registered longshoremen. With the introduction of containerization in 1961, the workforce was significantly reduced and union power concentrated in the skilled crane operators, increasingly making the ILWU a job trust. Unlike the construction trades, however, it has the highly significant peculiarity in racist America that it is made up of a large proportion of blacks and Latinos in the ports of Oakland and Los Angeles/Long Beach respectively. Despite its position as part of a true aristocracy of labor, the union's membership bridges a major fault line in American society, the racial divide, and thus provides a key link between the power of organized labor and the oppressed ghetto and barrio masses.

The pivotal position of longshoremen in the operation of the ports has enabled them to win conditions and wages placing them at the top of skilled workers



nationally while their numbers have shrunk by a factor of ten. To the extent the union becomes the representative of only the most privileged layer, it undermines its capacity to struggle against the bosses. The union bureaucracy, however, basing itself on the most privileged, aims only to protect that job trust within capitalism, accepting its dwindling numbers as new technology is introduced. Abolish the category of steady man and trash the whole invidious tier system! No second-class union workers—get rid of the system of B-men and casuals!

One of the gains of the mass struggles that built the ILWU was a six-hour workday on the docks. Long in abeyance—due to the bureaucracy’s refusal to defend it—enforcing the six-hour shift for eight hours’ pay would not only make the docks a lot safer for the workers; it would create more jobs, enabling all longshoremen to get enough work. For higher manning scales to put more workers on the docks! Against the mass unemployment created by the capitalist system with its inevitable recessions and depressions, it is necessary to fight for a sliding scale of hours to divide the available work among all workers, uniting the employed and unemployed in the fight for jobs.

**For Industrial Unionism—
Organize the Port Truckers!**

The Achilles’ heel of union power on the waterfront remains the port truckers, who are not organized by any union. The lockout showed clearly that in any strike, the solidarity of the port truckers will be key to shutting down the docks if the PMA should attempt to move cargo with scab operators, whether renegade steady men, Operating Engineers or Navy personnel. Nothing moves on or off the docks without the truckers except where rail lines reach into the terminals, when the solidarity of rail workers also becomes critical.

Organizing the port truckers would enormously strengthen the power of all workers on the docks. It would also counteract the movement to turn the waterfront into a craft-union operation by organizing the entire industrial base at the ports. Most importantly, it would join together in struggle the union and immigrant workers in the face of mounting anti-immigrant attacks. But despite the much ballyhooed “tripartite alliance” of the ILWU, International Longshoremen’s Association and Teamsters tops, who claimed to be organizing port truckers, the bureaucrats have not lifted a finger in this regard. On the contrary, they have rejected efforts by port truckers to join the ILWU or another union over the last decade. The labor tops regard them with utter contempt and have actively joined the witchhunt against these overwhelmingly immigrant workers who are in the gun sights of the government post-September 11.

A telling example is the ILWU tops’ collaboration in writing the new Maritime Transportation Security Act (MSA), passed by both houses of Congress with no opposition and signed by Bush on November 25. Under the guise of fighting “terrorism,” this law directs the Department of Transportation to develop secure areas of the ports and to limit access for anyone convicted of a felony within the last seven years, based on the government’s determination of who is “a terrorism risk.” This directly threatens the jobs of black and Latino longshoremen who have been on the receiving end of racist cop harassment in the so-called “war on drugs.” The new law mandates the issuance of a “transportation security identification card” that will contain every port worker’s photo, fingerprints, signature, driver’s license number and criminal background (*Los Angeles Times*, 16 December 2002). It also calls for deterring any “transportation security incident,” which specifically includes “economic disruption,” a direct threat to union activity at the ports.

But instead of fighting this assault on the union, the ILWU bureaucrats signed on to the government’s “security” witch-



WV Photo

Longshoremen were at core of Oakland united-front mobilization last February in defense of immigrant rights and in opposition to repressive “anti-terror” laws.

hunt, with Spinosa vituperating against “unknown truck drivers” being “allowed free access to our work environment.” During negotiations the ILWU misleaders repeatedly offered up their members to help police the ports, while at solidarity rallies they raised placards calling to “Fight Terrorism, Not American Workers.” At the same time, the AFL-CIO tops, pitching themselves as the government’s most loyal servants, sent a letter to Congress demanding that the shipping “industry giants stop being a dangerous roadblock to safety on our docks.”

The end result of the bureaucrats’ pledge of allegiance to the “war on terror” is that now all dock workers are facing a sinister government witchhunt. To unite the workers to stop it, it is necessary to organize the port truckers. But this can only be carried out in a fight to break the unions from the bureaucracy’s protectionism and anti-immigrant chauvinism, raising on the union’s standard the demand for full citizenship rights for immigrants. Fighting to mobilize the ILWU against the MSA and in defense of immigrant rights last February 9 in Oakland, the call for a mass labor-centered protest issued by the Labor Black League for Social Defense and the Partisan Defense Committee declared: “We must fight against deportations, for unionizing the unorganized and for a shorter workweek with no loss in pay in order to spread the available work. Let our motto be *class* struggle—joining forces against our common enemy, the capitalist ruling class!”

Bush’s recent ruling permitting Mexican truckers across the U.S. border was greeted with howls of outrage by many officials in AFL-CIO unions. The trade on which the longshoremen depend for their work is by its very nature international. In any showdown with the bosses, longshoremen rely on the support of their international counterparts. For U.S. unions to align with the rapacious U.S. ruling class in “national unity” against foreign workers creates a fundamental obstacle to such solidarity. Instead labor must be mobilized in concrete actions of proletarian internationalism in the fight for the unionization of all dock and transport workers so that work is performed by union labor at union scale, no matter where; only union hands should touch any container from the point of loading to the point of discharge.

The Portworkers Solidarity Committee (PWSC), a group of union supporters including self-proclaimed socialist organizations convened by a more left-talking wing of the Bay Area Local 10 bureaucracy, has made a pretense of defending immigrant rights and opposing the U.S. war moves against Iraq. But the overwhelming majority of the work of the PWSC consisted of building “solidarity rallies” that provided an uncritical platform for the bureaucracy to spout its flag-waving patriotism and stump for the Democratic Party. This only serves to give a left cover to the bureaucracy’s program of support to “national unity,” in which they try to sell to the workers the

lie that they have interests in common with the U.S. rulers.

The International Socialist Organization (ISO), which was a central organizer of the PWSC, aims to promote a more “militant” wing of the bureaucracy. The 10 January issue of the ISO’s *Socialist Worker* prints a statement by ILWU Local 10 business agent Jack Heyman demanding that “longshore workers should reject this contract and send our negotiating committee back.” Some alternative!! This putative oppositionist can summon up nothing more than sending back the very bureaucrats he postures at denouncing for “acquiescing to government intimidation.”

In this article, Heyman invokes the “principled legacy” of the ILWU in opposing reactionary government policies domestically and internationally. A whole wing of the ILWU bureaucracy was schooled in the “progressive” tradition of the Harry Bridges leadership, which was forged in the crucible of the Communist Party’s popular front with Franklin D. Roosevelt’s “New Deal” Democrats. These bureaucrats sometimes talk left, professing solidarity with the world’s oppressed. But since they don’t mobilize the membership in action, this amounts to little more than a distraction to keep the ranks busy while the tops conduct business unionism as usual.

**Build a Revolutionary
Workers Party!**

All wings of the ILWU bureaucracy and their reformist tails expressed dismay that the government was “colluding” with the PMA. But in this capitalist system the government exists to enforce the bosses’ interests against the working class here and to defend the capitalist rulers’ interests abroad. Karl Marx described the government as the executive committee of the capitalist class, and the first step in any workers struggle must be a sharp

break with the capitalist government and its parties.

The situation facing the ILWU today is a stark example of what Leon Trotsky, one of the central leaders of the Russian Revolution, observed more than 60 years ago: “The trade unions of our time can either serve as secondary instruments of imperialist capitalism for the subordination and disciplining of workers and for obstructing the revolution, or, on the contrary, the trade unions can become the instruments of the revolutionary movement of the proletariat.”

—“Trade Unions in the Epoch of Imperialist Decay” (1940)

Unionized workers are now down to some 13 percent of the workforce. Without a renewal of the labor movement, American workers are facing a return to the brutal conditions of the 1920s, before the great labor struggles that led to industrial union organization. But even the simple question of organizing the unorganized across the country requires taking the struggle off the narrow terrain of trade unionism. The very fact that the U.S. South remains a bastion of the “open shop” is testimony that any organizing effort requires a battle for black rights. This would immediately pose the need to break with the Democratic and Republican parties of racist American capitalism.

The savage attacks on the living standards of the working class and on the very ability of the poor and helpless to live, the slashing of health care at all levels, the empty futures of youth for whom there is little education and few jobs and the rampant racist attacks are no less the product of the bureaucracy’s class-collaborationist policies that have sapped the organized strength of the unions. Armed with a class-struggle program, a union with the power of the ILWU could spearhead a fight against these ravages and begin to turn the tables on the bosses.

The catastrophe of joblessness, threatening the disintegration of the working class, can be done away with—but not without getting rid of production for profit. It is necessary to fight for a workers government, where the means of production have been taken away from the capitalists and made the collective property of the working class. Under such conditions, labor-saving technology would mean less time at work and a vast improvement in conditions of life for the population as a whole.

The road forward requires a political struggle against the labor misleaders and the forging of a new leadership that will fight to mobilize union power independently of the bosses’ government and their parties. Such struggles are necessary to construct a revolutionary workers party that will be the champion of all the exploited and oppressed against the bloody U.S. capitalist class, the enemy of the world’s peoples. We seek to build such an organization, as a section of an international party, which can seize power and overturn the decaying capitalist system so that those who labor will rule. ■

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Local Directory and Public Offices**

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National Office: Box 1377 GPO, New York, NY 10116 (212) 732-7860

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Box 390840, Central Sta.
Cambridge, MA 02139
(617) 666-9453

Chicago

Box 6441, Main PO
Chicago, IL 60680
(312) 563-0441

Public Office:

Sat. 2-5 p.m.
222 S. Morgan
(Buzzer 23)

Los Angeles

Box 29574, Los Feliz Sta.
Los Angeles, CA 90029
(213) 380-8239

Public Office: Sat. 2-5 p.m.
3806 Beverly Blvd., Room 215

New York

Box 3381, Church St. Sta.
New York, NY 10008
(212) 267-1025

Public Office:

Tues. 6:30-8:30 p.m.
and Sat. 1-5 p.m.
299 Broadway, Suite 318

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Box 29497
Oakland, CA 94604
(510) 839-0851

Public Office:

Sat. 1-5 p.m.
1634 Telegraph
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Iraq...

(continued from page 12)

who is running for president in opposition to an Iraq war, these liberal Democratic Party politicians seek to position themselves to get ahead of and contain the increasing discontents that the capitalist rulers' war at home and abroad will generate among working people and minorities. It is small wonder that the majority of these politicians are black Democrats who are more attuned to the fact that there is enormous anger and disaffection particularly among black people and the poor.

The January 18 demonstrations are scheduled for the weekend of Martin Luther King Day. The protest organizers invoke the legacy of Martin Luther King to draw the link between the fight against racial oppression at home and war abroad in order to promote liberal opposition to war. To be sure, there is an inextricable link between the two. Just look around. From the get-go, the "war on terror" has been brought home in a racist witchhunt against immigrants, primarily Muslims and Arabs. And as the U.S. amasses forces for war against Iraq abroad, it is rounding up male immigrants over the age of 16 from 20 different countries while threatening Iraqi Americans and Iraqis in the U.S. with mass incarceration.

The fight against imperialist war cannot be divorced from the struggles of working people and minorities against all manifestations of capitalist oppression. The multiracial working people of America and the semicolonial masses of Iraq have a common enemy in the exceptionally war-crazed, labor-hating gang in the White House and the capitalist class it repre-



Israeli military terrorizes West Bank town of Nablus. U.S.-led "war on terror" has given Zionists green light to intensify murderous repression of Palestinians.

haven't noticed, the U.S. capitalists have acquired their untold billions of dollars through the exploitation of labor and the immiseration of the oppressed. If you want to get your hands on the money, you have to break the power of the bourgeoisie and place the means of production in the hands of those whose labor creates the wealth of society.

LRP: "United Front" with Imperialist Liberals

Neither WWP/ANSWER nor any of the other reformist groups endorsing these protests raises the necessary call for the defense of Iraq against U.S. attack because to do so would mean antagonizing Democratic Party liberals. The cen-

gram against imperialist war with representatives of the very capitalist class in whose interests such wars are waged. To attempt to do so can only mean subordinating the working class, the only force that can actually defeat imperialism, to the interests of its capitalist exploiters.

In contrast, revolutionaries seek to break the disastrous unity of antiwar militants with the most deceptive wing of the bourgeoisie and replace it with a working-class unity—a unity based on a program of international class struggle. As V.I. Lenin, leader of the Bolshevik Party which led the only successful antiwar movement in history by overthrowing the rule of capitalist imperialism in Russia at the height of World War I,

sented real gains for the working class internationally. It was the elementary duty of revolutionaries to unconditionally militarily defend the Soviet Union against imperialism and internal counterrevolution, as it is necessary today to defend the remaining bureaucratically deformed workers states—China, Vietnam, Cuba and North Korea. But the LRP howled along with the imperialist wolves in opposing the Soviet military intervention against the CIA-backed woman-hating Islamic fundamentalists in Afghanistan in the 1980s and stood with the counterrevolutionary forces headed by Boris Yeltsin that destroyed the Soviet degenerated workers state in 1991-92.

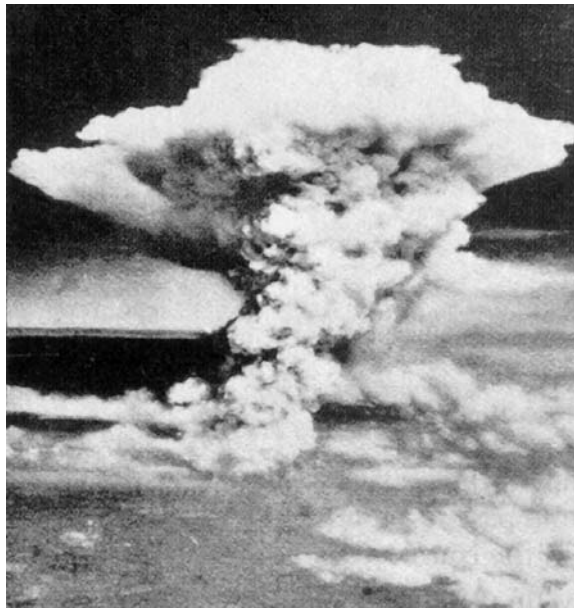
IG: Empty Bombast, Opportunist Practice

Another group that claims to stand apart from the reformist swamp is the centrist Internationalist Group (IG), which raises the call "Defeat U.S. Imperialism! Defend Iraq!" (*Internationalist*, September-October 2002). At the time of the U.S. military adventure in Afghanistan over a year ago, the IG loudly and indignantly took us to task for supposedly "flinching" in the face of jingoist war-mongering because we did not emblazon "Defeat U.S. Imperialism!" across the front page of *Workers Vanguard*. They attacked our slogan, "For Class Struggle Against Capitalist Rulers at Home!" writing in the *Internationalist* (Fall 2001) that "the emphasis on 'at home' is counterposed to the call to defeat the imperialists *abroad*" and claiming that our line "amounts to *nationalist, economist social pacifism*." But these days, the IG itself seems to have fallen into "economist social pacifism," writing in its current issue: "Our call for defeat of the imperialists means class struggle at home."

But this is all just cynical wordplay. As we noted at the time of the U.S. war against Afghanistan ("No to Bosses' National Unity! For Class Struggle at Home!" WV No. 768, 9 November 2001):

"At bottom, the IG deliberately muddles the question of a military defeat in a particular war with the proletarian defeat of one's bourgeoisie through socialist revolution. The latter is the program animating any truly revolutionary party in peacetime as in wartime. The slogans used to proceed toward that end—to lead the working masses from their current level of consciousness to the seizure of state power—are, however, necessarily conjunctural. Thus, upon returning to Russia after the overthrow of the tsar in early 1917, Lenin had to fight against those in the Bolshevik Party who wished to lend support to the bourgeois Provisional Government. Having won this battle, he then had to caution left proletarian elements of the party who wanted to immediately call for the overthrow of the Provisional Government. On 5 May 1917, the Central Committee passed the following motion authored by Lenin: 'The slogan "Down with the Provisional Government!" is an incorrect one at the present moment because, in the absence of a solid (i.e., a class-conscious and organized) majority of the people on the side of the revolutionary proletariat such a slogan is either an empty phrase, or, objectively, amounts to attempts of an adventurist character'."

And the IG's phrasemongering is of the most empty sort—fraudulent bombast which they peddle to impress the unwary in cyberspace while on the ground they practice pure opportunist



Asahi Shimbun



Ronald Haeblerle

U.S. imperialism's trail of mass terror: A-bombing of Japanese city of Hiroshima, 1945; massacre of Vietnamese villagers in My Lai, 1968.

sents. America's colossal military advantage over Iraq underscores the importance of class struggle in the imperialist centers as a chief means to defend Iraq. We look to the example of the Japanese dock workers in Sasebo, who refused to handle Japanese military goods destined for use in the war against Afghanistan in the fall of 2001. But the aim of the demo organizers is not to promote a class-struggle defense of immigrant rights and opposition to imperialist war, but rather to promote the idea that positive social change can come through liberal Democrats.

An ANSWER leaflet for the upcoming rally declares that King "believed it was impossible to wage a war on racism and poverty at home while waging a racist war against poor people in Vietnam." The U.S. ruling class never had the intention of waging a "war on racism and poverty," then or today. While King was hounded by the Feds and assassinated for being a symbol of the struggle for black equality, his political role was to keep the civil rights movement firmly tied to the racist Democratic Party of John F. Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson.

Another ANSWER leaflet for the January 18 protests argues: "Like Dr. King did during the Vietnam War, we will demand that hundreds of billions of dollars be spent on jobs, education, housing, healthcare and to meet human needs—not for wars of aggression in the Third World." In case these reformist idiots

trist League for the Revolutionary Party (LRP) strikes an oppositional posture, declaring: "We stand for the defeat of imperialism and the defense of the Iraqi people in any war against the imperialist powers" (*Proletarian Revolution*, Fall 2002). The LRP article also polemicizes against WWP/ANSWER for "pushing the liberal imperialist line" and providing a platform for the Democrats. However, we can't help but note that the LRP's defense of Iraq and calls to defeat imperialism are buried within an article that at bottom promotes the same class-collaborationist unity pushed by the reformist groups it attacks:

"The task of genuine revolutionaries is not just to 'build the movement,' although we are of course in favor of the largest and strongest anti-war protests possible. We need also to fight for them to be built as genuine united fronts, where all voices are heard, including that of revolutionaries—not just those who support the Democrats and other pro-imperialist liberals. We also fight within the movement for revolutionary proletarian leadership, so that it points to a lasting challenge to capitalist attacks and imperialist war."

By its own admission, the LRP promotes an alliance with the class enemy—"Democrats and other pro-imperialist liberals." The idea of building a "revolutionary proletarian leadership" out of such a cabal is downright absurd; however, it is a measure of the opportunist impulses that animate the LRP. There cannot be a common movement and a common pro-

explained in *Socialism and War* (1915):

"To rally these Marxist elements, however small their numbers may be at the outset; to reanimate, in their name, the now forgotten ideals of genuine socialism, and to call upon the workers of all lands to break with the chauvinists and rally about the old banner of Marxism—such is the task of the day."

The LRP's professed "stand for the defeat of imperialism" is a manifest fraud considering that this organization capitulated to the imperialists down the line in their drive to destroy the Soviet Union. Although bureaucratically degenerated, the USSR was a workers state, based on collectivized property forms which repre-

San Francisco, October 26: Reformist ISO seeks "unity" with liberal imperialist politicians to pressure U.S. rulers for "peace."



WV Photo

Marxism, War...

(continued from page 5)

Comrades know of the historic betrayal of the Second International, when nearly every section supported its own imperialist rulers in the war. This betrayal first emerged on 4 August 1914, when the entire parliamentary fraction of the German Social Democratic Party (SPD) voted for war credits so that the rulers could finance their war. The vote for war credits by the SPD marked a fundamental betrayal of Marxism. The SPD helped to push the international proletariat into the slaughterhouse. In her wartime pamphlet titled *The Crisis in the German Social Democracy*, but better known as the *Junius Pamphlet* since it was written under the pseudonym of Junius, Rosa Luxemburg powerfully described how the war showed the true nature of capitalism, ripping apart all the hypocrisy that imperialism uses to pursue its aims:

“Shamed, dishonored, wading in blood and dripping with filth—thus stands bourgeois society. And so it is. Not as we usually see it, pretty and chaste, playing the roles of peace and righteousness, of order, of philosophy, ethics and culture. It shows itself in its true, naked form—as a roaring beast, as an orgy of anarchy, as a pestilential breath, devastating culture and humanity.”

Right after the war credits vote, Lenin declared the Second International dead; Luxemburg characterized it as a “stinking corpse.” And it was in this period that the policy of revolutionary defeatism was advanced. This was a reactionary war on every side, a gruesome fight by big and



Palestinians under guns of Israeli troops in Ramallah, West Bank.

little imperialist powers over how many countries and peoples they would hold as slaves. Marxists had no side in this war, and in fact, the defeat of one’s own bourgeoisie was the lesser evil. The aim was to turn this imperialist war into a civil war between the exploited class, the proletariat, and the warmongering exploiters, the imperialist bourgeoisie.

But there is an interesting point to note here. Working for the defeat of your own imperialists did not mean advocating the victory of the other side. The position of revolutionary defeatism was to be taken up by the working classes in all the belligerent countries—i.e., they were all supposed to work for the defeat of their rulers. And this was in fact a point of polemic between Trotsky, who occupied a centrist position at the time, and Lenin. Trotsky claimed that Lenin’s position—that the defeat of the Russian imperialists was the lesser evil—amounted to

social-patriotism toward Germany. Lenin replied in a July 1915 article titled “The Defeat of One’s Own Government in the Imperialist War”:

“The phrase-banding Trotsky has completely lost his bearings on a simple issue. It seems to him that to desire Russia’s defeat *means* desiring the victory of Germany.... To help people that are unable to think for themselves, the Berne resolution...made it clear that in *all* imperialist countries the proletariat must now desire the defeat of its own governments.... “What is the substitute proposed for the defeat slogan? It is that of ‘neither victory nor defeat’.... This, however, is nothing but a paraphrase of the ‘*defence of the fatherland*’ slogan. It means shifting the issue to the level of a war between governments (who, according to the content of this slogan, are to *keep* to their old stand, ‘retain their positions’), and not to the level of the *struggle* of the oppressed classes against their governments! It means justifying the chauvinism of *all* the imperialist nations, whose bourgeoisie are always ready to say—

and do say to the people—that they are ‘only’ fighting ‘against defeat’.”

The German revolutionary Karl Liebknecht’s slogan “The Main Enemy Is at Home” provided a powerful and popular distillation of revolutionary defeatism. It was broadcast to all the workers of the belligerent countries, not only those of Germany. It was a recognition that to the German workers, for example, the French imperialists, the Russian imperialists, etc. were enemies, but that the main enemy was German imperialism. It was a call to turn the imperialist war into a civil war against the ruling classes who were pushing millions of young workers into an unprecedented slaughter.

The “main enemy” slogan is a popular expression of revolutionary defeatism, which in a nutshell applies when a war is reactionary on all sides. So, in contrast, as I’ve already stated, the U.S.-led war on Iraq would be just and defensive on the part of Iraq—we therefore have a side. But wars like World War I, for example, are simply over division and redivision of imperialist booty and are reactionary on all sides. Likewise, regional wars like the Iran/Iraq War or the Arab/Israeli wars of 1967 and ’73, where none of the combatants were imperialist powers, are also reactionary on all sides because neither side’s victory could possibly bring about an advance in the position of the proletariat, either internationally or in these particular countries. Hence, we adopt a revolutionary defeatist position in such wars as well, fighting for the defeat of all the belligerent countries through proletarian seizure of power.

[TO BE CONTINUED]

accommodation. For example, on paper the IG claims to share our position hailing the Soviet Red Army intervention into Afghanistan in the 1980s. But at an IG-initiated united-front protest at New York City’s Hunter College in November 2001 against the anti-immigrant witch-hunt accompanying the U.S. war against Afghanistan, not one of the IG’s placards, not one of their speakers and none of the propaganda they produced for the protest said a word about the Red Army or defense of the Soviet Union. In his speech to the protest, IG leader Jan Norden made no mention of the Red Army intervention, only declaring lamely: “We fought against the Taliban, we fought against the Islamic fundamentalists when the United States was pushing them.” The IG did not want to offend those, like the International Socialist Organization (ISO), the LRP or the Revolutionary Communist Party who had endorsed and attended the rally and who to a man were on the imperialists’ side against the Red Army in Afghanistan.

The IG’s utter silence in front of the crowd of several hundred people at Hunter on the force that could have defeated the U.S.-backed reactionaries in Afghanistan—the Soviet Red Army—demonstrates that its oh-so-revolutionary calls for the defeat of U.S. imperialism are so much hot air. When they produced a 32-page IG pamphlet (December 2001) devoted to the Hunter protest, the IG went so far as to edit out any reference to the Soviet intervention in the SL speech at the rally and completely eliminated any mention of the SYC speaker, who had said:

“All of the left groups now talk about how the U.S. armed and funded the *mujahedin* against the Soviet Union in Afghanistan in the ’80s. But what they don’t say is that they all capitulated to the imperialist anti-Soviet war drive, with, for example, the ISO hailing the *mujahedin* as ‘freedom fighters.’ Only we Trotskyists said: ‘Hail Red Army in Afghanistan!’”

Lessons of the Vietnam Antiwar Movement

An understanding of the dearly bought lessons of the past is crucial to the con-

sciousness that is necessary if the proletariat is to be mobilized in the struggle to shatter the rule of capitalist imperialism. The reformists wilfully falsify those lessons in order to peddle their opportunist wares to a new generation of fighters. Thus, Socialist Action leader Jeff Mackler holds up as a model the single-issue campaign organized by the National Peace Action Coalition (NPAC) during the Vietnam War to “Bring the troops home now!” (*Socialist Action*, November 2002).

Mackler himself was prominent in the ex-Trotskyist Socialist Workers Party which at the time dominated NPAC. Limiting the protests to pacifist demands to bring the troops home, NPAC explicitly appealed to (and succeeded in drawing in) liberal Democratic Party politicians who sought to extricate American imperialism from this *losing* colonial war and to head off a challenge to the capitalist order at home. To ensure that NPAC demonstrations remained “peaceful, legal,” i.e., safe for liberal imperialist politicians, the SWP policed the movement and at times bloodily attacked those who solidarized with the Vietnamese revolutionary fighters or opposed allying with the Democrats. In his article, Mackler continues to take aim at those “who insist that more militant tactics are required to stop the war machine,” arguing that such militancy is counterposed to building a “mass movement.”

The effect of NPAC was to deflect antiwar youth back into the confines of bourgeois electoral politics, and it played a key role in defusing enormous opportunities for struggle against the capitalist order. By the late 1960s and early ’70s, the ghettos had been erupting in upheaval for a number of years; workers had begun staging a number of militant strikes, some in defiance of both the government and the labor bureaucracy; and the heavily black and working-class GIs in Vietnam were in a semi-mutinous state. The National Guardsmen who shot down four antiwar protesters at Kent State in the spring of 1970 had just come from a strikebreaking mission against the Teamsters, who at the time were engaged in a huge national wildcat strike. But in sub-



WV Photo

Chicago, January 11: Contingent built by SL/SYC marches at antiwar protest.

ordinating opposition to the war to political representatives of the class enemy, NPAC’s class-collaborationist “antiwar” movement was counterposed to a revolutionary mobilization of the workers.

What brought an end to the Vietnam War was not NPAC’s peace crawls or even the more militant civil disobedience protests. Rather it was the battlefield victory of the Vietnamese workers and peasants, who were fighting not only to expel the American invaders but for a social revolution against the capitalist order. We called for military victory to the North Vietnamese deformed workers state and the South Vietnamese revolutionary fighters and raised the slogan “All Indochina Must Go Communist!”

The Spartacist League fought to win radical antiwar activists to the proletarian struggle. In an October 1967 leaflet titled “From Protest to Power,” we explained:

“A political movement built solely around the war is incapable of unifying the various forces of discontent within American society. On the contrary, the necessary support given to the suppression of the American working class by establishment ‘doves’—[antiwar Senator] Wayne Morse is a leading Congressional advocate of government strike-breaking while the lib-

eral establishment, including King, unanimously supported the bloody suppression of the ghetto risings—is a major obstacle to building a mass anti-war movement....

“The anti-war movement can force Johnson to withdraw U.S. troops only if he is more afraid of it than of the victory of the Vietnamese Revolution. No demonstration, however effective and militant, can do this. Only a movement capable of taking state power can. The anti-war movement has no future except as a force for building a party of revolutionary change.”

Today, as well, we fight to break the ideological chains that bind the working people, oppressed minorities and radicalized youth to the “lesser evil” Democratic Party of American imperialism. The central task remains the forging of a revolutionary workers party to lead the workers to power. Only by wresting the means of production from the hands of the capitalist imperialist rulers and creating an international planned economy can the needs of the billions of toilers now consigned to hideous poverty begin to be met and the threat of war ended once and for all. **Anti-imperialism abroad means class struggle at home! Defend Iraq against imperialist attack! ■**

WORKERS VANGUARD

Don't Crawl for the Democrats— The Other Party of Racism and War



U.S. Navy



AFP

Defend Iraq Against U.S. Imperialist Attack!

JANUARY 13—After weeks of storming into Iraqi government and industrial facilities, Hans Blix and his team of United Nations imperialist “inspectors” (spies) concede that they have found no evidence of “weapons of mass destruction.” But it doesn’t really matter in any case. The U.S. imperialists have already dispatched an invasion force of over 100,000 troops to the Persian Gulf region, with Britain deploying 20,000 more. These inspections are nothing but a pretext for war. Indeed, as demonstrated by the U.S.’s response to North Korea’s announcement that it is reactivating its nuclear weapons program, it is the very fact that Iraq has no such capability that emboldens the U.S. for war.

For all their talk that any war with Iraq have UN sanction, the French imperialists have already dispatched warships to the Gulf. The Social Democratic government of Gerhard Schröder in Germany, which won re-election on the basis of opposition to a war against Iraq, is now mouthing that no second UN resolution is necessary before an attack is launched. At the same time, there is massive opposition throughout West Europe to the impending war. Even in Britain, where Tony Blair’s Labour government has operated as a mouthpiece for the Bush White House, there have been antiwar demonstrations of hundreds of thousands. Last week, a shipment of military goods bound for the Gulf was halted when railway workers refused to move

U.S. imperialists are rapidly building up for devastating war against Iraq. Top right: Victim of U.S. bombing raid in Baghdad, 1999.

the freight train carrying it.

We stand for the military defense of semicolonial Iraq against U.S. imperialist attack. This entails no political support to the regime of Saddam Hussein, the bloody butcher of Iraqi workers, leftists, Shi’ite Muslims, Kurds and others. As such, he was a close ally and client of U.S. imperialism for two decades before he made a grab for Kuwait in 1990. Now the U.S. wants a more pliant regime and tighter control of the oil spigot, not least to put economic rivals like Japan and Germany, who are more dependent on Near East oil, on rations.

It is the height of cynicism that the world’s bloodiest power with the greatest arsenal of nuclear weapons claims to be going to war to rid Iraq of “weapons of mass destruction.” Even a dairy facility or pharmaceutical plant can be targeted as a potential facility for the production of chemical and biological weapons, as can water purification systems using chlorine. In short, this is a program for the obliteration of all industry and infrastructure in the country. Indeed, much of Iraq’s sewage and water treatment systems have already been devastated by American bombing. And one of the first targets of U.S. bombers in 1991 was a baby formula factory that the Americans claimed was a biological weapons facility.

Tens of thousands of Iraqis were killed

in the 1991 Gulf War, and more than 1.5 million have been killed since through the UN starvation sanctions. A recent report released by International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War estimates that as many as a quarter of a million people could be killed in the course of the coming war. Meanwhile, the Israeli government of Ariel Sharon—with jet fighters and helicopter gunships supplied by American imperialism—has used the U.S.-led “war on terror” to escalate its murderous onslaught against the Palestinian people, which could increase to cataclysmic proportions under cover of a U.S. war with Iraq. *Down with the U.S./Israel axis of terror! Defend the Palestinian people! All Israeli troops, settlers out of the Occupied Territories!*

Anti-Imperialism Abroad Means Class Struggle at Home!

The patriotic “one nation indivisible” hysteria whipped up following the criminal attack on the World Trade Center has grown thin under the weight of recession, mass layoffs and grotesque corporate corruption. And the country at large is far from united behind the war on Iraq. On January 11, 30,000 or more antiwar protesters marched in Los Angeles and many tens of thousands more are expected to turn out for nationwide protests on January 18 to demand “No War

on Iraq!” The October 26 demonstrations in Washington, D.C., San Francisco and other cities drew up to 250,000 people. The Spartacist League/Spartacus Youth Clubs built Revolutionary Internationalist Contingents in D.C. and San Francisco around the slogans: “For Class Struggle Against the U.S. Capitalist Rulers! Defend Iraq Against U.S. Imperialist Attack! Down With the UN Starvation Blockade!” Against Workers World Party (WWP) and its International ANSWER Coalition, organizers of these demonstrations, our contingent mobilizing called stressed (WV No. 789, 18 October 2002):

“They are mobilizing on the basis of opposition to a war on Iraq, but as the call for the demonstration makes clear, their activities are consciously aimed at enlisting a wing of the capitalist rulers—primarily Democratic Party politicians—to struggle for a more ‘humane’ imperialist capitalism.... It is futile to oppose war against Iraq but not oppose the economic system which generates war and the ideology that legitimizes it. Moreover, pushing illusions in the reformability of the bloody American imperialist state can only result in the *demobilization* of the only force in capitalist society that can challenge the rule of the capitalist class: the working class.”

The October 26 demos provided a platform for an array of “antiwar” Democrats like Jesse Jackson, Al Sharpton and Cynthia McKinney. Like Barbara Lee, who cast the sole vote in Congress against giving the Bush administration a blank check for war in Afghanistan, and Al Sharpton,

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Down With UN Starvation Blockade! For Class Struggle Against U.S. Imperialist Rulers! Down With Anti-Immigrant Dragnet!