

Interimperialist Rivalries Heat Up Countdown to Desert Slaughter Defend Iraq!



U.S. Navy

Millions Protest Around the World

FEBRUARY 24—As many as a million people took to the streets of American cities on February 15 and 16 to protest the impending war against Iraq, despite concerted government efforts to intimidate the populace with a “code orange” terror alert and a police ban on a march in New York City. Millions more marched in every major capital of West Europe—London, Paris, Berlin, Rome, Madrid—and in hundreds of cities around the world. Public opinion polls show that a large majority of West Europeans view the present government of the United States as the greatest danger to world peace. In pursuing their own imperialist aims, the rulers of France and Germany are now appealing to this pacifistic sentiment and anti-American nationalism. A senior French official pontificated that if the U.S. goes to war without the sanction of a UN resolution, this will mean a return to “the law of the jungle.”

Predictably, the Bush White House has responded to all this with the arrogance born of overwhelming military superiority. The Pentagon budget is greater than the combined total military spending of all other major states in the world. Hence

the French and German leaders are forced to confront the U.S. only at the diplomatic level and then fairly cautiously. In the councils of NATO, they made a big show of opposing a U.S. move for additional weapons for Turkey, a member state, and then relented after a few weeks. Now France has joined in the hue and cry over Iraq’s supposedly illegal al-Samoud 2 missile arsenal—which have a range of barely 100 miles—with a government spokesman vigorously denying any “particular leniency with regard to Iraq” (Reuters, 23 February). With over 200,000 U.S. and British troops poised to invade and occupy the country, the imperialists vindictively demand that Iraq destroy what defensive weapons it has.

This would be a predatory and imperialist war on the part of the U.S. but a just and defensive war on the part of Iraq. Military defense of Iraq does not mean any political support to the bloody and oppressive Saddam Hussein regime. Particularly given the overwhelming military superiority of U.S. imperialism, the chief means of defending Iraq lies in class struggle against the imperialist rulers in

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WV Photo

Spartacist-initiated contingent at February 16 antiwar demonstration in San Francisco.

Italian Workers Block Arms Shipments

On February 21 trade unionists and antiwar activists blocked railway lines being used to transport 26 convoys loaded with weapons, amphibious vehicles and armored cars from the Camp Ederle NATO base in Vicenza to the Camp Darby NATO logistics depot in Livorno,

Tuscany. Camp Darby is one of the largest logistics bases and ammunition depots in Europe, and provided crucial support for the first Gulf War and the Balkans War. The final destination of the military shipment was reported to be the NATO airbase in Incirlik, Turkey—the U.S. military’s choice as launching pad for a northern strike against Iraq. Turkish workers at Incirlik have staged a number of strikes in the past and should be encouraged by the Italian workers’ example to take class-struggle action against the predatory war of U.S. imperialism and its allies against Iraq.

The alert on the train shipments came from members of the transport union FILT, which organizes rail workers, longshoremen, bus and metro workers, as well as airport workers. A group of rail workers in Genoa alerted their co-workers in Livorno to “be ready to organize some actions.” One of the workers in Livorno stated: “Many of us are ready to refuse to drive these trains of death. It’s our way of making a contribution to peace” (*Il Manifesto*, 23 February). Leaflets were put out in the local train stations, spreading the word. In the next hours groups of people gathered at train stations and key railroad

junctions to stop the military convoys on the tracks. The whole day of February 22 the convoys were chased around northeast Italy by protesters, as the authorities kept switching routes to evade antiwar blockades. *La Repubblica* (23 February) reported that the only way train convoys got through to Camp Darby was under protection of the police and carabinieri. In Fornovo, 50 cops savagely attacked protesters blocking the railroad. Evoking Alleanza Nazionale’s roots as the historic party of Italian fascism, AN leader Ignazio La Russa ominously demanded that

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Italy...

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the state “use the iron fist” against anti-war protesters. Undeterred, dockers in Livorno have made clear that they have no intention of loading this material on the ships. On Sunday, February 23, military convoys were again brought to a halt in a nationwide railway strike by the ORSA union, which is part of COBAS (Rank and File Committees). Although this strike was over economic issues and working conditions, it shows that *every* successful fight for the workers’ class interests now breaks a cog in the imperialists’ war machines.

Several unions have issued statements promising action against moving military cargo. The FILT issued a statement that “railroadmen must not be used to drive or unload weapons shipments” and that “all legitimate union actions will be undertaken to prevent any strategic support to an illegitimate war” (*Liberazione*, 22 February). The Tuscan branches of the FILT and the CGIL (the union confederation to which FILT is affiliated) have announced that railway and port workers will boycott the transportation of arms. Following the declaration by Minister of Defense Martino that the ports would be used to provide logistical support to the war, the FILT in Genoa, Italy’s largest port, declared their “maximal vigilance so that no collaboration, either direct or indirect, will be given to the warmakers.” A leader of the powerful metal workers union, FIOM, announced that “if, as they say, the armed intervention should happen around March 5, there’ll be an immediate popular mobilization including also strike action.”

In appealing for defense of Iraq against imperialist attack, we have stressed that above all this means class struggle against capitalist rule in the imperialist states. The potential strength of the labor movement lies in its strategic ability to shut down the economic production and distribution of goods. In mobilizing its power, not simply in protest demonstrations but in political strike action against the war, the Italian transport workers, as well as Scottish train drivers (see article this issue), have pointed the way forward for workers in the U.S. and elsewhere in the world.

In 1969, Livorno railworkers went on strike against the Vietnam War and received a medal from the Vietnamese fighters made of metal from a downed U.S. warplane. Italian workers were also in the forefront of struggle against the Balkans War in 1999. Over a million workers joined in a one-day political strike initiated by the syndicalist COBAS around the slogan “Not a life, not a lira for this war.” COBAS at the Fiat auto plants and elsewhere were also instrumental in launching a fund drive for Yugoslav workers after the Zastava auto plant in Kragujevac, Yugoslavia was bombed and destroyed by NATO. ICL sections participated actively in the Zastava fund drive, which provided a useful vehicle for working people to take a concrete stand against their own imperialist butchers.

In response to the actions by the train drivers, the right-wing government of Silvio Berlusconi (an ally of Bush and a crony of British prime minister Blair) has threatened to call out troops to move the military convoys. It is notable that this task would not be entrusted to the regular conscript troops, but to elite military



Corrado Pedon/Infophoto

Vicenza, Italy: Train shipping military equipment for U.S. war against Iraq blocked by trade unionists and antiwar activists.

engineers units. This points to the deep unpopularity of the war, which some 75 percent of the Italian population opposes. Berlusconi’s gambit could well backfire. The Italian working class should massively resist any efforts at strikebreaking by the military and the fascist guard dogs of the capitalist class. Key to this is the formation of *workers defense guards*. Moreover, workers must oppose not only the dispatch of American troops and matériel to Iraq, but *Italian militarism* as well. The government recently rammed through an increase of funding for the Italian expeditionary force to Afghanistan and dispatched another 1,000 Italian troops there and extended other military operations abroad, particularly in the Balkans. Not a penny, not a person for the Italian imperialist military!

However, there is a considerable gap between the felt desire to struggle against the war on the part of many Italian workers and the reformist perspective offered by the trade-union leaders and mass workers parties. Citing anti-union laws that strictly regulate strike activity, the trade-union tops are seeking to wriggle out of any sharp confrontation with the state. In 1999, the rail union leadership called off a strike because the “left” government at the time was supporting the Balkans War. One union engineer challenged the union leadership: “We are chained to ‘anti-strike’ laws. We cannot afford to let a co-worker be jailed for conscientious objection, but if the national and regional [union] secretaries take the lead, we are ready to follow” (*Liberazione*, 23 February).

Instead, the secretaries of the two largest union federations, the CGIL and the CISL, formally requested a meeting with the government to discuss “what is supposed to be transported and to get guarantees for the safety of the transport workers.” Any attempt to arrive at “ground rules” for transporting war materials with the Berlusconi government can only herald a sellout. Some union leaders like former CGIL head Sergio Cofferati, who praised the railway workers, have embraced the concept of “civil disobedience,” the better to dissolve the crucial proletarian centrality of these actions against the war into an undifferentiated popular mass protest. CGIL leader Guglielmo Epifani declared himself “in favor of political struggle against the military convoys but against obstructing the railway.” A spokesman for the civil disobedience protesters retorted that “In the end they were overruled by their own members. In fact it is the railway workers, the members of their union who supported us and supplied the information on the plans to move the trains loaded with American arms” (*La Repubblica*, 23 February). Elected workers’ action committees are necessary to put the power of the unity and discipline of the workers movement behind these anti-war actions, particularly as the union tops threaten to leave the militants out to hang by themselves.

Fausto Bertinotti, the leader of the left reformist Rifondazione Comunista (RC), recently declared that “it is now possible to think about a European general strike against the war.” But a general strike

would mean a decisive confrontation with the capitalist order, posing the question, “which class shall rule?” This is *not* what Bertinotti and RC really have in mind. Thus, RC recently published an article headlined “Paris-Berlin, the Axis of Peace.” In reality RC fights not to get rid of capitalism and replace it with proletarian rule, but simply wants to get rid of the Berlusconi government and replace it with a more “left” bourgeois government whose foreign policy is aligned against Washington. Bertinotti seeks to manipulate and exploit the combative militancy of the Italian proletariat for RC’s own parliamentary ambitions, and not to satisfy the workers’ class interests, as any examination of RC’s role proves. Prior to the Balkans War, RC gave de facto support to the “Ulivo” government, a popular-front coalition of the social-democratic Democratici di Sinistra and openly bourgeois parties. RC helped enact the racist anti-immigrant Turco-Napolitano laws and other attacks on workers’ rights and supported the dispatch of Italian troops to Albania.

Many of the auto workers at Fiat who politically led the proletariat in taking a side with the victims of imperialism’s war in the Balkans by launching the Zastava campaign have lost their social power and their livelihoods as Fiat axed tens of thousands of jobs as part of the worldwide economic retrenchment. RC’s response was to appeal to the reactionary Berlusconi government to nationalize Fiat. Predictably this had no impact whatsoever, inasmuch as the purpose of capitalist governments is not to preserve jobs for workers, but rather to preserve profits for the bosses. Just as today it appeals against the use of NATO bases in Italy on the grounds that it undermines “our own national sovereignty,” the RC campaign on Fiat sought to whip up nationalist sentiment against the possibility that Fiat would be bought out by General Motors, an American firm. As if the Italian bosses were one bit better than their American counterparts!

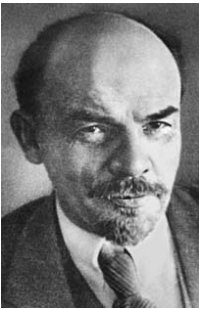
Particularly in Italy, workers fed up with parliamentary betrayals have turned toward the syndicalist COBAS, which on occasion have engaged in exemplary political struggles against war, as in the Zastava campaign. But the difference between militant trade unionism or even radical syndicalism, on the one hand, and genuine Marxism is that the latter seeks not only to mobilize workers in political struggle against war, but to raise the consciousness of the proletariat to the understanding that it has the power to get rid of the system of capitalist exploitation and imperialist plunder through socialist revolution. Militants engaged in actions against the war should broaden this into a struggle against capitalism itself. Down with the scourges of unemployment, racism and imperialist war! For a sliding scale of hours and wages—Jobs for all with no cut in pay! Smash the anti-immigrant laws—Full citizenship rights for all immigrants! Down with Italian militarism! For workers independence from the capitalist state—Down with popular-frontism! Above all what is necessary is a Leninist vanguard party, forged through relentless struggle against the reformist misleaders like Rifondazione. ■

Women and Imperialist War

This year as we commemorate International Women’s Day, March 8, the U.S. imperialists are about to launch a devastating attack on semicolonial Iraq. In the massive protests internationally against the impending war, we have called for military defense of Iraq and for class struggle against the imperialist rulers at home. As seen in the following draft resolution to a 1915 International Socialist Women’s conference, Lenin’s Bolsheviks fought to transform mass sentiment against the slaughter of



TROTSKY



LENIN

World War I, a war between the imperialist powers for redivision of the world, into a struggle for workers revolution against the capitalist order.

This war is an imperialist one, caused by the struggle between the ruling classes of various countries for a division of the colonies and domination of the world market, and by dynastic interests. It is a natural continuation of the policy conducted by the class of capitalists and the governments of all countries....

The horrible suffering caused by this war awakens in all women, especially proletarian women, a growing desire for peace. Declaring *war on all imperialist* war, the conference at the same time believes that if this desire for peace is to be transformed into a *conscious political force, working women must well realise that the propertied classes are striving for nothing* but annexations, conquest and domination, that in the epoch of imperialism wars are inevitable, and that imperialism threatens the world with a series of wars, unless the *proletariat musters enough strength to put an end to the capitalist system by the final overthrow of capitalism*. Every working woman who wants to shorten the period of suffering connected with the epoch of imperialist wars, must strive to have her urge for peace develop into *indignation and struggle for socialism*. *The working woman will attain her aim* in this struggle *only through a revolutionary mass movement, and a strengthening and sharpening of the socialist struggle*.

—V.I. Lenin, “Draft Resolution of the International Socialist Women’s Conference” (June 1915)

WORKERS VANGUARD



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Young Spartacus

Capitalism, Gun Control, Racism and War

By Laura DeMatteis

Writer and filmmaker Michael Moore has made a bang in theaters internationally with his funny and compelling new documentary, *Bowling for Columbine*, a raw examination of guns in American culture. Moore's ironic and provocative style is well known from his earlier acclaimed film *Roger and Me*—roasting General Motors for the company's devastating mass layoffs of Midwest auto workers in the 1980s—as well as his recent best-selling book lampooning the Bush administration, *Stupid White Men and Other Sorry Excuses for the Nation*.

Convinced that Americans are gun-crazy, Moore tries to uncover the reason why the U.S. has over 11,000 gun-related deaths a year, more than any other country. *Bowling for Columbine* is dedicated to victims of gun violence, and its title is a satirical reference to the bowling class attended by the two infamous Columbine killers the morning before shooting up their high school. In the movie, Moore interviews Lockheed Martin executives, fascist paramilitary militiamen, the patriotic and reactionary NRA president Charlton Heston, an impressively eloquent Marilyn Manson (whose music was scapegoated in the media for the Columbine shootings) and travels to Canada, painting it as an idyllic “haven” from violence.

Moore seems quite aware of many of the problems of American capitalism. The movie touches on poverty, racism—its roots and media perpetuation—as well as crimes of U.S. imperialism under both Republican and Democratic presidencies. Notable in the current era of post-9/11 raging patriotism, a short montage graphically portrays a litany of crimes of the U.S. government, ending with an image of the World Trade Center attack with the caption: “Osama bin Laden uses his expert CIA training to murder 3,000 people.” This scene, more than anything else, really ruffled the feathers of the bourgeoisie. So the *New York Times* (11 October 2002) published a scathing review commenting on the scene's caption: “The idiocy of this statement is hardly worth engaging; it is exactly the kind of glib

distortion of history that can be taken as a warrant to dismiss everything Mr. Moore has to say.”

Though *Bowling for Columbine* astutely comments on the problems of American society, the movie's suggested solutions are all wrong. Moore concludes that what makes America so uniquely violent is a “culture of fear”—a fanatical paranoia inflamed by the media. But such fear can take hold only to the extent that it feeds on a brutal social order. Although himself a lifetime member of the NRA, Moore ends by advocating, at least for now, restricting access to guns while pushing to make the government and corporations more humane and less violent. Moore's politics prevent him from seeing the larger truth—that American “democracy” can only be violent, racist and class-divided because at its core is a system based on exploitation and racial oppression: capitalism.

Certainly, today a climate of fear and

hysteria is being whipped up by the capitalist rulers who use the cry of “national unity” to justify their bloodthirsty war aims against Iraq and the intensification of repression of immigrants, blacks and labor. The U.S. capitalist state is a killing machine equipped with nuclear weapons which relies on trigger-happy racist cops and death chamber executions to terrorize the population at home. It's no wonder many Americans—not just right-wingers but immigrants, blacks, workers—fear being disarmed. And in the interests of the working class and all the oppressed, the right to bear arms needs to be defended.

Today minorities and working people are the special targets of the violence spawned by American capitalism, as they are starved by ghetto poverty and a lack of jobs, incarcerated under the pretext of the “war on drugs” and sent off to be cannon fodder for American imperialist war. It is a reflection of the decades of bipartisan attacks and desperate living condi-

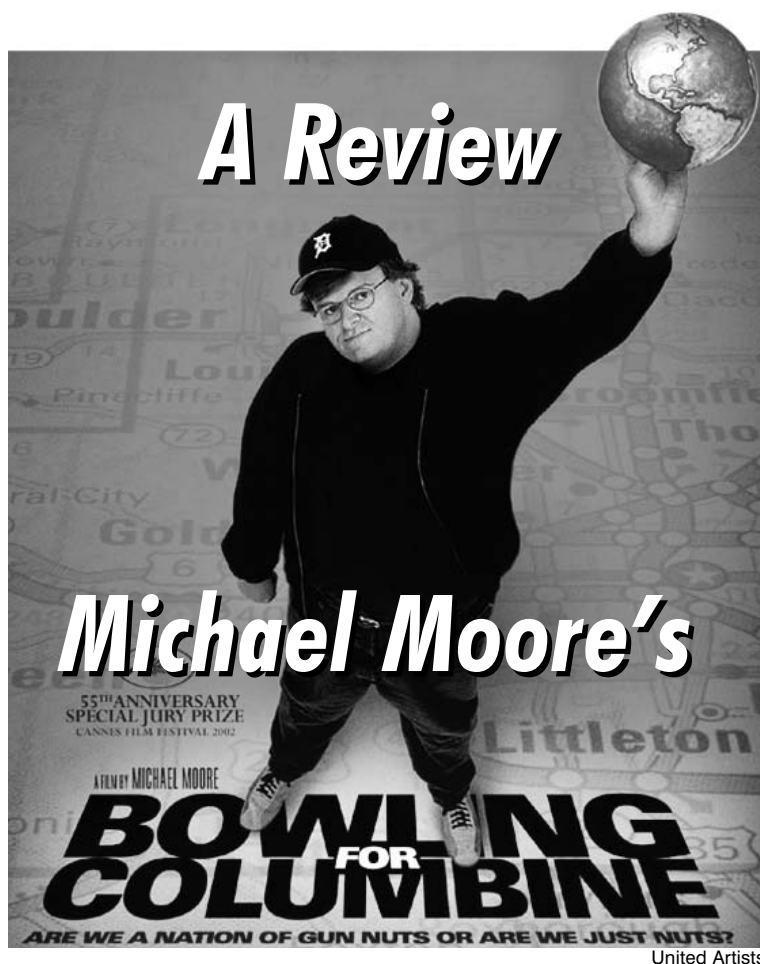
tions of the urban masses that homicide statistics for 2002 show heavily black and immigrant Oakland at more than 100 and central Los Angeles at over 650. In one powerful scene in *Bowling for Columbine*, overlapping segments of newscasters repeating “black male” and clips from the television show *Cops* illustrate how the “war on drugs” grotesquely glorifies police violence and paints black people as predatory criminals. And one of the funniest moments in the film shows a series of newscast excerpts sounding the alarm about an invasion of “Africanized” bees coming north from Latin America—unlike the tamer, friendlier “European” variety, the “Africanized” bees are dangerous, aggressive and uncontrollable.

The media certainly uses racist stereotypes of the black urban poor as criminals in an attempt to justify police occupation of the ghettos. Yet the media does not produce a racist society. The owners of the media are themselves capitalists who seek to perpetuate the domination of their class, whose rule is based on a system that is racist from the ground up.

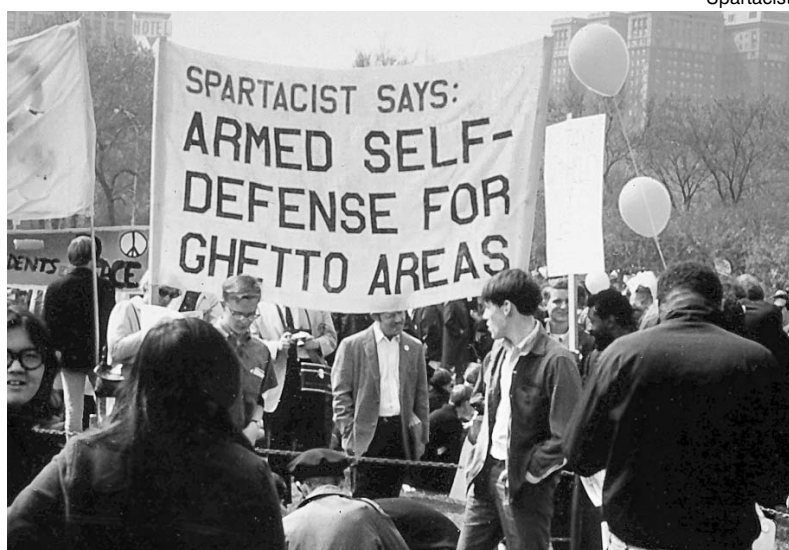
Capitalist Violence and Black Oppression

In the end, Moore misses the most fundamental answer to the question “Why is America so violent?” that he spends the whole movie pursuing. In fact, there is something very unique to American capitalism: the special oppression of black people, directly linked to the violent legacy of chattel slavery. In an insightful article entitled “Deadly Symbiosis,” UC Berkeley sociology professor Loïc Wacquant reminds us that the subjugation and dispossession of blacks in the U.S. has persisted through four major institutions: slavery, the Jim Crow system, the urban ghetto, and now, the expanding prison system. We say that in the U.S. blacks constitute a race-color caste, forcibly segregated socially but integrated into the capitalist economy at the bottom. With the de-industrialization Moore chronicled in *Roger and Me*, blacks who were once relied upon as a “reserve army” of labor when needed for industry have been increasingly deemed a surplus population by the ruling class, thrown out of work and

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Left: Newark ghetto upheaval, 1967. During wave of ghetto explosions, Spartacists fought for militant defense of inner cities, sought to mobilize working-class solidarity.



Amici Curiae Brief Filed SL, PDC Protest Big Apple Police State

We reprint below a slightly shortened *amici curiae* (friends of the court) brief filed by the Spartacist League and Partisan Defense Committee in the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit in New York City on February 11. Submitted in support of the United for Peace and Justice coalition's appeal of a lower court decision upholding the NYPD's prohibition of a protest march past the United Nations on February 15, our brief predicted, "In criminalizing any march that day, the government is preparing an outright provocation virtually guaranteeing that not a few protesters will end up beaten and bloodied by the NYPD."

Those who made it to the rally site on February 15 were herded into tightly controlled police pens. Many who attempted to navigate the maze of police barricades to get to the protest were directed by cops into streets that were then sealed off. A videotape released by the demonstration organizers at a February 18 press conference shows mounted police backing horses into the crowds, cops pummeling demonstrators with nightsticks and penned-in protesters being pepper-sprayed. Some 300 protesters were arrested. The following day, cops in San Francisco arrested 46 protesters at an antiwar demonstration of 200,000 there.

As the PDC wrote in a February 15 letter protesting the NYC arrests: "With cops armed with machine guns roaming the city's streets and the subways, the courts and their armed police thugs were hoping to intimidate people into staying home today. But they *failed*. Over 500,000 demonstrators defied the cops and courts and came out to express their opposition to the slaughter the government is planning in Iraq, joining millions of antiwar protesters across the globe. We demand: *Free all the protesters now! Drop all the charges!*"

I. STATEMENT AND THE INTEREST OF AMICI CURIAE

The Spartacist League is a Marxist political organization with a history of almost forty years of activity in the United States, including running candidates for public office, holding classes and public forums on Marxist history and international and domestic politics, initiating and participating in protest demonstrations against government policies, and publishes a bi-weekly newspaper, *Workers Vanguard*, and a theoretical journal, *Spartacist*. The Spartacist League seeks to educate workers and their allies to build a workers party which fights for a socialist future.

The Partisan Defense Committee is a class-struggle, non-sectarian legal and social defense organization which champions cases and causes in the interest of the whole of the working people. This purpose is in accordance with the views of the Spartacist League.

The Spartacist League and Partisan Defense Committee file this motion and brief because they are tenacious defenders of their own legality and of those democratic rights won through bourgeois revolutions and revolutionary wars—the parliamentary partisans in the English Civil War, the U.S. Revolutionary War, the French Revolution and the American Civil War. *Amici* intend to participate in the protests against the Iraq war set for February 15, 2003 in New York City and support the Plaintiff-Appellant's appeal of the District Court's ruling upholding the City's abrogation of the democratic right to march in protest of the United States government's impending war against Iraq.

Amici have filed lawsuits as well as engaged in decades of political activity against prior government attempts to criminalize the expression of First Amendment rights by falsely targeting opponents of government policy as terrorists. The Spartacist League successfully sued the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) in 1983 after the FBI changed its Guidelines, designating political organizations as "domestic security terrorist organizations." As a result of that lawsuit, the FBI withdrew its witchhunting "definition" of the Spartacist League. On February 9, 2002 *amici* initiated the first labor-centered united-front protest in the U.S. against the USA-Patriot Act and the government's anti-immigrant witchhunt, which has been conducted in the name of the "war against terrorism." *Amici* have long understood and prop-

agandized that if political opponents of the government and government actions are put in the category of "terrorists," this defines them as "outlaws" of civil society, providing the state with a license to suspend democratic rights, criminalize political activity, and ultimately to engage in legalized murder. It was the fate of the Black Panther Party (BPP) to be deemed a "terrorist" organization by the FBI, and it was subjected to a government COINTELPRO campaign of harassment, surveillance and prosecution; government agents killed some 38 members of the BPP.

Amici Spartacist League and Partisan Defense Committee file this brief in support of the right of opponents of the United States' impending war on Iraq to march in protest of government policies. As the United States government prepares to launch an imperialist war of plunder against Iraq in the name of "freedom," the District Court below banned not only the projected march that would pass by the United Nations, but effectively endorsed the New York City Police Department's right to ban any protest march at any time in the streets of Manhattan. The Court asserted that it "will not second guess or substitute its judgment for that of the NYPD," thereby leaving the Police Department as the arbiter of democratic rights, including the fundamental First Amendment rights of speech and assembly, and criminalizing protest against the government.

This controversy over the right to march in opposition to the government's impending war against Iraq arises in the context of a wholesale government assault against democratic rights following the September 11, 2001 murderous attacks on the World Trade Center. The Bush administration with bipartisan support has since engaged in a so-called preventative and pre-emptive global "war against terrorism." From the USA-Patriot Act to new FBI Guidelines to the proposed "Domestic Security Enhancement Act," the government is engaged in a wholesale evisceration of democratic rights, including granting to itself the authority to detain terrorist suspects or potential material witnesses indefinitely, spy on individuals not suspected of committing crimes and use secret "evidence" and deny terrorist suspects legal counsel. Con-

comitantly, the government has relegated to itself the sole and legally unchallengeable right to indefinitely imprison U.S. citizens, without counsel and without judicial hearing or review. Internationally, the U.S. has kidnapped foreign nationals suspected of terrorism, imprisoned suspects indefinitely and authorized assassinations, overriding international conventions and its own longstanding ban on assassinations.

The District Court's ruling upholding the City's ban on the protest march is a frontal assault on the First Amendment right of speech and assembly and an ominous escalation in the government's crackdown on the rights of the population in the name of the "war on ter-

Andy Stern/Indymedia



New York City, February 15: As hundreds of thousands turned out despite ban on antiwar march, cops attacked protesters, arresting some 300.



Lina Pallotta/Indymedia

Transit workers at NYC protest.

government has asserted itself as the unquestionable supreme military power in the world. To carry out its imperial designs abroad, now concentrated on waging war against Iraq, the government needs class and social peace at home. In order to accomplish these ends it is attempting to regiment the population through an ideological “national unity” crusade and war propaganda. Seizing on the criminal attack against the World Trade Center, which killed thousands of innocent civilians, the government launched this “war against terror,” which has led to smearing all government opponents and actions in opposition to government policy as threats to national security and criminalizing dissent.

Pursuant to Rule 29 of the Rules of the Second Circuit Court of Appeals *amici curiae* have concurrently filed a motion for leave of this Court for permission to submit this brief.

II. LEGAL ARGUMENT

A. The Primacy of First Amendment Rights

The First Amendment rights are intertwined and indivisible; and in class society, reversible. The First Amendment is a unified totality, the “text is indeed both general and absolute. In one sentence it separates church and state and guarantees free opinion.” (See Mitchell Franklin, “Infamy and Constitutional Civil Liberties,” *Lawyers Guild Review*, Vol. XIV, No. 1, p. 3 (1954).) The First Amendment is the “keystone of our Government,... the freedoms it guarantees provide the best insurance against destruction against all freedom,” stated Mr. Justice Black, dissenting in *Dennis v. United States*, 341 U.S. 494, 580 (1951). The First Amendment is unified in its various clauses by the central liberty of freedom of the individual in matter of thought and conscience whether the concerns are political, religious or social. The legal force of the First Amendment applied only to the federal government until the defeat of slavery on the battlefields of the Civil War provided the legal basis for a national American state. Legally this was codified in the Reconstruction Amendments to the U.S. Constitution, subordinating the state governments to these democratic principles. (See *Gitlow v. New York*, 268 U.S. 652 (1925), *Cantwell v. Connecticut*, 310 U.S. 296 (1940).)

As Marxists, *amici curiae* recognize that the contraction of constitutionally protected rights is rooted in the class nature of the capitalist state. Harold Laski explains in his treatise, *The State in Theory and Practice* (1935): “... how accidental was the union of capitalism with democracy. It was the outcome, not of an essential harmony of inner principle, but of that epoch in economic evolution when capitalism was in its phase of expansion. It had conferred political power upon the masses; but it was upon the saving condition that political power should not be utilized to cut at the root of capitalist postulates. It would offer social reforms so long as these did not jeopardize the essential relations of the capitalist system. When they did as occurred in the post-war [World War I] years, the contradiction between capitalism and democracy became the essential institutional feature of Western civilization.”

Constitutional history demonstrates that particularly when the populace is being prepared for war, the protections of the First Amendment are denied to the populace. The Bill of Rights was less than a decade old in 1798 when war hysteria prompted the Federalist-dominated United States Congress to enact the Alien and Sedition Acts. Constitutional challenges to the Acts were generally precluded in the federal courts. During World War I,



Ligato/Philadelphia Bulletin
1970: During FBI’s murderous COINTELPRO campaign, Philadelphia cops dragged Black Panthers onto the street, forced them to strip and searched them at gunpoint.

the Espionage Act of 1917 and the Sedition Act of 1918 were passed and then upheld by the U.S. Supreme Court in *Schenck v. United States*, 249 U.S. 47 (1919). In 1940 Congress, concerned with the increased possibility of the United States entering into World War II, passed the Alien Registration Act (better known as the Smith Act). The first to be prosecuted for their opposition to the impending interimperialist war were the Trotskyists of the Socialist Workers Party. The convictions for conspiring to overthrow the government by force and violence

“War on Terror” Witchhunt Against Palestinian Activists
Free Professor Sami Al-Arian!

On February 20, U.S. attorney general John Ashcroft announced the indictment of Professor Sami Al-Arian and seven others on racketeering conspiracy charges. According to the Feds, Al-Arian, a Kuwaiti-born Palestinian who had been wiretapped for nearly a decade, is now reputed to be the North American leader of the fundamentalist Islamic Jihad. He and three others residing in the U.S. were arrested. In a 24 February letter to the Justice Department, the Partisan Defense Committee demanded that all charges against Sami Al-Arian and the others be dropped and that they be immediately released. The letter stated, “Dr. Al-Arian has been targeted solely because he is an Islamic scholar and is outspoken in his defense of the Palestinian people against marauding Zionist terror.... This is a thought-crime prosecution pure and simple.”

This is the culmination of a long state vendetta against Al-Arian and his family. Last summer, a media-abetted campaign of vilification led to death threats and the loss of his tenured position at the University of South Florida. One day after his firing, Al-Arian’s brother-in-law, Mazen Al-Najjar, was deported to Lebanon on the pretext of overstaying his visa. In 1997, Al-Najjar had been rounded up by the INS and held on secret evidence for three and a half years under the 1996 “Anti-Terrorism Act” signed into law by Democratic president Clinton.

Al-Najjar’s struggle against the Kafkaesque law won widespread support and international publicity, with Amnesty International declaring him a political prisoner. Former CIA head James Woolsey testified before the Senate for the law’s repeal. In the summer of 2001, the “Secret Evidence Repeal Act” spon-

were affirmed by the Court of Appeals, *Dunne v. United States*, 138 F.2d 137; and the Supreme Court refused review, 320 U.S. 370 (1943). The internment of American citizens of Japanese descent during World War II, *Korematsu v. United States*, 320 U.S. 214 (1944) is a notorious example of trampling on democratic rights of citizens during wartime. Post-World War II, during the McCarthy anti-communist witchhunts, members of the Communist Party were convicted under the Smith Act, *Dennis v. United States*, 341 U.S. (1951).

The attacks on the First Amendment and on the rights of citizenship are reflections of the tendency toward state bonapartism, part and parcel of the drive toward war. The U.S. imperialist government wants the capacity to conduct its wars and military adventures as well as deal with the threat of class or social struggle at home without the encumbrances of Congressional approval, judicial oversight, or even the theoretical nod toward the democratic expression of the populace. In the current, post-September 11 “war against terrorism” period, as the U.S. government prepares for war against Iraq, the evisceration of First Amendment rights proceeds at a rapid pace. A core component of this diminution of democratic rights is the move toward unfettered power by the executive branch, a move toward state bonapartism. Such a move toward a police state relies on a compliant judiciary.

B. The District Court’s Refusal to Grant Plaintiffs a Preliminary Injunction Violates Plaintiffs’ First Amendment Rights and Constitutes Irreparable Injury

The Federal District Court ruling not only denied the application by the United for Peace and Justice coalition to march by the United Nations but also effectively endorsed the NYPD’s right to ban *any* protest march at any time in the streets of Manhattan. The court ruling baldly stated that “The Court will not second guess or substitute its judgment for that of the NYPD.” The linchpin of the Court’s decision is the full acquiescence to the rationale by the NYPD representative: “The City’s concerns with respect to crowd control are exacerbated by the added security concerns since September 11, 2001. The nation and the City are currently at the second highest security alert, a fact that the NYPD must take into account in determining the level of risk. The police can more effectively monitor crowds for terror threats at stationary rallies than they can crowds moving in a procession.”

With war imminent and popular opposition continuing to mount, *the government is sending a message that those who protest against the war are potential terrorists and therefore antiwar protest can be deemed criminal.*

In explaining why marching rights given to organizers of “cultural events” like the St. Patrick’s Day Parade are off-limits to antiwar protesters, the Court below explicitly terror-baited the planned demonstration, dismissing some 360 organizations as just so much rabble, stating “the Court finds that the heightened security concerns

sored by Congressmen David Bonior, John Conyers and Tom Campbell—and supported by Bush during the 2000 presidential campaign—was near passage, only to fall victim to the anti-Arab witchhunt ushered in by the September 11 attack on the World Trade Center.

Ironically, Al-Arian was instrumental in turning out Muslim support for Bush in the 2000 election, possibly providing the margin of victory in the key state of Florida. The following June, Al-Arian was one of the members of the American Muslim Council invited to the White House to be briefed on the administration’s “faith-based initiatives.” A week later his son, an intern for Congressman Bonior, was part of a delegation of Muslims to the White House but was ejected from the grounds by Secret Service agents, prompting a walkout by the others.

The indictment of Dr. Al-Arian marks a watershed in the obliteration of protections under the Fourth Amendment. The sole “evidence” against him are wiretaps obtained under the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA). That law formally limited the use of wiretaps to “gathering intelligence,” barring them from being used as the basis for prosecution since the Fourth Amendment prohibits search or seizure without probable cause that a crime is being committed. But last November, the secret FISA appeals court ruled that the newly passed USA-Patriot Act erased any such restrictions. The indictment of Dr. Al-Arian, the first since the FISA appeals court ruling, is a dangerous precedent which would allow the government to tap the phones or break into the houses or offices of any one of us. It must not go unchallenged!

posed by an unorganized, large scale march threaten the City’s interest in maintaining public safety.” The Court further declared that the march would be “simply too large for the NYPD to adequately secure the safety of United Nations Headquarters” and endorsed the testimony of a top NYPD official that “if somebody in the group had a device, I don’t know how we would be able to stop it with that amount of people.” The presumption is an equation of antiwar protests with a nest of terrorists....

With well over 100,000 likely to turn out in New York City on February 15, the NYPD intends to herd the protesters into a series of tightly controlled pens. Based on the newspaper reports on the “preparations against terrorist attack” taking place in New York City, the protesters will be placed under armed guard by the NYPD, with little or no intercourse between the various police pens. This will not only have the effect of chilling and intimidating the protest, but will create chaos and disorder. In criminalizing any march that day, the government is preparing an outright provocation virtually guaranteeing that not a few protesters will end up beaten and bloodied by the NYPD.

In bowing to the judgment of the NYPD the Court below has relegated to the police the role of sole arbiters of the exercise of elementary and fundamental constitutional rights. This is consonant with the rationale of a police state; consonant with a growing body of judicial decisions which adopt the government’s unsupported allegations in matters they deem to be “national security,” ignoring the rights of citizens and non-citizens alike.

Plaintiff-Appellant is entitled to a preliminary injunction enjoining Defendants-Appellees from depriving the United for Peace and Justice coalition and all those who join them the right to march in protest against the impending war against Iraq....

CONCLUSION

The fundamental proposition of the First Amendment is to constitutionally safeguard free speech. There is no more urgent time to do so than now. The NYPD ban against this political protest march constitutes an intimidation tactic by the government against those who would demonstrate their opposition to government policies. The alternative presented by the City—putting tens of thousands of people into tightly controlled pens surrounded by heavily armed police—is a recipe for police attacks and violence against the antiwar protesters. The District Court decision acquiescing to the NYPD ban of the February 15 march on the grounds that it is a security and “terror” threat is an open declaration that any opposition to the United States government’s war moves can be criminalized as potential “terrorism.” It must be reversed.

Respectfully submitted,
RACHEL H. WOLKENSTEIN

Dated: New York, New York
February 11, 2003

Columbine...

(continued from page 3)

into prison. At the same time, anti-black racism is wielded by the exploiters to weaken and divide the working class as a whole. What the capitalists fear above all is the spectre of an aroused, class-conscious, multiracial working class, since labor has the objective self-interest and power to overthrow the capitalist system.

Bowling for Columbine attempts to address the origins of black oppression in a witty cartoon history of the U.S. by one of the creators of *South Park* where guns are the weapons of paranoid white folks, from Pilgrims fleeing the British crown to settlers killing Indians they fear, to slaveholders surrounded by blacks in the antebellum South. But it was the *arming* of 200,000 ex-slaves and free black men from the North fighting with the Union Army that helped turn the tide in the Civil War—the Second American Revolution—and smash chattel slavery.

Yet soon after, the promise of black freedom was betrayed by the Northern capitalists, the radical reforms of Reconstruction were reversed, and the reactionary institution of official Jim Crow segregation triumphed. Disenfranchised blacks were stalked by KKK terror and lynchings. Today, the barbaric death penalty is the Jim Crow lynch rope made legal. As communists, we fight for a third American Revolution to finish the Civil War, for a socialist revolution that would smash the racist system of capitalism. Our aim is to create a society which will lay the material basis for full social and political



Library of Congress

Black troops in Union Army helped turn tide in war to defeat Southern slavocracy.

TELPRO), which killed and jailed scores of Panthers. One former Black Panther is the well-known award-winning journalist Mumia Abu-Jamal, who, as an advocate of black self-defense, was blatantly framed up by the state, railroaded to death row, and is currently facing his twenty-first year in prison. The prosecutor in his “trial” argued on political grounds that he be put to death, citing Jamal’s having quoted Mao Zedong’s truism that “political power grows out of the barrel of a gun.”

Anti-black racism has historically been used by the ruling class to keep the work-

that house where her six-year-old son finds his uncle’s gun—the gun which was taken to school and which was used in the tragic shooting. And, since the victim was white and he is black, there is an uproar calling to hang the six-year-old boy.

Above all this scene shows the effects of the brutal “workfare” program, pushed forward during the Democratic Clinton administration to mark “the end of welfare as we know it.” In 2002, more and more destitute women and children were simply dumped off welfare, job or not, for exceeding the five-year lifetime “drop deadline.” Workfare programs, promoted as the road to permanent employment, leave the destitute with only two options: slave-labor “jobs” or a life on the streets. As poverty increases, single mothers suffer tremendously from deadly cut-offs in housing and medical aid. And working-class black women—triple oppressed by their class, race and sex—are especially hard hit along with their children. As we wrote in “Genocide U.S.A.” (WV No. 463, 21 October 1988):

“[Workfare] is not welfare reform, it’s a plan to turn the ghettos into vast cemeteries—because *there are no jobs to get*. The aim of this legislation is to see to it that layers of the minority population *die*, because this decrepit capitalist system no longer needs them.”

The Capitalist State: Worst Enemy of the Oppressed

The attacks on welfare are part of a broader reactionary rollback of gains that were won during the rise of industrial unions in the 1930s and the civil rights movement of the 1950s and ’60s. These important gains were not bestowed from above by a benevolent government but won through *mass integrated social struggle*. Yet a lot of radical youth today believe that capitalism and its politicians can ultimately be pressured to be more “socially conscious.” Disillusioned with the Democrats, some turn to Ralph Nader’s

Green Party which poses as a “left” alternative third party through its criticisms of “corporate greed” and the death penalty. Many fans of Michael Moore—himself an active supporter of Nader and the Green Party—share the ideology that change in society can be achieved through electoral pressure politics.

Moore is honest—he doesn’t claim to be a Marxist. But as Marxists we know that the capitalist state is the executive committee of the ruling class, made up of the police, courts, military and prison system—the special armed bodies of men whose *job* it is to protect capitalist property from the many whose blood and sweat make the profits for the few. The only way to make real social gains permanent and irreversible is *not* by voting for a different bourgeois politician but by mobilizing the working class to take state power in its own name, in the interests of all the working masses and oppressed.

While *Bowling for Columbine* is biting testimony to the state of the violent chaos of modern American capitalism, the biggest problem is what Moore appears to advocate as a solution: gun control legislation. The movie is literally—emotions aside—*disarming*. The intent of gun-control legislation is not to “fight crime,” but to ensure that *only* the capitalist state has access to arms. It leaves guns in the hands of the cops, criminals and crazies (including fascists), while workers, blacks, minorities and the poor are left defenseless. If some of the women and men who work at abortion clinics were armed, knowledge of that fact might put the fear of god into the biblethumping “right to life” thugs. Likewise, the criminal hijackers from the September 11th World Trade Center attack might have been stopped dead had anyone had a gun, but none did. We Marxists uphold the right to self-defense from the standpoint of defending the interests of the workers and oppressed against the oppressors.

Gun Control Kills Blacks

Bowling for Columbine’s pro-gun-control “corporate responsibility” campaign comes when Moore demands that Kmart take their handgun and assault rifle ammunition off its shelves. He does this after discovering that two victims from the Columbine massacre were crippled by bullets, still lodged in their bodies, that were purchased at Kmart. Kmart caves in, phases out its ammo, and Moore is jubilant. The British Socialist Workers Party (SWP)—a reformist outfit formerly allied with the American International Socialist Organization and which still shares the same fundamental politics—wrote in a review of the movie that this scene “shows the power of protest” (*Socialist Worker* [Britain], 23 November 2002). Such enthusiasm over this action is a not-so-back-handed endorsement of gun control. While pretending to be on the side of the “underdogs” in one big, bad, profit-gouging world, the “socialist”



S. Plakula

Hospital in Belgrade, Serbia, bombed by NATO in 1999 war under Democratic president Clinton. Moore notes that Columbine massacre occurred during U.S. bombing campaign.

equality for blacks. Such a revolution can only be led by a multiracial vanguard party capable of linking the struggles of the black ghetto masses with the social power of labor.

As the movie’s history cartoon shows, the racist rulers have always been petrified of black militancy and—just like the former slaveholders—tremble with fright at the image of blacks with guns. In the 1950s, Robert F. Williams was one of the many black ex-Marines who came home to American discrimination and fought back by organizing black self-defense squads against KKK and police terror. Because he was a heroic black fighter championing the right to bear arms, Williams was framed up by the FBI and driven into exile in Cuba.

Later, black soldiers returning from Vietnam, disillusioned by the dead-end pacifism of the liberal civil rights leaders, also saw the need to be armed in order to fight racist repression. Many ended up joining the Black Panther Party, which although far from Marxist politics, rejected the electoral, pro-Democratic Party mainstream road of the civil rights movement and hoped to achieve black freedom through revolutionary struggle at home. The ruling class responded with murderous terror under the FBI’s Counter-Intelligence Program (COIN-

ing class divided. Today, with the country plunging deeper and deeper into recession, the bourgeoisie has declared an all-out war against the black and working poor through massive unemployment, deteriorating schools, and the stripping away of social services. Meanwhile, as industry after industry is milked dry by profit-hungry capitalists, for every job lost on the assembly line a new place in the prison system is created. In the U.S., where more people are behind bars than anywhere else in the world, nearly one-third of all black males in their 20s are either in prison, on parole or probation.

One of the biggest attacks on black people in the recent decade has been the destruction of the welfare system, painted vividly in one of the most powerful scenes of *Bowling for Columbine*. The scene begins when Moore returns to his hometown of Flint, Michigan, and discovers another school shooting: this time, a six-year-old girl has been killed by a classmate. The movie goes on to tell the real story of a single black mother who is forced to slave in “workfare” programs in order to work off her welfare check and must work two jobs, commuting 80 miles a day and leaving little time for her to spend with her kid. Evicted from her home and still unable to pay rent, she is forced to move in with a relative. It is at



Sotomayor/NY Times

In wake of Columbine massacre, U.S. high school students face heightened repression, security guards and metal detectors.

SWP is standing *against* the right of working people and the poor to defend themselves.

What would have happened had the striking miners in Ludlow, Colorado in 1914 not had guns? After the state militia massacred several striking miners and their families, some 1,000 workers—armed by the United Mine Workers—fought back bullet for bullet, to the bosses’ horror, for ten days. But *Bowling for Columbine* seems to skip every chapter in U.S. history in which the oppressed took up arms to battle their oppressors. A quick montage in the movie shows the U.S. carpet-bombing Vietnam, but the movie shows nothing of the heroic struggle of the *armed* Vietnamese workers and peasants who in the course of a social revolution defeated on the battlefield the mightiest imperialist power in the world. In America it was the revolutionary struggle against Britain which produced the principle of the “right to keep and bear arms,” codified in the Second Amendment to the Constitution. And every attempt to unravel it has been a calculated counterrevolutionary act on the part of an imperialist ruling class.

In fact, right now the bourgeoisie

“Riders,” police thugs named after the murderous nightriders of the KKK. And the list of victims is long: Tyisha Miller, a 19-year-old black woman shot to death by the police in the middle of an epileptic seizure; Amadou Diallo, an African immigrant gunned down in a hail of 41 bullets by the NYPD on his doorstep; Patrick Dorismond, a 26-year-old black father blown away by an undercover narc while talking on his cell phone; Timothy Thomas, chased into an alley and gunned down by Cincinnati cops under the pretext of petty misdemeanors, to name a few. And the list increases every day.

Imperialist War or Socialist Revolution

Obviously, disarming the cops is *not* on the agenda of the gun-control junkies. Better yet, how about disarming the Pentagon? Such a feat requires a *social revolution*, in which the ruling class is expropriated and its state shattered.

In one ironic scene in *Bowling*, an executive of Lockheed Martin, the largest producer of weapons of mass destruction, stands in front of the plant’s ballistic missiles while commenting how Columbine might have been prevented with a little

society, Moore opines that this is a country with politicians who make sense. Behind this “kinder, gentler” facade—conditioned by the existence of a social-democratic party, albeit a right-wing variant—is the brutal reality of capitalist austerity attacks against the working class, poor and homeless and police terror against immigrants and minorities in Canada. If you want a taste of gun control Canadian style, look at the army of cops and troops that was unleashed against Mohawk Indians who took up arms to defend their land rights in 1990 in Oka, Quebec. In 1970, the English-chauvinist suppression of the national rights of the Québécois was enforced with the military occupation of Quebec, deploying army troops and tanks in the streets and rounding up hundreds of trade-union leaders, leftists and others who were thrown behind bars.

Capitalist Canada’s foreign policy is different from the U.S. not from any moral or social superiority but only because it has qualitatively less weight to throw around, acting instead as an appendage of U.S. capitalism. Here Canadian imperialism plays a useful role in providing the cover of “peacekeepers” for the brutal depredations of U.S. imperialism from the Near East to Iraq to Afghanistan. Behind Canada’s “nice guy” mask are troops like those of the Canadian Airborne Regiment who systematically tortured and killed Somali teenagers during their “peacekeeping” murder

mission in that country.

Bowling for Columbine’s conclusion that America is simply too riddled with fear to have an armed citizenry is a statement of despair that only alibis the capitalist rulers’ desire to obtain a complete monopoly of armed force. And so long as capitalism exists, its rule will be maintained by armed violence. Even though the period looks grim, social struggle could rapidly change the political climate. To reverse the erosion of social services, to oppose the U.S. rulers’ wars of depredation and to defend civil liberties demands the mobilization of the multiracial working class.

There can be no end to unemployment, exploitation or racism without uprooting the entire capitalist order and replacing it with a planned, socialist economy capable of building a classless society. For a revolution to be won, the work of a conscious, organized vanguard party—like the Bolsheviks who led the Russian workers to power in 1917—must lead the working class in a fight against all forms of oppression, especially, in this country, the special oppression of black people. Of course, having guns is no magic talisman against the endemic violence of decaying capitalism. But, as stated in the Transitional Program by Trotsky: “The only disarmament which can avert or end war is the disarmament of the bourgeoisie by the workers. But to disarm the bourgeoisie the workers must arm themselves.” ■



Petrograd, 1917: Red Guards with banner, “Long Live the Universal Arming of the People and the Workers First of All.”

would love to see the population disarmed in order to better carry out its “war on terror” domestically and abroad. The whole history of gun control is the story of the bourgeoisie trying to quell any resistance to their rule, particularly in periods of social struggle. In 1934, the U.S. government banned automatic weapons when workers entered into a massive strike wave in the midst of the Great Depression. Three decades later in the 1960s, New York City passed a law against carrying “longarms” in public specifically to disarm Malcolm X. And when the ruling class saw the Black Panthers arming themselves, the federal gun control act was pushed forward to ward off black self-defense against racist police. Gun restrictions ensure only that racist armed cops have free rein in the ghettos and barrios against a vulnerable, unarmed population. Indeed, this is what is meant when we say that gun control *kills* blacks.

So the question of gun control boils down to: do you trust the state to have the monopoly of weapons? Corporate bigwigs and editors-in-chief of bourgeois media outlets who preach gun control know that there will always be an armed man at hand for their protection, be it the hired hand of security guards or the police who protect *them* and their property. In the U.S., racist cop brutality against the oppressed is no aberration, but rather an American custom—in the words of 1960s black militant H. Rap Brown (to howls of ruling-class outrage), “Violence is as American as cherry pie.”

Just recall the LAPD unleashing their version of “to serve and protect” on Rodney King in 1991, or the recent Oakland

“anger management.” Just one of these missiles can carry between 12 to 24 warheads, each warhead with up to eight times the explosive power of the A-bomb dropped on Hiroshima during the Second World War. It’s not a question of immoral sources of profit for greedy war-industry corporations, but of the fundamentally imperialist character of capitalism in its decay. The U.S. government, dead set on being the superpower of the world in the quest for markets and domination, spends hundreds of billions of dollars a year in its military budget and its nuclear weapons have the capacity to wipe out the world several times over.

But disarming the imperialist bourgeoisie clearly raises questions of *who* and *how*, questions Michael Moore cannot touch. It was the triumphant Bolshevik Revolution in 1917, the first and only workers revolution in history, which ended the Russian capitalists’ bloody participation in the interimperialist slaughter of World War I—the first blow of an international workers revolution that had the potential to end this capitalist horror for good. It is only the working class, the producers of the wealth of society, that is capable of putting an end to war for good by overthrowing the imperialist warmongers, taking power, and instituting an egalitarian socialist order.

If there is one thing *Bowling for Columbine* fancies about America, it’s Canada. According to the movie, Canada has just as many guns per capita as the U.S. but has a far lower murder rate. Interviewing a local mayor in Canada who speaks about the need for health care, welfare and other social programs as the means to alleviate violence in



Canadian cops brutalize demonstrator during Quebec anti-globalization protest, 2001.

Spartacus Youth Club Class Series

BOSTON

Monday, 7 p.m.

March 3: “War on Terror” Equals War on Immigrants, Blacks and Labor: The Marxist Understanding of the Capitalist State

BU School of Education, Room 212
605 Commonwealth Avenue
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Alternate Tuesdays, 7 p.m.

March 4: Free Mumia Abu-Jamal! No Illusions in the Racist, Capitalist State and Its Courts!

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

LOS ANGELES

Alternate Saturdays, 2 p.m.

March 1: The Fight Against Capitalist Counterrevolution in the USSR and Eastern Europe

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

NEW YORK CITY

Tuesday, 7:30 p.m.

March 4: The Fight for Black Liberation: Key to the American Socialist Revolution

Columbia University
306 Hamilton Hall
Information and readings: (212) 267-1025
or e-mail: nysl@compuserve.com

TORONTO

Wednesday, 6:30 p.m.

March 5: Capitalism and Women’s Oppression—For Women’s Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!

University of Toronto
Sidney Smith, Room 1085
100 St. George Street
Information and readings: (416) 593-4138
or e-mail: spartcan@on.aibn.com

VANCOUVER

Tuesdays, 5:30 p.m.

March 11: Build a Revolutionary Workers Party! Break With the NDP!

University of British Columbia
Student Union Building, Room 211
Information and readings: (604) 687-0353
or e-mail: tllt@look.ca
(In the event of a UBC Teaching Assistant strike, call for location change.)

(continued from page 12)

Anti-Imperialism Abroad Means Class Struggle at Home!

Such action had already been taken by 15 Scottish railway drivers who refused to transport munitions to a NATO weapons depot. More recently in Italy, transport unions, together with antiwar activists, blocked the railway line being used to transport military equipment to Camp Darby (see article, page 1). In Australia, the Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union has announced that building workers in Sydney will walk off the job immediately upon the outbreak of war. Leaders of five major unions in Britain have also warned of possible industrial action when war breaks out.

This is manifest in the case of Italy's Rifondazione Comunista (RC), which talks of a general strike against the war while making clear in a statement issued after the February 15 protests that RC's real purpose is to again play a role in a "left" parliamentary coalition government, as it did in the mid '90s. RC declares: "Let the arguments for peace and democracy win in parliament as they have already won in the country at large. Take the responsibility to represent the will of the majority of Italian citizens. Restore a positive role and social dignity to our country."

Available in Turkish

Also Available in Turkish:
**ICL Declaration of Principles and
 Some Elements of Program**
 Adopted in 1998 at the ICL
 Third International Conference
\$1 (16 pages)

8

Similarly in Britain, the reformist and centrist left provides cover for the social-chauvinism and parliamentarism of the



Espartaco

trade-union tops and Labourite social democrats. The outpouring of up to two million people in London on February 15 is a stunning measure of the growing hatred for “New Labour” prime minister Tony Blair, more popularly known as “Bush’s poodle” for his loyal service to U.S. imperialism. Left-talking trade-union leaders, dubbed the “awkward squad,” who are behind the calls for labor action were prominent speakers from the platform. But this massive mobilization is now being seized upon to channel growing opposition to the Labour Party into...the Labour Party!

These Labour “lefts” all hark back to “real Labour.” Just what are they referring to? The Labour Party which joined in a coalition with Winston Churchill’s Tories to pursue the aims of British imperialism during World War II, including the

The Labour Party has always served

the interests of British imperialism against the working class at home and the working people and oppressed abroad. The present massive discontent in the ranks of the unions with the Blair government provides a real opening toward breaking the proletarian ranks of the Labour Party away from its pro-capitalist leaders (not just Blair but also the so-called Labour "lefts"), a strategic task in forging a proletarian revolutionary party in Britain.

Within days of the antiwar protests, the reformist and centrist left went into overdrive in a campaign to “Drive Blair Out!” as the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) declared in a *Socialist Worker* (22 February) banner headline. Providing one of the more chemically pure statements of what’s behind the bureaucrats’ call for “labor action,” an article titled: “We Can Get Regime Change in Britain” says, “Now we have to cause such turmoil that Blair is forced from office.” In effect, this is a call to replace Blair with his chancellor of the exchequer (treasury secretary), Gordon Brown, his chief rival in the Cabinet.

The right centrists of Workers Power give a more militant gloss to the idea of “regime change.” This was spelled out in an article titled “Break with Blair—We

Need a New Workers' Party": "The question of breaking from Labour—over both the war on Iraq and the war on the unions—is now concretely posed" (*Workers Power*, December 2002). They even allow that "it needs to be a revolutionary party." But falling back on the excuse that "many workers don't yet agree with the need for revolution," they argue that "in the best case scenario" a new workers party needs to be built by the very left-talking bureaucrats and Labour MPs who are now campaigning to "reclaim" the Labour Party!

As our comrades of the Spartacist League/Britain wrote in the front-page article “Fight British Imperialism Through Class Struggle at Home!” in the current *Workers Hammer* (Winter 2002-2003), many hundreds of which were sold at the protests in London and Glasgow:

"Today we fight to break the ideological chains that bind the working people, minorities and radicalized youth to the Old Labour programme of pressuring decaying British imperialism. Proletarian revolutionary opposition to war, in a conscious way, requires a split from the opportunist currents in the workers movement. The central task remains the construction of a multiethnic revolutionary workers party modelled on the Bolshevik Party of Lenin and Trotsky that led the October Revolution in Russia."

The call for the February 15 demonstrations emerged from the European Social Forum in Italy last fall. Preceding that event, the bulk of European fake socialists—RC, the LCR, the SWP and Workers Power—co-signed a declaration appealing to the European bourgeois rulers to oppose American imperialism. It read:

"Those who show solidarity with the people of Iraq have no hearing in the White House. But we do have the chance to influence European governments—many of whom have opposed the war. We call on all the European heads of state to publicly stand against this war, whether it has UN backing or not, and to demand that George Bush abandon his war plans."

Far from advancing a struggle for “peace,” these putative leftists promote the resurgent nationalism and chauvinism in Europe that paves the way for a future interimperialist war.

In Germany, the organizers of the Berlin protest openly demanded that the government of Social Democratic (SPD) chancellor Gerhard Schröder and Green foreign minister Joschka Fischer “use all political means to oppose this war.” It certainly is a topsy-turvy world when the Fourth Reich of German imperialism is being portrayed as a major force for “peace.” As our comrades of the Spartakist Workers Party (SpAD) wrote in the mobilizing leaflet for their contingent: “The German bourgeoisie is attempting to merge the opposition to war in the population—a result of Germany losing two imperialist world wars and an expression of mistrust in the SPD/Green

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Class-Struggle Protest Against War on Iraq

Scottish Railway Drivers Refuse to Transport Armaments

The following article by the Spartacist League/Britain is reprinted from Workers Hammer No. 183 (Winter 2003).

In early January, in a dramatic political action against the threatened war on Iraq, two rail workers in Motherwell, members of the union ASLEF, halted a freight train

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loaded with tanks and munitions destined for the Gulf. When over a dozen more drivers, employed by the EWS freight company, also refused to move the cargo, Ministry of Defence officials were forced to transport it by road to its destination—the NATO munitions depot at Glen Douglas on Scotland's west coast—where it was eventually loaded onto the Ark Royal warship bound for the Gulf region.

As revolutionary socialists who stand for the military defence of Iraq in the impending war, we salute the courageous action of the Scottish railway workers. Their refusal to move the armaments points the way forward to the kind of

class struggle that needs to be waged by workers here against the capitalist rulers and the Labour government in order to give content to the defence of semicolonial Iraq against the imperialist warmongers. To their credit, the local leadership of ASLEF have backed the workers involved. The drivers' action should have the full support of the union and of the entire working class. It follows similar recent working-class antiwar actions, such as that of Japanese dockworkers at Sasebo who in 2001 refused to load armaments and military supplies onto Japanese navy ships aiding the war on Afghanistan. During the 1999 U.S./Britain/NATO war against Serbia, Italian COBAS unions organised a one-million-strong political general strike against the war. Fiat workers, who today battle plant closings in Italy, organised a campaign of material aid—a campaign which all sections of the ICL actively supported—for their class brothers and sisters at the Yugoslav Zastava car plant, which had been bombed by the imperialists.

The Motherwell railway workers also

stand in the tradition of Red Clydeside during World War I when Scottish engineering workers waged strikes that caused major disruption to the war effort. They defied the chauvinist war frenzy, and as today this meant defying Labour politicians and union officials. Leaders such as John MacLean refused to bow to the state and insisted on pursuing the class war during the imperialist war, and were jailed for this. Later, in May 1920 London dockers refused to load the ship *SS Jolly George* with weapons for war against the fledgling Soviet workers state. The “Hands off Russia” campaign achieved mass support among British workers who, like the working people of the whole world, were electrified by the Bolshevik October 1917 Revolution. The leaders of Red Clydeside, John MacLean and Willie Gallacher, were revolutionary syndicalists, who led militant strikes that challenged the capitalist system but could not overthrow it. From 1914 the Bolsheviks insisted on the need to split from the social-chauvinist Labourites, to build a revolutionary vanguard

party. Indeed, Lenin wrote his pamphlet “*Left-Wing*” *Communism—An Infantile Disorder* to win leaders like Gallacher and MacLean to the Communist International. The Bolsheviks’ perspective was that only workers’ revolution could end imperialist war. That’s the perspective we uphold today.

In bringing the munitions trains to a grinding halt, the Motherwell ASLEF workers' action points the way forward, demonstrating the social power of the working class. It is the labour of workers that manufactures the armaments, that transports and loads them, and it is the working class that has the capacity to bring the whole capitalist economy to a grinding halt. There is much discontent in the British proletariat and more broadly throughout society, both with economic conditions and with the war. Concerted union action against the war is needed. Every successful strike, every workers mobilisation against the war plans, every reverse for the imperialists represents a set-back for their war drive and a blow struck in the interests of workers at home.

The fight against imperialist war is the fight against the capitalist system that breeds it. Today this means the international proletariat has a stake in defending Iraq, taking a side with it against U.S. and British imperialism. This perspective is bound up with a political struggle to win the proletariat to consciousness of the need to be truly independent of the capitalist order and to forge a Leninist party in counterposition to Labourite reformism. ■

government—with resurgent German nationalism reflecting the ambitions of the German capitalist rulers to compete with their U.S. and Japanese imperialist rivals over carving up the world's natural resources and to redivide their spheres of influence.”

In his speech to the Berlin protest, Rolf Becker, an activist from the German public sector union in Hamburg, took the leaders of the DGB trade-union federation to task: “We must remind the DGB leadership that they unconditionally said yes to war against Yugoslavia from the first day on.... We ask the DGB leadership: Is the no today only a no as long as the government says no?” The SPD/Green government aided in the 1999 bombing of Serbia and deployed the Bundeswehr in the Balkans—the first significant German military force to be sent abroad since the Nazi era—and also sent troops as part of the imperialist occupation forces in Afghanistan. As the SpAD leaflet declared: “Schröder and Fischer are Balkan butchers! Bundeswehr out of the Balkans, Afghanistan and the Near East! Not a man, not a cent to this imperialist army!”

The left groups who now join the pacifist chorus of “give peace a chance” were singing a different tune during the U.S.-led NATO war against Serbia in 1999. Then it was “give war a chance,” as they appealed to their imperialist rulers to bring “human rights” and “democ-

racism” to the Balkans. The LCR in France and leading British SWP member Alex Callinicos signed a statement openly calling for imperialist military intervention in Kosovo. They merely objected to U.S. imperialism leading the charge and instead called for this to be carried out under the auspices of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe or the United Nations. For its part, Workers Power and its League for a Revolutionary Communist International supported the Kosovo Albanian separatists who were then pawns of U.S. imperialism. Workers Power even co-sponsored a meeting with pro-NATO speakers from Bosnia and Kosovo and participated in a “Workers Aid to Kosovo” demonstration in London which was shot through with NATO flags and placards screaming, “NATO Just Do It.”

In Australia, the Laborite left and trade-union bureaucrats campaigned for the intervention of Australian imperialist troops in East Timor in 1999. At the February 15 protest in Sydney, the Spartacist League/Australia, which opposed that intervention from the outset, carried a banner declaring: “Australian Military Get Out of the Persian Gulf, East Timor! Hands Off Indonesia! Defend Iraq Against US/UN/Australian Imperialist Attack!” In Britain, we prominently featured the call for British troops out of Northern Ireland, while the protest organizers prominently featured former Labour Northern Ireland Secretary Mo Mowlam—who deployed the British Army to occupy a Catholic area of Portadown in 1997—as a platform speaker. In Canada, our comrades raised the demand “Independence for Quebec!” and fought against the English-Canadian chauvinism of the NDP social democrats.

It is important that millions of people protested the war against Iraq. In New York City, despite a court order banning protesters from marching and with the city turned into a virtual police occupation zone under the Bush administration's "terrorism" alert, hundreds of thousands defiantly came out to show their opposition. In San Francisco, the SL/U.S., the Spartacus Youth Clubs and the Labor Black League for Social Defense organized the Revolutionary Internationalist Contingent under the slogans: "For class struggle against U.S. capitalist rulers! Defend Iraq against imperialist attack! Down with the UN starvation blockade!"

by a number of youth who were attracted by our signs and chants pointing to the need to break with the Democrats, the other capitalist party of war and racism, and for a revolutionary struggle against the capitalist system. The contingent stopped as we reached the entrance to the rally site, where our bright red flags with the internationalist symbol of hammer and four could be seen and our chants heard by all who passed by. This embarrassed the demonstration organizers in ANSWER, the vehicle of the Workers World Party (WWP) for class collaboration. The WWP was fearful of raising any demands that might alienate their bourgeois liberal coalition partners, who think that war with Iraq is not *at the moment* in the best interests of U.S. imperialism. ANSWER marshals unsuccessfully attempted to stop our chants and to isolate us from the other demonstrators by holding yellow "caution" tape in front of our banner and literature table. It is clear that these fake socialists want to suppress

the views of revolutionaries while ensuring the presence of Democrat after Democrat on the official speaker's platform.

Would-be leftists internationally make much of their role in building the broad “unity” of the antiwar movement. But as James Burnham, a leader of the Workers Party, then the American Trotskyist organization, argued in his 1936 pamphlet “War and the Workers”:

“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 only 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.”

The ICL is dedicated to forging the world party of socialist revolution that can eradicate the scourge of capitalist imperialism around the globe. ■

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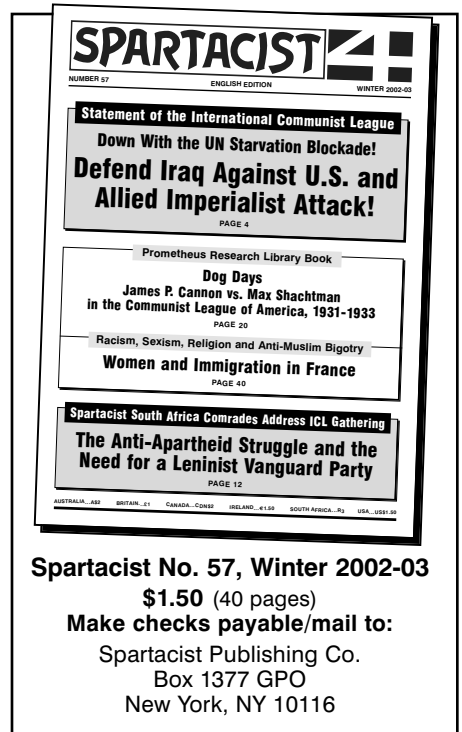
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Defend Iraq...

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the U.S. and Europe. At the same time, the working class and oppressed peoples the world over must defend the struggles of the Iraqi people against the American invaders.

The main focus of wrangling between the U.S. and France is over an additional UN resolution explicitly authorizing an immediate war. Such a resolution is particularly important to British prime minister Tony Blair, whose lapdog-like servility to Bush has provoked massive popular opposition, indeed revulsion, especially in his own ruling Labour Party and the trade-union movement. The Bush gang is hoping that France, Russia and China will abstain rather than exercise their veto power in the Security Council. But even American neocolonies like Mexico are balking at endorsing a U.S. war against Iraq.

For 12 years, the self-proclaimed “world’s only superpower” has waged a one-sided war against this small, semi-colonial Near Eastern country. The 1991 Desert Slaughter campaign was accompanied by economic sanctions, both “legitimized” by UN resolutions, which have resulted in the deaths of a million and a half Iraqis from malnutrition and disease.

The “disarmament” of a relatively industrialized Third World country like Iraq means not only the slaughter of tens or hundreds of thousands of people but the continued devastation of industry and infrastructure. Chlorine for water purification and pumps for irrigation and sewage are among the wide range of items deemed by Washington to have military use and thus banned by the UN starvation blockade. As Dilip Hiro notes in his book *Iraq: In the Eye of the Storm* (2002): “Due to the broken-down pumps, the sewage spills over into rivers, the source of drinking water. And that leads to such illnesses as typhoid and dysentery, which reached epidemic proportions in 1997.” Also banned as “dual use” items are seeds, pesticide, fertilizer and spare parts for farm machinery—even textbooks, writing paper and medical vaccines, the latter because they contain trace amounts of a potential chemical weapon.

Now Bush Jr. is intent on finishing the job begun by his father and continued by his Democratic successor Bill Clinton. Why? The usual answer, especially on the left, is that the U.S. wants to get control of Iraq’s oil fields, which contain the second-largest petroleum reserves in the world after Saudi Arabia. “No Blood for Oil!” is a main slogan of the antiwar protests. But the U.S. could buy every barrel of oil produced by Iraq for a fraction of the projected cost—from \$50 to \$200 billion—of an invasion and occupation. The men who run Wall Street and Washington *want Iraqi blood* no less than they want Iraqi oil. They want to send a message, especially to their main imperialist rivals, that they have the military power and the will to use it regardless of what the rest of the world says or does. **Defend Iraq against imperialist attack! Down with the UN starvation blockade! All U.S./UN troops out of the Near East and Persian Gulf region!**

Rifts in the Western “Alliance”

The recent political fireworks and mutual recriminations over Iraq signal deeply rooted and long-developing tensions between American imperialism and its main European capitalist rivals and erstwhile anti-Soviet Cold War allies. From the White House and Congress to TV and radio talk shows, the American ruling class is whipping up popular hostility especially toward France. Prominent politicians, Democrats as well as Republicans, are calling for punitive measures against French and German imports. Pentagon generals are talking about reducing U.S. troops stationed in Germany and transferring them to the now-friendlier climes of East Europe and the Balkans. The right-wing *New York Post* ran a doctored photo of the UN Security Council on its front page depicting the French

and German delegates as weasels. In North Carolina, one restaurant has even changed french fries to “freedom fries”!

In an op-ed piece in the *New York Times* (14 February), French ambassador Jean-David Levitte commented: “Reading the papers from both sides of the Atlantic, I sometimes wonder whether the impending war is not between France and the United States.” In a sense, the impending U.S. invasion and occupation of Iraq is directed at France or, more generally, at America’s rivals in Europe and also Japan.

The massive outpouring of antiwar protest across Europe expressed the well-founded hatred and fear of American militarism among the working people, fear that the Pentagon’s arsenal of death and destruction will be used not only against Third World countries like Iraq but at some point against Europe. That fear was heightened by the Pentagon’s release last year of the “Nuclear Posture Review,” which explicitly allows for a “pre-emptive” American nuclear attack and lists seven possible targets, including (for the first time) non-nuclear countries like Iraq. But if popular opposition to American militarism is not directed toward **proletarian internationalism**, it will inevitably be directed toward strengthening the military power and global role of one’s “own” capitalist state.

Thus a recent editorial in *Le Monde*, the premier mouthpiece of the French bourgeoisie, called for the European Union (EU) to “enlarge our defense policy which today is nationally limited” and an earlier piece even chastised Germany for being too pacifist. If today the German imperialists clothe themselves in more pacifistic garb than their American counterparts, it does not mean that they are inherently more “peaceful.” It simply reflects the fact that at the present moment they lack the military means to challenge their American rivals. The European sections of the International Communist League inter-



Reuters

Diplomatic wrangling among imperialist thieves: Pentagon chief Rumsfeld with German foreign minister Fischer.

vened in the February 15 protests linking the defense of Iraq against the American-led attack with total opposition to the militarism of the European bourgeois states.

The rift between the United States and the major European capitalist states revealed by the Iraq crisis points toward the division of the capitalist world into rival imperialist blocs. As we wrote five years ago in the ICL “Declaration of Principles and Some Elements of Program” (*Spartacist* [English-language edition] No. 54, Spring 1998):

“Increasingly mutually hostile imperialist powers and rival blocs must oppress the peoples of the former colonial world and those still under the yoke of colonial peonage, impoverish the world’s masses, engage in continual wars for the maintenance and revision of the world markets in order to prop up the falling rate of profit, and attempt to smash the revolutionary struggle of the workers wherever it breaks out. In its final frenzied effort to maintain its class rule, the bourgeoisie will not hesitate to plunge humanity into nuclear holocaust or dictatorial oppression of unprecedented ferocity.”

America vs. Europe in the Post-Soviet World

NATO was formed in 1949 under tight American control as a military alliance with the West European capitalist states against the Soviet Union, which in defeating the Nazi German Wehrmacht had emerged from World War II as a military-industrial power second only to the United States. A few years later the U.S. formed a military alliance with

Japan against the USSR, the People’s Republic of China and North Korea in the Far East. With the destruction of the Soviet Union through capitalist counter-revolution in 1991-92, the fundamental economic conflicts of interest among the major imperialist states, which had been somewhat constrained by the Cold War alliances, had to come to the fore.

In their own way the American ruling class understood this, too. Declaring their state to be the “world’s only superpower,” they were determined to keep it that way. In what has since been explicitly adopted as U.S. policy, a 1992 Pentagon document, leaked to the press, stated its intent to “set the nation’s direction for the next century” (*New York Times*, 8 March 1992). The “first objective” was to “prevent the emergence of a new rival,” precluding “the emergence of any potential future global competitor.”

With the demise of the Soviet Union, the primary purpose of NATO for American imperialism has been to prevent European, centrally German, economic strength from being translated into an independent military force. Thus during the 1990s, the Clinton White House consistently sabotaged any independent EU policy—especially at the military level—toward the fratricidal wars in the Balkans ignited by capitalist counterrevolution and the resulting breakup of Yugoslavia. Two left-wing writers, James Petras and Steve Vieux, explained in this regard:

“The disintegration of the Yugoslav confederation and the subsequent emergence of warring ethnic mini-states formed the background for the revitalization of NATO and the re-emergence of US hegemony in Europe. At the cost of tens of thousands of lives, the US blocked European peace initiatives in order to safeguard its political ‘leadership’ on the continent via NATO.”

—*New Left Review*,
July/August 1996

Nonetheless, France and Germany not only supported but actively participated in the U.S./NATO attack on Bosnian Serbs

in 1995 and the air war against Serbia in 1999. And Russia joined in the subsequent occupation of Kosovo under the NATO structure, with an American general in overall command.

France Talks the Talk But Can’t Walk the Walk

This time around, however, Paris, Berlin and Moscow are taking a different line. The neo-Gaullist regime of Jacques Chirac in France has put itself forward as the main spokesman for anti-American bourgeois nationalism in Europe. But that role does not correspond to the actual balance of economic and military forces in Europe. France’s exalted diplomatic status as one of five permanent members of the UN Security Council, with the right to veto American-supported resolutions, is a carryover from the early years of the Cold War. Despite its small nuclear arsenal—the *force de frappe*—France is a second-level imperialist state.

Germany is the dominant economic power in Europe. And then there’s Russia waiting in the wings. Capitalist counter-revolution has led to a catastrophic economic and social decline unprecedented in the history of any modern, industrialized country. Nonetheless, Russia’s new capitalist rulers inherited from the USSR a powerful nuclear arsenal and strong conventional armed forces. An alliance between Germany’s economic and technological resources and Russia’s military potential would create a formidable chal-



AP

Ankara, Turkey February 15 antiwar protest. Sign reads: “No to American Aggression.”

lenge to American global dominance.

For the moment, however, France is trying to act as spoiler to the U.S. at the diplomatic level. This is not, in fact, something new. France played the maverick in the Western alliance during the Cold War, too. Since the regime of Charles de Gaulle in the 1960s, French ruling circles have flaunted their “independence” from Washington without, however, seriously opposing American strategic interests.

Taking advantage of the close ties between the U.S. and Zionist Israel, de Gaulle and his successors reoriented French policy in the Near East toward “radical” Arab nationalist states like the Ba’athist regimes in Syria and especially Iraq. While the latter mainly depended on Soviet military aid and diplomatic support, the Iraqi regime also cultivated good relations with France and vice versa. In the 1970s, the state-owned Iraq Company for Oil Operations agreed to provide France with almost a quarter of its total output. In turn, France became a major weapons supplier to the Iraqi military. Jean-Pierre Chevènement, the defense minister in the Socialist government of François Mitterrand in the 1980s, was a founder at the time of the Iraqi-French Friendship Association.

During the diplomatic run-up to the 1991 Gulf War, Mitterrand played “soft cop” to Bush Sr.’s America. For example, he proposed a UN resolution “linking” the withdrawal of the Iraqi army from Kuwait (which is part of the American oil empire in the Arabian peninsula) with Israeli withdrawal from the Palestinian Occupied Territories. In the 1990s, France along with Russia pressed for a relaxation of the economic sanctions against Iraq but was rebuffed by the Clinton White House. So they have continued to participate in the starvation blockade of Iraq.

The Iraq Crisis and the New World Disorder

Why then the sudden and massive explosion in West Europe of opposition to a U.S. military takeover of Iraq? The usual answer is a simple one: George W. Bush. Certainly, this extreme right-wing administration in Washington, with its “America über alles” ideology, has aggravated tensions with its European “allies” and inflamed European public opinion. There is real hatred for the racist warmonger in the White House among the working people of Europe, just as there is among workers, blacks and Latinos in the U.S.

But popular hatred of war has nothing to do with the reasons that the French Gaullists and German Social Democratic leaders are now balking at a U.S. invasion and occupation of Iraq. The current rift in the Western “alliance” is in part conditioned by the world economic downturn precipitated by the Wall Street crash. During the 1990s, European, especially German, industrialists and financiers made a lot of money in the U.S. through increased export earnings, increased sales revenue from their American-based operations and capital gains on their holdings of high-tech and other American corporate stocks. But then the U.S. boom went

bust, and many Europeans took a bath as the S&P 500 and NASDAQ indices went south. To make matters worse, the Bush administration has resorted to trade protectionism, for example, on imports of steel.

The U.S. move to take over Iraq has brought to a head an array of accumulated grievances in French and German ruling circles—trade policy, the Anglo-American cartel’s control of the world oil market, the flaunting of U.S. power around the world from Afghanistan to the Philippines. The Bush gang has responded by seeking to undermine French/German leadership of the European Union. In late January, Secretary of State Colin Powell lined up the governments of Britain, Italy, Spain, Denmark, Portugal, Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic to issue a pro-war and pro-American statement in no less an authoritative organ than the *Wall Street Journal*.

Powell’s ploy exposed and deepened the division in Europe between East and West. The new capitalist rulers of the countries of the former Soviet bloc (e.g., Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic) have joined the EU or applied for membership with the expectation of being generously subsidized by the far wealthier West European countries, centrally Germany. But now they are being offered the opportunity to play off Washington against Paris and Berlin for perhaps even greater economic rewards. French president Chirac was so incensed that the new and aspiring EU members in East Europe supported the American position on Iraq that he lashed out: “It is not well brought-up behavior.... They missed a good opportunity to shut up.”

Underlying Chirac’s tirade are a couple of basic truths. First, France, even in concert with Germany, lacks the economic resources, much less military power, to check American influence even in France’s own backyard. Second, there is no such thing as “Europe” in a political sense. The EU is a bloc of bourgeois national states whose rulers pursue their own conflicting interests, often knifing one another in the back.

In fact, the period prior to the Iraq crisis was one of substantial conflict among major EU states. France and Germany were fighting over agricultural subsidies; France and Italy over the regulations governing trade in wine and cheese; France and Britain over job losses from the closure of British firms in France. The only policies these West European capitalist regimes were collaborating in were police-state measures against immigrants and intensified attacks on the union movement and social programs.

Chirac and German Social Democratic chancellor Gerhard Schröder are now acting more or less in tandem in opposing an immediate invasion of Iraq. However, the overall policies of France and Germany in the Near East are quite different, to a degree even counterposed. Orienting toward the Arab nationalist regimes, French ruling circles profess (however hypocritically) sympathy for the Palestinian cause. Moreover, France has a large Arab population, mainly from its former North African colonies, who are fervent supporters of the Palestinian resistance to the murderous Israeli occupation. Germany, on the other hand, has been a major provider of economic aid to Israel, second only to the U.S. Hence the effect of an American invasion of Iraq on Israel/Palestine would likely disrupt the current Paris/Berlin bloc vis-à-vis the U.S.

The Zionist rulers are looking forward to the American attack on Iraq as an opportunity to completely crush the Palestinian resistance, possibly by driving the Palestinian population into the surrounding Arab states. *Le Monde* (20 February) quoted a “very senior military official” who recalled that “the first Intifada [Palestinian uprising] was stopped by the first Gulf War.” The current Palestinian uprising “could finish the same way,” he declared, “if the American attack takes place and it is victorious.”

While Washington openly backs its Israeli junior partners in their bloody

repression of the Palestinians, it currently postures as a defender of the Kurdish national minority in Iraq. But nowhere is the cynicism of U.S. imperialism’s proclamations of “liberating” the Iraqi people clearer than in the horse trading over the Kurds. In order to secure Turkey as a platform for an American invasion into northern Iraq, the U.S. is giving the Ankara regime billions of dollars and license for its army, notorious for its war of annihilation in Turkish Kurdistan, to occupy Kurdish areas of Iraq. The imperialists are dead set against any expression of Kurdish national self-determination.

Only within a socialist federation of the Near East can the national rights of all the main peoples of the region be achieved, from the Palestinians to the



Antiwar demonstrators fill Madrid’s Puerta del Sol square during worldwide day of protest.

Kurdish population, which is divided among Iraq, Iran, Syria and Turkey. The realization of a *socialist republic of united Kurdistan* requires the proletarian overthrow of all four of those bourgeois states.

For Unconditional Military Defense of North Korea and China!

The impending U.S. invasion of Iraq is to be carried out in the name of the “global war on terror” declared by the U.S. rulers following the criminal 9/11 attack on the World Trade Center by Islamic fundamentalists. Osama bin Laden’s Al Qaeda network and its Afghan *mujahedin* supporters were originally *organized, armed and financed by the CIA* to fight the Soviet Army in Afghanistan in the 1980s. In 1989, the “liberal” Stalinist regime of Mikhail Gorbachev withdrew the last Soviet forces from Afghanistan in order to appease American imperialism. The retreat of Soviet power in Central Asia was quickly followed by the capitalist counterrevolution which swept across East Europe and then destroyed the USSR itself.

In the aftermath, Washington seized on “Islamic terrorism” as a new external enemy against which to rally the population. For their part, the Afghan-based Islamic fundamentalist terrorists turned on their former American paymasters. The U.S. rulers justified the invasion of Afghanistan in late 2001 as a war of vengeance. It also served a broader strategic purpose by introducing U.S. military forces into Central Asian countries bordering both Russia and China.

Iraq, of course, had nothing whatsoever to do with the 9/11 attack. The Arab nationalist regime in Baghdad and Islamic fundamentalist groups like Al Qaeda are mortal enemies. Recall that Saddam Hussein was a Soviet client while Osama bin Laden was a CIA asset during Cold War II.

The Bush gang has made it clear that after the takeover of Iraq its next target will be North Korea. Standing behind North Korea, geographically and politically, is China, by far the most powerful of the remaining states where capitalism has been overthrown (the others being North Korea, Vietnam and Cuba). Having succeeded in their decades-long goal of destroying the Soviet Union, the American imperialists view the continued existence of the People’s Republic of China as

a very large piece of unfinished business. Their goal: to reverse the 1949 Chinese Revolution in order to subjugate and exploit China. Their strategy: to combine external military pressure with internal capitalist penetration facilitated by the “market reforms” of the venal Beijing Stalinist bureaucracy.

We stand for the defense of the Chinese and North Korean bureaucratically deformed workers states against imperialist attack from without and capitalist counterrevolution from within. Especially in the present context, that means supporting the right of North Korea to develop nuclear weapons along with the delivery system necessary to make them an effective deterrent to the Pentagon war machine.

Precisely because North Korea might

have a few nukes and effective medium-range missiles and certainly does have a strong conventional armed force, even Bush & Co. are moving against it in a cautious and roundabout way. For now, they’re trying to line up Japan, Russia and China to put economic pressure on the Kim Jong Il regime to restore “international” (i.e., imperialist) control over its nuclear facilities.

The key country here is China, which provides most of the economic aid, especially food and fuel, upon which the beleaguered and impoverished Pyongyang regime depends. China has the power to block any U.S. move for stronger economic sanctions against North Korea not only in the UN Security Council but, more importantly, in the real world. However, the Beijing Stalinist bureaucracy has repeatedly emphasized agreement with the imperialists’ demands for a “non-nuclear Korean peninsula” and has sought to lean on the Pyongyang regime to “moderate” its policies. Such criminal appeasement only emboldens the imperialists in their drive to foment counterrevolution in China itself.

Fundamentally, the defense of those states where capitalism has been overthrown requires the extension of proletarian rule to the advanced capitalist countries. Yet this perspective is not only alien but anathema to the nationalist bureaucratic castes that rule in China and North Korea. The Stalinist bureaucrats in Beijing and Pyongyang fear that socialist

revolution in South Korea and Japan would quickly inspire proletarian political revolutions against themselves by the Chinese and North Korean workers and peasants. Likewise, a political revolution in China or North Korea would have an enormous impact on South Korea and on Japan, the industrial powerhouse of Asia.

For Class Struggle Against U.S. Capitalist Rulers!

Seizing on the World Trade Center attack to get a lock on power, the Bush administration has unleashed a “war on terror” whose domestic face has been a racist witchhunt against Arabs and Muslims, with the civil liberties of the population as a whole increasingly put through the shredder. Beginning with the arbitrary detention and forced interrogation of thousands of non-citizens, the government has gone on to assert that those citizens deemed “enemy combatants” also have no citizenship rights. Its ultimate target is the labor movement, the real “enemy within” in the eyes of the American bourgeoisie, as seen in the invocation of “national security” against a threatened West Coast longshore strike last year. Meanwhile, the White House showers tax cuts on the rich and strips inner-city kids even of their school lunches.

But as the huge turnout for last week’s antiwar protests and the number of trade-union resolutions against a war demonstrate, the patriotic “one nation indivisible” hysteria whipped up following 9/11 has grown thin under the weight of recession, mass layoffs and grotesque corporate corruption. And with its heavily working-class and black and Hispanic base, the U.S. military is a reflection of the class and racial contradictions of civil society. An article in the Japanese newspaper *Asahi Shimbun* (19 January) reports on widespread sentiment among the sailors of the USS *Kitty Hawk* and other ships of the Seventh Fleet against an attack on Iraq.

It could not be clearer that the multiracial working people of America and the semicolonial masses of Iraq have a common enemy in the war-crazed, labor-hating gang in the White House and the capitalist class it represents. But the labor tops and the reformist organizers of the antiwar protests seek to channel the growing opposition to U.S. military adventures abroad and the anger building at the base of this society into the “lesser evil” Democratic Party of American imperialism. In fact, because of its image as a “friend” of labor and black people, the Democratic Party has historically been the preferred party of war for the bourgeoisie. Those Democrats who have spoken out against “Bush’s war” hope to position themselves to get out ahead of and contain any opposition and turmoil that the war against Iraq could generate among working people and minorities.

Antiwar youth, labor militants and fighters for black and immigrant rights must understand that any genuine opposition to imperialist war must be based on class struggle and political protest independent of all the parties and agencies of capitalist class rule. ***Defend Iraq against U.S. attack! For class struggle against U.S. capitalist rulers at home! Break with the Democratic Party of war and racism! Build a workers party to fight for socialist revolution! ■***

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WORKERS VANGUARD

Revolutionary Internationalists on the March



Workers Hammer



Le Bolchévik

From New York City to Johannesburg to London, the International Communist League stood out in the gigantic protests against war on Iraq on the weekend of February 15-16, mobilizing contingents and sales teams to intervene with a program of proletarian revolutionary internationalism. Unlike pacifists, we take a side, fighting for the defense of Iraq against imperialist attack without giving an iota of political support to the regime of Saddam Hussein, the butcher of Iraqi leftists, workers and Kurds. As we underlined in the ICL statement “Down With the UN Starvation Blockade! Defend Iraq Against U.S. and Allied Imperialist Attack!” (reprinted in WV No. 790, 1 November 2002), which was translated into eight languages and distributed at the protests:

“The colossal military advantage of the United States against neocolonial Iraq—a country which has already been bled white through 12 years of UN sanctions which have killed more than 1.5 million civilians—underscores the importance of class struggle in the imperialist centers as the chief means to give content to the call to defend Iraq. Every strike, every labor mobilization against war plans, every mass protest against attacks on workers and minorities, every struggle against domestic repression and against attacks on civil liberties represents a dent in the imperialist war drive. To put an end to war once and for all, the capitalist system that breeds war must be swept away through a series of revolutions and the establishment of a rational, planned, egalitarian socialist economy on a world scale.”

Our intervention sharply distinguished us from an entire spectrum of self-styled “socialists” both in the U.S.—where the protest organizers seek to channel opposition to the war into support for “antiwar” Democrats—and throughout Europe, where the mass antiwar protests against “Bush’s war” are being channeled in the national-chauvinist direction of getting one’s “own” rulers to stand up to American imperialism. This was particularly the case in France, where most of the left rallied behind the neo-Gaullist regime of Jacques Chirac, hailing its obstruction of the U.S. in the UN Security Council. Having assisted in getting Chirac elected, the Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire (LCR) issued a statement calling on “the French authorities and parliament to use all means in their power to stop a war against Iraq.” In a leaflet mobilizing for a revolutionary internationalist contingent in the Paris demonstration, our comrades of the Ligue Trotskyste de France exposed this revolting fraud:

“The truth is that ‘the French authorities’ have the blood of a million Algerians on their hands as well as tens of thousands



Spartakist

February 15: Spartacist contingents in antiwar demonstrations in London and Paris (top) and Berlin. SpAD banner in Berlin reads: “Down With Racist State Terror! For Class Struggle Against German Capitalist Rulers! Defend Iraq Against Imperialist Attack!”

of Vietnamese and other colonial victims. Now, with the Marcoussis agreements which confirm a ‘regime change’ in the Ivory Coast at the gunpoint of thousands of French soldiers and with the support of the UN, the French are putting together all of the elements for a bloodbath, as they did in Rwanda in 1994.”

Cheering for French imperialism was a theme of the demonstrations throughout Europe, echoed also in the U.S. protests. Disgustingly, Ahmed Ben Bella, who was president of Algeria following its independence from France, proclaimed in addressing the London demonstration: “Vive la France!” Ben Bella should try chanting this to the Algerian population in the Paris suburbs, which faces deadly racist terror at the hands of the French state and Le Pen’s fascist National Front.

That Le Pen issued a call on his storm-troopers to join in the Paris antiwar march is a measure of the deadly chauvinism behind appeals to the French bourgeoisie to “stop” the war against Iraq.

In France and elsewhere, we championed the defense of immigrants and their families who have been the first targets of the “war on terror,” the opening shot worldwide for the imperialist rulers in augmenting their machinery of state repression, which is aimed straight at the heart of the working class. In Athens, where the demonstration was tear-gassed by police, our supporters combatted the chauvinism of those leftists, like the Greek Communist Party, who declare that the European Union (EU), currently headed by Greece, should have the de-

ciding vote on war against Iraq. As an expression of proletarian internationalism, we distributed the ICL statement in Greek and Turkish.

The Turkish statement was also distributed by our comrades at the mass protests in London and Berlin. Turkish workers are a vital and combative component of the proletariat in Germany. In Berlin, a Kurdish contingent gave our comrade their bullhorn to lead chants when they heard our slogans opposing the EU ban on the Kurdish nationalist PKK, which has long been brutally repressed by the Turkish state. In France, where Arab workers are a strategic and militant part of the proletariat and a critical link to the working and oppressed masses in North Africa and the Near East, our Paris contingent had signs in Arabic opposing the racist state terror of the government’s “Vigipirate” campaign and calling for the defense of the Palestinians against Zionist terror.

Our contingents and interventions also drew a sharp class line internationally with our forthright calls for the unconditional military defense of the North Korean deformed workers state, including its right to nuclear weapons. This too cut against the pacifism and class collaborationism of the protest organizers. Speaker after speaker railed against the nuclear cowboys in the White House. But the leftists who now head various “antiwar” coalitions made their own contribution to the emergence of U.S. imperialism as the world’s unrivaled military power through their support to the forces of capitalist counterrevolution that destroyed the former Soviet Union and the East European deformed workers states. Although bureaucratically degenerated and undermined by Stalinist misrule, the Soviet Union possessed military might that held the ambitions of U.S. imperialism in check. Now the American rulers see nothing standing in the way of their riding roughshod over the entire planet.

We fought until the bitter end for the unconditional military defense of the Soviet Union, throwing every resource at our disposal into the struggle to stop capitalist counterrevolution. Our purpose was to reimplant the revolutionary internationalist program of Lenin and Trotsky’s Bolshevik Party through proletarian political revolution against the treacherous Stalinist bureaucracy. We continue that fight today in defense of China, North Korea, Cuba and Vietnam against imperialist attack and internal counterrevolution. In contrast, those leftists who stood on the side of imperialism in its

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