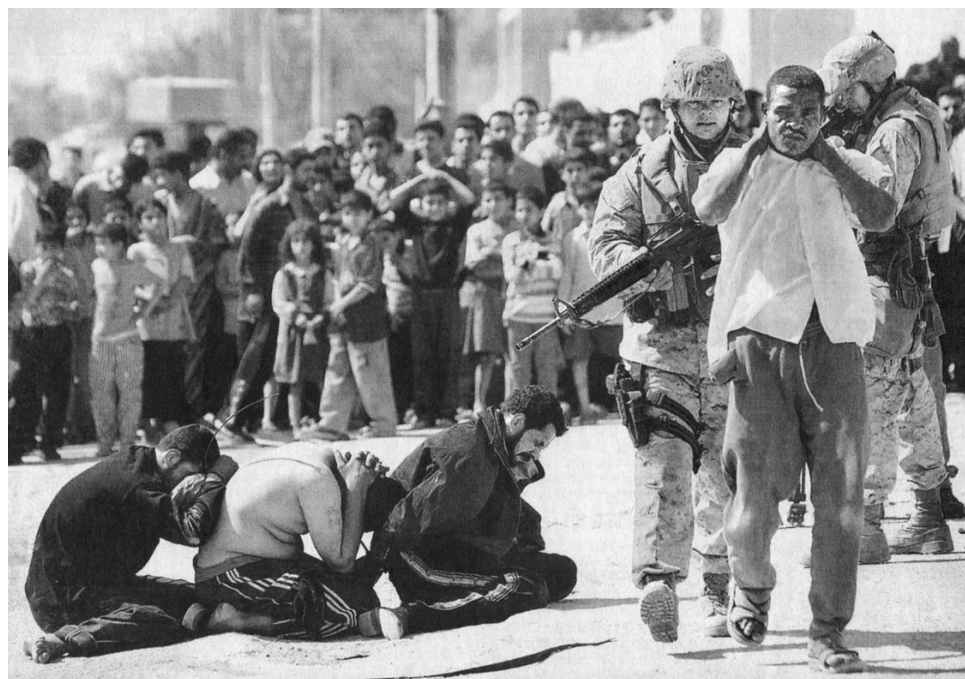


U.S. Hands Off Syria!

Down With Colonial Occupation of Iraq!



AP



Reuters

As U.S. occupation army terrorizes colonial victims in Baghdad, thousands rally outside Abu Hanifa Mosque demanding U.S. get out.

APRIL 22—The people of the northern Iraqi city of Mosul got their first real taste of American “liberation” last Tuesday when U.S. Marines fired directly into a crowd of demonstrators protesting against the occupation. Within minutes, ten Iraqis had been shot dead and dozens more wounded; the next day at least seven more people in Mosul were killed by American troops. In a column in the London *Guardian* (10 April), Seumas Milne wrote:

“What cannot now be disguised, as US marines swagger around the Iraqi capital swathing toppled statues of Saddam Hussein with the stars and stripes and declaring ‘we own Baghdad,’ is the crudely colonial nature of this enterprise. Any day now, the pro-Israeli retired US general Jay Garner is due to take over the running of Iraq, with plans to replace the Iraqi dinar with the dollar, parcel out contracts to US companies and set the free market parameters for the future ‘interim Iraqi administration’.”

The imperialists may have won an easy military victory, but the colonial occupation has already provoked outrage and resistance among the population. In the southern Shi’ite city of Nasiriya, up to 20,000 marched to protest the colonial occupation. On April 18, tens of thousands more demonstrated on the streets of Baghdad, carrying banners in Arabic and English reading: “Leave Our Country. We Want Peace” and “We Reject American Hegemony.” Organized by the

Shi’ite mosques, this demonstration was a rare display of unity between Sunni and Shi’ite Muslims. But it took place under the green banners of Islamic reaction.

The imperialist occupation has encouraged reactionary forces to emerge, from fundamentalists demanding an Islamic republic to monarchists to “democrats” on the CIA payroll. Ethnic and religious antagonisms, stoked by the British imperialist conquest at the end of World War I and fueled by decades of bourgeois-nationalist rule, now threaten to erupt in an orgy of bloodletting. In the areas of northern Iraq dominated by the U.S.-allied nationalists of the Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP) and Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), mobs have driven thousands of Arabs from their villages. In Mosul, Arab protesters not only chanted

“U.S. out!” but also “Kurds out!” And the Turkmen minority is so besieged that they have appealed for military intervention by Turkey.

Mosul was a stronghold of the Ba’ath Party. However, among its population of some one million, one-third are Kurds, who also form a majority in the surrounding region. Under the Ba’ath regime’s “Arabization” scheme, hundreds of thousands of Kurds, Turkmen and Assyrians were driven out of the region. With 300,000 Kurdish refugees planning to return, the threat of communalist bloodshed hangs over the whole area. A reporter for the *Guardian* (17 April) noted that “Mosul looked more like a Beirut war zone than a liberated city.”

No one really knows the number of civilians killed during the war, or even the

number of Iraqi soldiers slaughtered while defending their country. What is clear is that the hospitals and morgues are overflowing with the dead and wounded. And what little civil infrastructure survived the U.S./British bombing and 12 years of starvation sanctions has been devastated through widespread looting carried out under the gaze of U.S. occupation forces who rushed to secure the country’s oil fields. In Baghdad, 35 hospitals are closed because of looting and arson and the three still functioning are without basic drugs. Baghdad and other cities have been without electricity or water for weeks. And there is widespread fear of diseases such as cholera spreading as people drink contaminated water from the rivers.

What we are witnessing is the return to old-style colonial pillage, with the hated cops of the Ba’athist regime once again terrorizing the population as puppets of the colonial invaders. While U.S. troops guarded the Ministry of Oil, the imperialist occupiers gave a green light to the sacking of the Baghdad museum and the torching of the library—the cultural heritage of Iraq and indeed of humanity. In an eyewitness account, Robert Fisk wrote in the London *Independent* (13 April):

“Our feet crunched on the wreckage of 5,000-year-old marble plinths and stone statuary and pots that had endured every siege of Baghdad, every invasion of Iraq throughout history—only to be destroyed when America came to ‘liberate’ the city....

“Not since the Taliban embarked on their orgy of destruction against the Buddhas of Bamiyan and the statues in the museum of Kabul—perhaps not since the Second World War or earlier—have so

continued on page 6



Reuters

Invading U.S. troops immediately moved to secure Iraqi oil facilities.



Shipping Bosses, Police Collude in Cop Rampage

Oakland Docks

OAKLAND—Unions around the world have sent statements protesting the April 7 cop rampage at the Port of Oakland. Cops opened fire on antiwar protesters, longshoremen and port truckers, injuring dozens—including nine members of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU)—and arresting 31. *Drop all the charges now!*

This brutal assault brought home with a vengeance the direct link between the war against Iraq and the war on U.S. labor. As the Partisan Defense Committee wrote in a statement issued the same day: “Labor’s enormous social power must be brought to bear *now* to stop the government’s attack on the very right to protest the bloody colonial war and occupation of Iraq.”

The deliberate targeting of this protest had the character of a “pre-emptive strike” against any potential union action. The

Port of Oakland, the fourth largest in the nation, is critical to shipping war supplies to the imperialist military. A motion declaring solidarity with the antiwar protesters and longshoremen passed by AFSCME Local 444, representing municipal water workers in the Oakland area, declared that with its assault, “the government took aim and fired at the stronghold of labor power on the West Coast. Given the ILWU’s ability to shut down the ports, it could very well have been an ILWU picket line the cops were attacking. This escalation of police violence was a warning directed at the whole labor movement in the Bay Area, as well as an attack on the very right to protest the U.S. war on Iraq.”

Indeed, it is now known that the cop attack was coordinated and planned days in advance in collusion with the union-busting shipping bosses who locked out longshoremen last fall, in particular APL and Stevedoring Services of America (SSA). The day after the attack, the *Oakland Tribune* reported, “At a meeting last



Hafalia/SF Chronicle

Cop attack against antiwar protest at Port of Oakland, April 7.

week, officials from the Police Department, port and two shipping lines targeted by protesters came up with a strategy to handle the expected gatherings.”

Jack Heyman, the ILWU business agent on duty when the protest began, was dragged out of his car, thrown to the ground, arrested and jailed for 18 hours for trying to protect his union members. Heyman said that when taken to the cops’ temporary command center in a port rail yard, he saw “the top dog from SSA’s Matson operations, Kevin Mehlberg, and another SSA bigshot in their conspicuous yellow and green company jackets” (*Maritime Worker Monitor*, 18 April).

Statements by Oakland Police Department (OPD) spokesmen claimed that police were responding to demonstrators throwing rocks and other heavy objects. Demonstrators and longshoremen present—including supporters of the Spartacist League, two of whom were injured by the “less lethal” projectiles shot from police shotguns—uniformly report that the police attack was both unprovoked and deliberate, firing at close range.

Statements of protest have been sent by unions from Pakistan to Canada, including dockers in the Compagnia Unica in Genoa, Italy; the European zone of the International Dockworkers Council; the Brazilian labor federation CUT; and the National Council of Dockworkers’ Unions of Japan and the All Japan Dockworkers’ Union, which in 2001 refused to load Japanese military supplies bound for Afghanistan to assist the U.S.-led war there. The Oakland Education Association, which had some 15 members at the port protest, and the main Bay Area labor councils also protested the attack.

A letter to Oakland mayor Jerry Brown by ILWU International president James Spinosa stated, “Our union was founded on the blood of workers shot and killed by police in 1934. We did not tolerate such actions then and we certainly will not tolerate them now.” A union worth its salt would have shut down the entire port in an elementary act of self-defense once the first concussion grenade was lobbed by the cops on April 7. This did not happen. Why? Because of the pro-capitalist outlook of the ILWU leadership, which leads them to sanctify the myriad laws and institutions that the bourgeois state has put in place to keep the workers in line.

The heavily black ILWU Local 10 has a progressive image; it has endorsed any number of antiwar demonstrations—including Congresswoman Barbara Lee’s April 5 rally in Oakland, at which she called for support to the troops while pushing for votes to the Democrats in the next elections. What the support to the “friends of labor” Democrats gets you was seen by the response of liberal mayor Jerry Brown to the cop attack.

As the *San Francisco Chronicle* (8 April) put it, Brown declared that the “police acted appropriately in dealing with protesters who wanted to ‘occupy and take over the port and shut it down’.” But only last August, the same Jerry Brown was lauded by the same ILWU tops, who invited him to bluster forth from the platform of an ILWU rally about how he was a friend of the working class.

At a rally at the Federal Building in Oakland on August 12, he even boasted he was “there with you” at a protest picket at the Oakland docks in 1997 against the *Neptune Jade* in support of striking dockers in Liverpool, England. Yet the OPD’s eagerness to try out their “crowd control” firepower on the docks in support of the rape of Iraq recalls the sinister 1999 invasion of Oakland staged by the U.S. Marines under its Operation Urban Warrior, an exercise also welcomed by Mayor Brown (see “Marines Invade Oakland,” WV No. 710, 2 April 1999). He knows whose side he is on: the capitalist rulers.

In fact, the ILWU leadership has itself embraced the “war on terror,” even insisting it would load military cargo during the lockout of its members last fall. Faced with the anti-union Maritime Security Act, the union bureaucrats offered up the union’s services to enforce “security” on the docks. April 7 was exactly what “security” on the docks means!

The ILWU response is to pressure the City of Oakland for an “independent investigation,” which will supposedly lead to more control over the cops. This call has been taken up by “progressive” Democrats on the Oakland City Council—like Jane Brunner and Vice Mayor Nancy Nadel—and a public hearing has been scheduled for April 29. The aim of these Democratic Party “soft cops” is to head off struggle against the system of exploitation by offering the illusion that it can be pressured to satisfy the needs of the exploited.

The facts of this attack are obvious. The only thing an “investigation” will do is to whitewash the role of the police. The Oakland Riders, a cabal of notoriously racist OPD thugs who rampaged through the West Oakland ghetto—three of whom are currently on trial in Oakland—are the true face of the capitalist police. The only thing that can restrain them is the power of workers organized in unions to shut down the flow of profits—i.e., hurting the cops’ real masters, the capitalists.

The truth is that keeping the working class and oppressed down and protecting capitalist profits is the *whole reason for existence* of the police. You won’t hear this from the International Socialist Organization (ISO), which supports the cops when they “rebel collectively,” or the Taaffeites of Socialist Alternative, who think cops are “workers in uniform.” In their view, what happened on April 7 was that one group of workers shot at another group of workers.

Workers need a party that fights for their interests and those of all the oppressed. Such a workers party would, for example, take a side in defense of Iraq against the U.S. invasion and occupation and would defend immigrants witch-hunted by the “war on terror” at home. That party will be built in a political struggle against the current union misleaders who push the lie that there can be a partnership between labor and capital. As written on one of the signs carried by members of the SL and Spartacus Youth Club who were protesting at the port on April 7, “Break with the Democrats! Build a Workers Party that Fights for Socialist Revolution!” ■



TROTSKY

On the British Invasion of Baghdad

When the British imperialists invaded Baghdad in 1917, they, too, claimed to come as liberators, not occupiers. As Britain proceeded to impose a bloody occupation over a state artificially cobbled together from the distinct Kurdish, Sunni and Shi’ite populations, it used poison gas on rebellious villagers and unleashed a massive wave of terror bombings throughout the country. In a 1922 letter, “representatives of the Mesopotamian people” appealed to the Communist International for solidarity. In a reply on

behalf of the Comintern, Gregory Zinoviev warned against any illusions in the League of Nations, predecessor of the United Nations.

I have read your letter with the greatest interest for your cause. The tragic history of the subjugation of Mesopotamia is the clearest possible expression of the hypocritical and treacherous policy pursued by the English government. And where has English imperialism ever acted otherwise? In India, Egypt, South Africa—everywhere we find the same policy of lies, treachery, and ruthless cruelty....

In your letter you refer to the fact that the regime introduced by English imperialism into your native country is a violation of the principles of the League of Nations. Here there seems to be a grave misunderstanding. The League of Nations was called into existence after the war, by the imperialist victors: England, France, etc., in order that the vanquished might be the better robbed. It is precisely England who now heads this institution.

Thus the “principles” of the League of Nations differ in no way from those “high principles” now being put into practice in Mesopotamia by England, and realized by a bombardment of the defenceless population from aeroplanes. I beg in all friendship to draw your attention to this misunderstanding, and request that you enlighten all those who share your views on the matter, in order to avoid the serious errors rendered inevitable by an incorrect estimate of the true character of the so-called “League of Nations.”

The emancipation of Mesopotamia will never be attained with the aid or support of this or that imperialist state or League of Nations, but by the organized struggle of the broad masses of the town and country population of Irak against the occupation. These masses are to be convinced that their material position will be alleviated and improved when the English are driven out: all traitorous Mesopotamians, with Emir Feisal at their head, who are seeking for personal enrichment from the oppression of the people, are to be exposed to the contempt they deserve, the confidence of the neighbouring countries is to be won and when all this is realized, then the victorious end of your heroic struggle against English imperialism is secured.

The Communist International, which unites the millions of revolutionary workers and peasants of England, France, Germany, Russia, etc., assures you of its sympathy and support in your fight for liberty.

—“The Leaders of the Mesopotamian People to the Comintern,”
International Press Correspondence (3 May 1923)

WORKERS VANGUARD

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

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No. 802

25 April 2003

Anarchism and Imperialist War

The following are excerpts from an 8 March article in Spartacist Canada No. 136 (Spring 2003) titled "Down With U.S. and Canadian Imperialism! Defend Iraq!", published by our comrades of the Trotskyist League/Ligue Trotskyiste. The International Socialists (I.S.) are the Canadian co-thinkers of the British Socialist Workers Party.

SPARTACIST CANADA

To struggle against capitalist war and degradation, the workers need a revolutionary party, not a bunch of fake leftists who tie them to the class enemy. As V.I. Lenin, leader of the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution, wrote during World War I in *Socialism and War*:

"Today *unity* with the opportunists *actually* means subordinating the working class to their 'own' national bourgeoisie, and an alliance with the latter for the purpose of oppressing other nations and of fighting for dominant-nation privileges; it means *splitting* the revolutionary proletariat of all countries."

Lenin emphasized that a decisive split from the opportunists was the *precondition* for the proletariat to further its own class interests and fight for its own class rule.

Today's "socialist" organizers of the antiwar coalitions, notably the I.S., pursue exactly the kind of "unity" that Lenin so sharply condemned. They puff up the NDP's [social-democratic New Democratic Party] "antiwar" credentials and hide its crimes, building platforms for NDP honchos like Layton, McDonough and Svend Robinson. Far from looking to proletarian struggle against the various national capitalist rulers, the I.S. looks to the rulers of Canada and West Europe to stand up to the U.S....

Standing to the left of NDP-loyal outfits like the I.S. are a series of anarchist and other "direct action" organizations. A recent leaflet by Anti-Authoritarian Anti-War Toronto headlined "Class Struggle Against the Work/War Machine!" sharply attacks the local CSW/TCASWI antiwar coalitions, in which the I.S. plays a leading role:

"Far from opposing the political, social and economic structures that create war

(i.e. capitalism), TCASWI advocates the reactionary/pacifist position that capitalist society can exist without war in other words with capitalist peace....

"CSW/TCASWI's role has been to pacify and paralyze autonomous working class opposition by channeling it into activity that legitimizes the existence of capital, the state and therefore war."

All true. Yet this same leaflet denounces the TL's call to militarily defend Iraq against imperialism while giving no political support whatever to the vicious

being trampled by imperialism—is crucial for advancing the interests of the proletariat and oppressed. Thus we stand with the Ontario Coalition Against Poverty [OCAP] against the state's vicious attacks, despite our political disagreements. We defend workers' unions and strike pickets against scab, boss and state attack while struggling politically against the pro-capitalist labor misleaders. The reason is simple: a defeat for OCAP or a busted union is an attack on all who

The anarchists' equation between military defense of a weak neocolonial country and political support to its rulers mirrors the imperialists' lie that opposition to their war means support to Saddam Hussein. We stand with the Iraqi people against their bloody rulers who, with Washington's complicity, slaughtered Iraqi Communists and waged a hideously brutal war against the oppressed Kurdish people. Indeed, until he invaded Kuwait in 1990, the imperialists were silent on Hussein's many crimes. A revolutionary party in Iraq would agitate for a revolutionary war to defend the country from imperialism. It would seek to give leadership to the resistance of the Iraqi people against the entire Iraqi ruling class, both the ruling Ba'athists and the exile gang the CIA are nurturing.

The anarchist leaflet concludes with the slogan, "No War Between Nations! No Peace Between Classes!" raised as well by the North Eastern Federation of Anarcho-Communists (NEFAC) in Montreal and Quebec City. This may sound radical, but it is an excuse for neutralism and a confession of impotence in the face of imperialist onslaught. Its logic is ultimately chauvinist. All nations are not equal. Some wear the imperialist boot; others, subjugated by imperialism, are trampled by it. Would these anarchists have been neutral in conflicts between the British Empire and its Indian colony? Between the bloody French imperialists and Algeria?

And what of the Palestinian struggle against Zionist state terror, on which their statement is conspicuously silent? Some elements in NEFAC, saying "anarchism spits on all nationalism," denounce the call to defend the Palestinians and oppose the elementary struggle for their self-determination (see Ryan McCarthy, "Anarchists and Palestine: Class Struggle or Popular Front?" A-Infos News Service). This statement cites the very real betrayals of the nationalist leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) to justify refusal to take a stand with the oppressed Palestinians against their oppressors. So those who may have

continued on page 8



Spartacist Canada

Trotskyist League contingent at February 15 Vancouver antiwar protest.

Saddam Hussein regime. "What is the difference between 'military defense' and 'political support'?" it asks, continuing:

"Well of course there is none.... [I]f war is politics by other means, then 'military defense' is nothing more than 'political support' by other means. The 'leftist' defensist theory is nothing more than a thinly veiled call to support a worker-murdering capitalist war machine."

The distinction between military defense and political support—whether of workers' organizations in the capitalists' gun-sights, or of whole peoples and countries

would defy the capitalist rulers, while their victories will advance the class struggle.

Similarly, the crushing of neocolonial Iraq at the hands of the U.S. and its allies would strengthen the imperialists and embolden them to further rampage and bloody conquest. Thus it would be a devastating blow to the struggles of the working people of Iraq and throughout the neocolonial world against both the ravages of imperialism and the domestic capitalist rulers, who are tied to and subordinated to the imperialists.

DEBATE

Spartacist League vs. League for the Revolutionary Party

"The Fight Against Imperialist War: Which Way Forward?"

NEW YORK CITY

322 West 48th Street, 1st floor
(between 8th and 9th Avenues)
Take C or E train to 50th St. stop

For more information: (212) 267-1025 or e-mail nysl@compuserve.com

Saturday, May 10, 3 p.m.

On Saturday, May 10 in New York City, Don Alexander of the Central Committee of the Spartacist League, U.S. section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist), will debate a spokesman for the League for the Revolutionary Party (LRP). The topic of the debate, "The Fight Against Imperialist War: Which Way Forward?" poses the fundamental questions facing workers and youth looking for a proletarian, revolutionary and internationalist perspective in struggle against the carnage unleashed by the imperialist rulers of the United States. For in the imperialist epoch, as Lenin pointed out long ago, the struggle against war is inextricably linked to the struggle for workers revolution, since you cannot effectively fight against war without fighting to end the capitalist system that breeds it.

The counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union has made it possible for the dangerous and rapacious U.S. ruling class to militarily ride virtually unchecked to satisfy its global ambitions. This underscores that the question of where one stood when defense of the Soviet Union was posed is hardly an academic or historical question, but one that reveals in practice whether one stands on the side of the proletariat against the imperialist order.

Since the mid 1960s when the Spartacist tendency was formed, we have

upheld revolutionary Trotskyism on the key programmatic issues, not least being the need to defend the gains of the planned economies issuing from anti-capitalist overturns. From the Soviet Union and East Europe to the remaining deformed workers states of China, North Korea, Cuba and Vietnam, we have fought for the unconditional military defense of the degenerated and deformed workers states against imperialism and for proletarian political revolution against the Stalinist bureaucracies. This is the programmatic heritage of Trotsky's strug-

gle against Stalinism and for new October Revolutions internationally. The need for proletarian defense of the remaining deformed workers states has been underlined as capitalist counterrevolution wreaks unprecedented havoc on the living standards of the peoples of the former Soviet Union and East Europe.

On the other hand, from its inception in the mid 1970s, the LRP has been defined not by a proletarian—i.e., Trotskyist—program but by the prevailing winds of petty-bourgeois radicalism. The LRP is a direct political heir of

Max Shachtman, who led a split from the American Trotskyist movement in 1940. Succumbing to anti-Communist hysteria over the 1939 Hitler-Stalin pact, Shachtman repudiated the Trotskyist call for unconditional military defense of the Soviet Union. The LRP has throughout its existence followed in Shachtman's footsteps, joining the imperialists in denouncing the Soviet intervention against CIA-backed Islamic fundamentalists in Afghanistan in the 1980s and backing Boris Yeltsin in his counterrevolutionary power grab in 1991, which led to the final undoing of the October Revolution.

Directly connected to the question of how to struggle against imperialist war is the necessity of forging a Leninist vanguard party that takes up key questions such as the fight for black liberation in the U.S. and the fight to end the Zionist subjugation of the Palestinian people—both important areas of difference between the LRP and SL. The radical public is invited to participate in this important counterposition of program, which will include time for speakers from the floor. We contend that those who cannot defend the gains of past workers' victories are incapable of conquering new ones. Come see for yourself in this debate between the revolutionary Trotskyist politics of the ICL and the centrist Shachtmanite politics of the LRP.

Young Spartacus

SYC Leads Protest Against Cop Attacks on Antiwar Demonstrators

Riot-equipped police launched a brutal and premeditated assault on antiwar protesters and longshoremen at the Oakland docks on April 7, opening fire with wooden bullets, pellet-filled “sting bags” and concussion grenades. Over a dozen demonstrators and dock workers were hospitalized, and dozens more were arrested. The Spartacus Youth Clubs moved quickly to mobilize students to protest this potentially lethal attack. The Chicago SYC initiated a rally at the University of Chicago the very next day under the slogans: “Protest brutal police attack against antiwar protesters, Oakland longshoremen! All U.S. and allied troops out of the Near East now!”

Our protest was a united front joined by the U. of C. NoWar in Iraq coalition and the reformist Spark group in condemning the police attack. As one U. of C. NoWar member said, “This is not only a war on Iraq, this is a war on our civil liberties and freedoms and our rights and freedoms here at home.” Protesters gave speeches and took up chants like “W. Bush, imperialist beast, U.S. out of the Middle East!”

The opportunists in the International Socialist Organization (ISO), who run the NoWar coalition at the University of Illinois at Chicago, refused to hold



April 8: Emergency speakout initiated by Chicago SYC against Oakland cop attack on antiwar protesters.

a similar demonstration with us communists at UIC in defense of the right to protest the war. The ISO preferred to attend an administration-sponsored “Open Forum”—billed as an event for pro- and antiwar students to “express their feelings, thoughts, concerns, and opinions regarding the war with Iraq” so that the uni-

versity could be “sustained” as a “true academic community.” Yuck!

The speakers at our U. of C. protest carried on a debate over *how* to stop wars of imperialist aggression. This debate centered on the SYC’s revolutionary proletarian internationalist opposition to war versus the strategy of building the

“broadest possible unity” against war, shared alike by Spark, the ISO and the NoWar coalitions. As one speaker from U. of C. NoWar put it: “These other people, they’re against imperialism. But NoWar in Iraq is just against war in Iraq.” Simple opposition to war is *not enough*. War is endemic to the capitalist system, so the struggle against war necessarily requires a struggle against the capitalist order. The SYC spokesman at the protest explained:

“The U. of C. NoWar coalition attempts to build the broadest possible unity against the war. That sounds fine, right? Nothing wrong with unity. But unity with whom? And for what purpose? The organizers of the antiwar protests have sought merely to use slogans such as ‘No war’ and ‘Peace is patriotic’ in order to make it safe for the movement to be taken up by Democratic Party politicians. But elements of the Democratic Party only oppose this war to refurbish the image of U.S. imperialism so it can lead the U.S. into more slaughters like when they dropped the atom bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki and killed millions in Vietnam. The strategy of unity with your ‘own’ ruling class can only divide the working class internationally and demobilize the real fight that needs to be waged—the struggle against the profit system of which racism and war are its inevitable outcome.”

U. of C. NoWar’s coalition is broad, indeed. One article they reproduced and distributed was written by none other than reactionary demagogue Pat Buchanan, including among its right-wing ramblings the complaint that the U.S. fought Hitler instead of the Soviet Union in World War II!

In turn, a U. of C. NoWar member said, “We here at NoWar in Iraq U. of C. say that having built this broad coalition, we did slow down Bush’s war drive, and we have done a lot to fight against the war and that we continue to do so working together. And for that reason we took up the Spartacist call for a united-front demonstration today.” This conflates united-front protest with an ongoing political bloc in the name of broad unity. The purpose of the united front is to mobilize in a common action against an attack or threat, while each organization puts forward its own political program. By design, the “broad” antiwar coalitions limit in advance what is fought for to what is acceptable to pro-imperialist liberals and bourgeois politicians, forces representing the class in whose interest imperialist war is waged. The proponents of “broad” coalitions claim they slowed the U.S. war drive because mass liberal antiwar protest supposedly emboldened the “opposition” of the French and German governments. But that “opposition” was dictated only by those capitalist governments’ own rival imperialist interests. Chirac and Schröder wanted a war waged under UN auspices, which they hoped would bring them a share of the spoils.

As for Spark, our speaker noted: “Spark, a group that claims to be socialist, acts as one with the liberal class-collaborationists in saying, ‘Support our troops, bring them home.’ Those people over there in Iraq, who are killing innocent civilians for the pride and pleasure of the bourgeoisie, aren’t our troops any more than it is our government. We welcome every military setback for U.S. imperialism in its colonial war against

Spartacist Educationals

CHICAGO Sunday, April 27

1 p.m.

U.S. Imperialism on Bloody Rampage in the Post-Soviet World

Speaker: Joseph Seymour
Spartacist League Central Committee

4 p.m.

Bolshevism vs. Social Democracy, Anarchism The Russian Revolution and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat

University of Illinois – Chicago (UIC)
Circle Center (CCC), Room 713
750 S. Halsted

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

TORONTO Sunday, April 27, Noon-5 P.M.

First Session

Russia 1917: From War to Revolution

Second Session

“New World Order”: Imperialist Barbarism

Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, Room 5185
252 Bloor Street West (above St. George Station)

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

BAY AREA Saturday-Sunday, May 3-4

Saturday, May 3, 2 p.m.

U.S. Imperialism on Bloody Rampage in the Post-Soviet World

Speaker: Joseph Seymour
Spartacist League Central Committee

Saturday, May 3, 5 p.m.

The Kurdish Question and the U.S. Invasion of Iraq

Speaker: Bruce André, Spartacist League

Sunday, May 4, 12 Noon

The Fight for a Revolutionary Workers Party France 1968: Lessons of the Student Revolt and Workers General Strike

Speakers: Valerie West and Steve Henderson

University of California at Berkeley
Valley Life Sciences Building, Room 2040

For information: Los Angeles: (213) 380-8239,
Bay Area: (510) 839-0851, Vancouver: (604) 687-0353
or e-mail: slbayarea@compuserve.com

NEW YORK CITY Saturday-Sunday, April 26-27

Saturday, April 26, 5 p.m.

The Kurdish Question and the U.S. Invasion of Iraq

Speaker: Bruce André, Spartacist League

Sunday, April 27, 1 p.m.

Twelve Years After Counterrevolution in the USSR Why We Fought to Defend the Soviet Union

Speaker: Victor Gibbons, Spartacist League

322 West 48th Street, first floor
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Cal Students Say: ROTC Off Campus!

As the U.S. imperialist troops tightened their stranglehold on Iraq, some 70 people came out to a united-front protest initiated by the Spartacus Youth Club against Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) cadets and recruiters at UC Berkeley on April 12. Thousands were on hand for “Cal Day 2003,” UC Berkeley’s annual open house for prospective students, where ROTC every year tries to seduce these youth into becoming officers for the next imperialist slaughter with scholarships and job training. As rain came pouring down, the protesters set up a picket line and demanded: *ROTC off campus! All U.S. troops out of the Near East now!*

A group of Berkeley students called the Twisted Sister cluster, who are involved with Direct Action to Stop the War, commendably came out in full force for the united front. The youth in Twisted Sister, some donning anarchy symbols, chanted “R-O-T-C off campus now!” We carried signs with slogans including calls for “Open Admissions!” and “Free, Quality Education for All!” A popular chant was “Saddam, Bin Laden and Pinochet—all created by the CIA!” Many passers-by applauded our efforts, and some joined the protest.

At the protest, one SYCer spoke on the war against Iraq, “This war isn’t about ‘liberation’ of the Iraqi people, it is about the colonization of a strategically located oil-rich nation. The U.S. also wants to send a message to their imperialist rivals.” A member of the Labor Black League for Social Defense, which is fraternally allied with the Spartacist League and endorsed the demonstration, said in a speech: “The best way to defend the victims of imperialist war abroad as well as blacks, immigrants and working people from the war on them at home is through class struggle against America’s capitalist rulers. We in the Labor Black League stand for a fighting labor movement!”

The protest was an opportunity for students to stand against the horrors of the blitzkrieg in Iraq by striking a blow against the U.S. imperialist military appendage on campus. The SYC built for this action all across the Bay Area, including a trip to Santa Cruz to participate in a protest against military recruiters called by the Resource Center for Non-Violence. Although not at the protest, endorsers of the rally included the Freedom Socialist Party, Standing United for Peace, the Gay Lesbian Bisexual Transgender Resource Center from Santa Cruz and Ann Robertson, a lecturer at San Francisco State.

Many of the fake socialists who claim to be building the antiwar movement were nowhere to be found, although we asked for their support. Antiwar coalitions built by these groups, like International ANSWER and Not In Our Name (NION), also failed to give even a paper endorsement.

Anyone who opposes the war against Iraq should want to struggle against militarism on campus by obstructing the recruitment of officers for the U.S. armed forces. Yet at its March 22 meeting, the Berkeley Stop the War Coalition rejected our call for such a protest, with many members seeing ROTC’s presence on campus as harmless or even a good thing because they provide scholarships and a liberal education for cadets! Individual International Socialist Organization (ISO) members voted in favor of the anti-ROTC protest at the coalition meeting, but when SYC members went to an ISO meeting to motivate united-front action, all they said was, “We’re not interested.”

The Revolutionary Communist Party (RCP), accusing us of “sectarianism,” refused to attend or endorse the demonstration because it was initiated by us. The RCP, through its NION coalition, endorsed a demonstration on April 5 led by Democratic Party liberals but refused to appear at a united front against ROTC! For its part, ANSWER, which was set up by the Workers World Party, held a rally two hours after the ROTC action, echoing the patriotic call to “Support our troops” with their slogan, “Bring the troops home now.”

The self-styled “communists” of the Progressive Labor Party (PL) report in *Challenge* (30 April) that at the ANSWER rally they “distributed widely” a leaflet calling for “closing ROTC” and “ending Defense Department research on campuses.” That’s nice...but we approached PL about participating in the anti-ROTC protest, and they emphatically refused! What kind of “communists” would rather wax eloquent about skipping socialism and jumping straight to communism than struggle against the direct agencies of the bosses’ war machine? The same people who refuse to defend oppressed neocolonial countries (Afghanistan, Iraq) against bloody military assault by *their own* ruling class!

In the last few months, it has become increasingly evident that these groups’ moans for the “broadest possible unity” are in actuality an appeal to unite with a section of the ruling class that isn’t satisfied with the way the war is being conducted. These peace marches always end with black Democrats like Barbara Lee or Jesse Jackson telling people about “Bush’s war” and spreading the illusion that somehow the capitalist production system can be rewired to better serve our interests. Capitalism is not open to

Party, which *administers* most inner-city police forces, including in Oakland. We said: “The cops do this every day. They can’t be reformed. Their role is to enforce profit. To stand up against them we need to say that they’re not our cops, that bourgeois democracy is a fraud, that the ability to choose every four years who will repress you is no democracy at all. We need to say...that it’s not our troops and not our government as long as the rule of American capitalism maintains. As long as this is the capitalists’ state. We need to take down the capitalist state. We in the Spartacus Youth Club are for a workers party, a workers government.”■

the people of Iraq.” Spark’s speaker made no attempt to respond to our speaker’s criticism.

One U. of C. NoWar member spoke out against police brutality: “When there’s no more workers being targeted at antiwar protests, the targeting will still go on. But it won’t be against the mostly white middle-class members of the antiwar movement. It will be against the normal, day-to-day targets of the police who are young black and Latin workers.... We need to continue the fight against police brutality at all times.” We agreed but also pointed out that struggle against cop terror means understanding the role of the Democratic



Young Spartacus

SYC-led united-front protest against ROTC military recruiters on UC Berkeley campus, April 12.

reform, and the groups that say otherwise help strengthen the control of the capitalists. Only socialist revolution can end imperialist war!

These limp appeals to the government have been met by some disillusioned youth with a turn toward “direct action” and anarchoid breakaway marches. Thoroughly dismayed by this subjectively leftward shift, the ISO wrote a polemic against direct action (*Socialist Worker*, 2 April), in which the ISO insists that “we need to keep organizing the widest possible expressions of antiwar opposition—and make sure that the movement speaks not only for the already committed, but for everyone who wants to say no to Bush’s war.” The ISO snarls at youth partaking in direct action for “isolating themselves from a wider audience.” As thousands of protesters are being arrested in San Francisco under a Democratic administration and youth and workers are being shot at by the police at the Port of Oakland, these “socialists” shout out “unity!” ever louder in an attempt to draw outraged youth back into the arms of the Democrats!

Since the very first arrests, we have fought for workers and unions to come to the defense of those involved in direct action protests. We participate in some of them: four SYCers were arrested at a March 15 breakaway march and two of our comrades were wounded at the port on April 7. But in the absence of a program for workers revolution, these attempts to “stop business as usual until the war stops” remain within the framework of pressuring the capitalists. Militant antiwar youth must be won

to recognizing that as a *strategy*, civil disobedience and direct actions are a dead end born out of their frustration that protest by millions of people around the world did nothing to stop the war.

At the April 12 action against ROTC, our “What do we want—Class war!” chant was met by many youth in Twisted Sister with counter-chants substituting the words “peace” and “justice” for “class war.” Some said they are in favor of “class war,” but they don’t have an orientation toward the social class necessary for this “class war” to be successful. In order to “shut down the warmakers” you have to mobilize the social power of the working class to shut down the means of production (i.e., factories—not roads or office complexes) and reorganize society through a socialist revolution.

There is plenty of discontent at the base of American society, but the pro-capitalist labor misleaders sell out the unions and deceive the membership with the lie that workers and their exploiters have common interests. What these workers need is a revolutionary leadership! As opposed to the organizers of the antiwar demonstrations who seek to corral a new generation of youth into the arms of the Democratic Party, we bring our Marxist perspective to anti-capitalist youth who are looking for answers. The young communists in the SYCs know what it means to be real fighters against capitalism, racism and war. It means to fight for the perspective of building a revolutionary vanguard party capable of leading the working class, radical youth and all the oppressed in the fight for a socialist world! Join us! ■

Spartacus Youth Club Classes & Events

BOSTON

Alternate Mondays, 7 p.m.

April 28: **Defend North Korea, China, Cuba and Vietnam Against Imperialism, Capitalist Counterrevolution! For Workers’ Political Revolution to Oust the Stalinist Bureaucracies!**

BU School of Education, Room 212
605 Commonwealth Avenue
Information and readings: (617) 666-9453
or e-mail: bostonsyc@yahoo.com

CHICAGO

Alternate Tuesdays, 7 p.m.

May 6: **The Revolution Betrayed**

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

NEW YORK CITY

Alternate Tuesdays, 7:30 p.m.

April 29: **Trotskyism vs. Stalinism: The Revolution Betrayed**

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

SANTA CRUZ

Friday, April 25, 6 p.m.

Marxist Readers’ Circle
Defend North Korea’s Right to Nuclear Weapons!

Café Pergolisse (at Cedar & Elm)
Information: (510) 839-0851
or e-mail: slbayarea@compuserve.com

LOS ANGELES

Saturday, 2 p.m.

April 26: **Marxism and the Trade Unions**

3806 Beverly Blvd., Room 215
(Vermont/Beverly Red Line station)

May Day Forum

Thursday, May 1, 12:30 p.m.

UCLA, Ackerman Union 2410
Down With the Colonial Occupation of Iraq! All U.S. Troops Out of the Near East Now!

Information and readings: (213) 380-8239
or e-mail: slsycla@cs.com

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(continued from page 1)

many archaeological treasures been wantonly and systematically smashed to pieces.”

This imperialist conquest is a blow not only to the people of Iraq and the Near East but to working people and the oppressed the world over. Gloating over their rapid victory in what was purely and simply a one-sided slaughter, America’s rulers have shown the world just how ruthless they can be in killing defenseless civilians. U.S. TV networks showed a Baghdad crowd cheering the toppling of Saddam Hussein’s statue, but they did not show American troops shooting up an ambulance in Baghdad the same day, killing two injured people on the way to a hospital.

As proletarian internationalists who called for the military defense of Iraq without giving any support to the Saddam Hussein regime, we say: *Down with the colonial occupation of Iraq! All U.S./British troops out of Iraq and the Near East now! Down with U.S. imperialism!*

U.S. Imperialism Threatens the World

Washington has wasted no time in warning the rest of the world that the same fate waits in store for any other country deemed to be defying American diktat. Apparently first in the firing line is Syria, with the White House trotting out the usual litany of war threats, claiming Syria is a “rogue state” that has “weapons of mass destruction” and is harboring former Iraqi leaders. Also on America’s hit list is the North Korean deformed workers state. The *New York Times* (21 April) reports: “Hardliners in the Pentagon—and some at the White House—say that the United States should use its speedy victory in Iraq to drive home to North Korea that it could meet the same fate.” We stand for the unconditional military defense of North Korea, including its right to nuclear weapons, against imperialist attack and capitalist counterrevolution.

With the invasion over, the Bush administration's first order of domestic business is to try to push through its massive tax cut for the rich, even as unemployment continues to rise. Senate Republicans are clamoring to overturn the "sunset clauses" imposing a five-year limit on the most onerous provisions of the draconian USA-Patriot Act. Meanwhile, the administration has already unveiled a new piece of legislation, Patriot II, which would strip citizenship from Americans who "provide material support" to an organization which at some time may be deemed "terrorist" by the government. What remains of affirmative action programs set up in the wake of the civil rights movement is under the ax. In league with the government, the airline corporations have launched a frontal assault on the airline unions, imposing massive wage cuts under the threat of court-ordered bankruptcy schemes.

The world's working and semicolonial peoples are paying the price for the coun-



terrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union in 1991-92. That historic defeat resulted in a catastrophic devastation of life and culture in the former Soviet Union. It has also emboldened American imperialism, proclaiming itself the “world’s only superpower,” to aggressively assert its dominance over the globe. While the reformist “socialists” who today proclaim themselves antiwar and anti-imperialist joined in cheering the demise of the USSR, we Trotskyists fought to the end in defense of the Soviet workers state and the collectivized prop-

by its roots through socialist revolution and the creation of a rational, planned economy internationally. We fight to build revolutionary workers parties as part of a reformed Trotskyist Fourth International to lead the proletariat in the struggle for power.

Zionist Neocons, Christian Fundamentalists

The takeover of Iraq “opens up all sorts of new possibilities for us,” proclaimed a spokesman for the Bush administration, whose policies are increasingly determined



Distraught Iraqi National Museum official amid artifacts destroyed by looting in U.S.-occupied Baghdad.

erty forms established by the October Revolution of 1917. This was part of our struggle for new October Revolutions around the world.

The naked colonial aggression against Iraq is the real face of imperialism, of the irrational, anarchic, profit-driven capitalist system made even more irrational in its epoch of decay. Mass slaughter is the concentrated expression and ultimate logic of the “normal” brutal workings of the capitalist system, which daily condemns countless numbers around the world to death by malnutrition, lack of medical care and industrial murder.

The only way to put an end to imperialist war is to tear up this whole system

by a cabal of Zionist neo-conservatives and Christian fundamentalists. These types are intent on again reshaping the Near East—as it was earlier reshaped by British and French imperialism after the fall of the Ottoman Empire—including through the creation of a *cordon sanitaire* between Israel and potentially hostile states. Former U.S. general Jay Garner, who is slated to be *gauleiter* of occupied Iraq, is closely linked to Israeli prime minister Ariel Sharon. In the baggage train of this imperialist occupation force is Christian evangelist Franklin Graham, son of Billy Graham and a prominent fixture at this year's Pentagon Good Friday service, who has railed against Islam as a “very evil and wicked religion.”

The neocons' favored choice as Garner's "native" stooge is Ahmed Chalabi, head of the U.S.-funded Iraqi National Con-

gress (INC) and a U.S.-educated banker who fled Jordan years ago to evade a conviction for bank fraud. Chalabi's American champions extend far beyond the right wing of the Bush administration. His INC was the chief beneficiary of the Iraq Liberation Act signed by Clinton in 1998. Another longtime booster of Chalabi is self-styled "anarchist" Noam Chomsky, who has promoted Chalabi and the Iraqi "opposition" for over a decade.

In the buildup to the 1991 Gulf War, Chomsky pushed as an “alternative” to war “the peaceful means prescribed by international law: sanctions and diplomacy” (*Z Magazine*, February 1991). Another “alternative” he promoted was Chalabi’s “democratic opposition,” lecturing that the media “have scrupulously avoided the Iraqi democratic forces” because “they are again calling for democracy in Iraq while Washington seeks to install some clone of Saddam Hussein” (*Lies of Our Times*, September 1991). Two years later, Chomsky complained that “the US always dismissed the Iraqi democratic opposition with disdain, including its most conservative elements, such as London-based banker Ahmed Chalabi” (*Z Magazine*, May 1993).

Only months before the passage of the Iraq Liberation Act, Chomsky again talked about how the Chalabi opposition had been an “alternative” to war in 1991, again complaining of the U.S.: “Regional opposition was regarded as a problem to be evaded, not a factor to be taken into account, any more than international law” (*Z Magazine*, April 1998). Even after Chalabi rode into Baghdad with American troops earlier this month, Chomsky said approvingly, “The US-backed opposition demands that the UN play a vital role in post-war Iraq and rejects US control of reconstruction or government” (*ZNet*, 13 April).

The current belligerence against Syria has long been a policy of the neocons' Project for a New American Century (PNAC), which in a post-9/11 letter to Bush declared that "the administration should consider appropriate measures of retaliation" against Iran and Syria, which they deemed to be "known state sponsors of terrorism." The letter continued, "Israel has been and remains America's staunchest ally against international terrorism, especially in the Middle East. The United States should fully support our fellow democracy in its fight against terrorism." The Zionist rulers have taken full advantage of the Iraq war and the massive American military presence to intensify their murderous attacks on the Palestinian people.

After months of lying war propaganda about Iraqi “weapons of mass destruction,” not a single such weapon has been found by the occupation forces. But they could find hundreds of nuclear weapons in Israel. As documented by courageous Israeli nuclear technician Mordechai Vanunu, who is serving an 18-year sentence for his service to humanity, the Zionist state had already acquired an arsenal of at least 200 nukes by the 1980s. To ensure its regional nuclear monopoly, Israel launched a “pre-emptive” strike against Iraq’s sole nuclear reactor in 1981. From the 1960s on, Israel developed its nuclear and missile programs in collaboration with the white-supremacist regime in South Africa which, according to American satellite surveillance, carried out a nuclear test in 1979. The Zionist



1983: Donald Rumsfeld, architect of murderous colonial war on Iraq, greets Saddam Hussein in Baghdad on behalf of Reagan administration.

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Colonial occupation and devastation. Left: American Marines occupy central Baghdad, April 9. Right: Baghdad home destroyed by U.S. bombing, March 31.



state and the apartheid regime jointly decided to end their nuclear collaboration in the early 1990s, when the African National Congress was about to come to power, and by the time Nelson Mandela became the country’s first black president in 1994, the nukes were gone.

Paul Wolfowitz and Richard Perle, leading lights in PNAC and the Bush administration, served as consultants to Benjamin Netanyahu when he ran for Israeli prime minister at the head of the ultra-Zionist Likud Party in 1996. But the Democrats are no less rabid in their support to Zionist Israel. Among the Congressional sponsors of the “Syria Accountability and Lebanese Sovereignty Restoration Act” are Democrats Eliot Engel and California Senator Barbara Boxer. Although in recent years Syria bought subsidized oil from Iraq, the Syrian rulers were by no means supporters of Saddam Hussein’s Iraq—Syria backed Iran against Iraq in the 1980-88 war and supported the U.S.-led Desert Slaughter in 1991. The Syrian leadership’s real crime in the eyes of both the neocons and their Democratic allies is its hostility to Israel, from whom Syria demands the return of the Golan Heights seized in 1967. *U.S. hands off Syria! Defend the Palestinian people! All Israeli troops, settlers out of all the Occupied Territories!*

The criminal role played by the Kurdish nationalist leaders in acting as pawns for U.S. imperialism will only set the Kurdish people up for yet another betrayal. What all the regional bourgeoisies, as well as all the imperialist powers, do not want to see is the creation of an independent Kurdish state, which would challenge the stability of the bourgeois order in the Near East. This underscores that any struggle for Kurdish national liberation must be based on implacable opposition to imperialism. The Kurdish nation is divided among four capitalist countries, Iraq, Iran, Syria and Turkey, which has threatened military intervention across the border to suppress any move toward Kurdish statehood. It is only through the overthrow of capitalist rule in these countries—establishing a Socialist Republic of United Kurdistan—that the Kurdish people can finally realize national self-determination. Only within the framework of a socialist federation of the Near East can the rights of the disparate nationalities and ethnic and religious peoples of the region be guaranteed.

Only Workers Revolution Can End Imperialist War!

The war against Iraq was a naked assertion of American military superiority, not only over the Near East, but over its weaker rival imperialist powers. It is also a way for the U.S. to assert its control of the Near East oil spigot, on which Japan and West Europe are particularly reliant. Having been the driving force behind the starvation blockade for the past 12 years, the U.S. imperialists are now calling on the UN to lift the sanctions so that they can fully exploit their control over Iraq’s oil wealth on the world market. At the same time, Wolfowitz has demanded that Russia, Germany and France forgive billions of dollars in debts owed them by Iraq.

The capitalist rulers of France, Germany and Russia, who posed as peace-loving opponents of American “unilater-

alism,” are now trying to get in on the division of the spoils, including the scramble for contracts for “reconstruction” of ravaged Iraq. Behind their insistence that the UN must have a central role in reconstruction is their own thirst for profit. Chirac and the French capitalist rulers, for example, hope to hold on to massive French investments in Iraq on behalf of oil giant TotalFinaElf. But the



Boston: SL/SYC-initiated Revolutionary Internationalist Contingent at March 29 antiwar demonstration.

U.S. masters insist that they fought for and stole Iraq for themselves. The contracts for rebuilding Iraq will overwhelmingly go to American corporations like Halliburton and Bechtel, for which the Bush administration essentially acts as a public relations department.

If nothing else, this flagrant imperialist aggrandizement certainly refutes the so-called theory of globalization, which was promoted by various leftists and liberals who declared that the capitalist nation-state had been superseded by multinational corporations and international agencies like the World Bank. Capitalist imperialism is premised on the existence of and competition among distinct nation-states defending the interests of their own respective capitalists. And as the examples of Bechtel and Halliburton demonstrate, the capitalists and their government form what is essentially one large interlocking board of directors. As V. I. Lenin wrote in a 1913 article titled “Armaments and Capitalism”: “Governments manage the affairs of the capitalist class, and the managers are well paid. The managers are shareholders themselves. And they shear the sheep together, under cover of speeches about ‘patriotism...’”

Millions of people around the world demonstrated their opposition to this war. In Europe, Italian dock and rail workers as well as Scottish train drivers took action against the transport of munitions, showing a tiny glimpse of the social power that could be brought to bear against the imperialist war machine. There was palpable support for class-struggle actions against the war, and “left” talking union leaders made fiery speeches about union opposition to the war, until such time as the bombing began. Then they predictably rallied behind their own governments. In Britain, the Trades Union Congress refused even to participate in a ten-minute European-wide work stoppage against the war. In Germany and France, the labor misleaders rallied behind their “antiwar”

imperialist governments, refusing to lift a finger to mount independent labor action once the bombing began.

It is patently clear that the biggest antiwar demonstrations in the world had no effect whatsoever on the war-crazed American ruling class. Yet the reformist antiwar organizers continue to sing the same class-collaborationist “unity” refrain that what was needed to stop the war was

the broadest possible movement, by which they meant an alliance with “antiwar” Democratic politicians like Jesse Jackson. Today, the reformist International Socialist Organization (ISO) promises more of the same: “The new antiwar movement has made great strides. But it has to become larger and broader still” (*Socialist Worker*, 4 April).

Workers World Party (WWP), the

dominant force behind the International ANSWER coalition, now proclaims that the movement must recognize “the Iraqis’ right to resist the occupation.” But right through to the end of the war, ANSWER refused to raise any slogans that hinted at taking the side of Iraq in the conflict—because that would have precluded Democratic Party politicians from speaking on its platforms. Even now, WWP upholds the slogan “stop the war on Iraq before it starts” because it “allowed the movement to put the greatest number of people in motion on a progressive basis” (*Workers World*, 17 April).

To build an antiwar movement with bourgeois politicians is to build an antiwar movement with representatives of the very class in whose interest imperialist war is waged. As Marxists, we fight for the unity of the international proletariat in struggle against its capitalist class enemy, which means a merciless political struggle against those who preach “unity” with the capitalists in the name of building a “larger and broader” movement.

From the beginning of the drive to war, we have told the truth, insisting that the struggle against imperialist war cannot be separated from the struggle against the capitalist system that breeds war. Genuine opposition to war must be based on class struggle and political protest independent of all the political parties of capitalist rule. U.S. imperialism’s conquest of Iraq will only strengthen the ability of the ruling class to plunder the world. The rapacious U.S. ruling class must be swept away through workers revolution. The Spartacist League is committed to forging the multiracial revolutionary workers party needed to lead that struggle to victory in the bastion of world imperialism. ■

International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist)

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Four thousand workers went on strike against Lockheed Martin Aeronautics Co., the world's leading producer of fighter aircraft, when their contract expired at midnight on April 14. International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers (IAM) Local Lodge 776 is fighting a company bloated with orders for its F-16 and F-2 fighter jets and raking in hundreds of millions in profits since the last contract was signed in 2000 following an 18-day strike.

It is significant that workers are striking against a military contractor on the heels of the bloody U.S. colonial war against Iraq. The company supplies only a couple of planes a month to the American military but also makes sections of the F/A 22 and the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter, which are both coming into production for the U.S. The plant is also a major supplier of such American allies as Israel, Egypt, Japan and Greece and has just procured a \$6 billion order from Poland.

Feeling their strength with the company desperate to fill its fat order books, the workers voted 85 percent in favor of the strike. After paltry pay increases in the previous contract, the company is offering 10 percent over three years (plus a \$1,500 contract ratification bonus) while demanding significant increases in workers' contributions to medical benefits, despite the company's huge profits. As a strike captain told a local NBC affiliate, "The proposed raises in the contract will be eaten up by increases in medical co-pays and prescription co-pays." The company also wants to cut jobs by changing work rules.

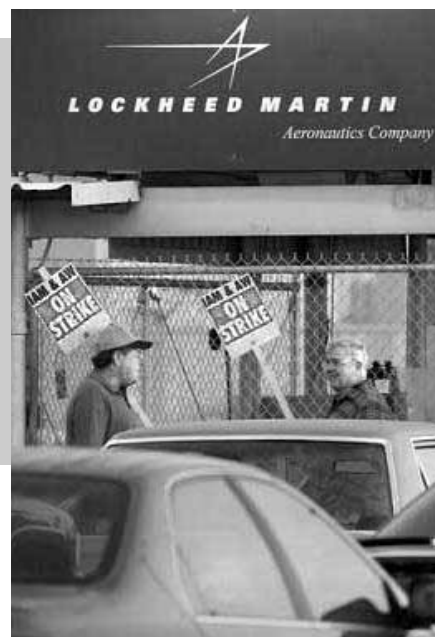
Fort Worth, Texas Victory to the Lockheed Strike!

While a handful of machinists have crossed the picket lines, the vast majority of the union has remained solid, including some 1,700 workers hired since the last contract. But the union tops are undermining the membership's determination to fight as other unions in the plant—the IBEW, OPEIU office workers and FITSU process planners—are crossing picket lines with the blessings of the IAM bureaucrats! While the other unions "pledged" not to do struck work, the company announced at the outset that its managers would keep production going, and in fact parts for the F-16 are being produced. **Picket lines mean don't cross!** There should be one industrial union for all Lockheed workers with a common contract expiration, including with other plants in Marietta, Georgia and Palmdale and Sunnyvale, California.

A solid strike that shuts the plant down is necessary for the union to fight

against the company's divisive wage scheme, in which it takes workers **more than 20 years** to reach top pay. As IAM official Bob Wood told WV, assembly workers start at about \$10 per hour and top out at \$20. Furthermore, Wood said, up to a fifth of the IAM members will retire in the near future, leaving a large number of workers at standard pay. This includes a number of women workers and many blacks, Latinos and Asians, who make up some 40 percent of the IAM workforce. The union should be fighting for equal pay for equal work!

The IAM strikers are fighting an intransigent employer in a "right to work" state where barely over 5 percent of workers are unionized. For the unions to win in the "open shop" South requires fighting head-on the entrenched racist oppression that has long been used to divide workers and keep unions out. And that means fighting against the



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policies of the AFL-CIO bureaucracy, which chains labor's power through its allegiance to the capitalist Democratic Party and its support to U.S. imperialism's military adventures. AFL-CIO chief John Sweeney early on endorsed the U.S. rulers' "global war on terror," which has meant military slaughter from Afghanistan to Iraq and a domestic war against immigrant rights and the rights of the entire population, with the labor movement the ultimate target. Labor needs a leadership that understands that the hard struggle needed to defeat the union-busters requires the independence of the working class from the capitalist parties.

Victory to the Lockheed strike!

Anarchism...

(continued from page 3)

better impulses than to buy into Arab bourgeois nationalism end up standing on the sidelines at the very moment when the survival of the Palestinian people is at stake, with the Zionist butchers poised to use the imminent onset of the Americans' Iraq war as the signal to drive the multiply oppressed Palestinian masses out of "Greater Israel."

We Trotskyists militarily defend the Palestinian people against Zionist terror while giving no quarter politically to the bourgeois Arab regimes, the secular-nationalist PLO or the Islamic fundamentalists who have come to the fore as the bankruptcy of the PLO has been demonstrated. At the antiwar protests, the TL has proudly carried our banner proclaiming: **Defend the Palestinian People! No U.S./Canadian/UN Intervention! For a Socialist Federation of the Near East!**

The Spanish Revolution of the 1930s powerfully illustrates the political bankruptcy of anarchism, both on the distinction between military and political

support and on the defense of peoples oppressed by imperialism. The Trotskyists joined with the Republican forces in fighting the right-wing Francoists, while giving no support to the "democratic" capitalist government. Throughout, the Trotskyists fought for the **independent** mobilization of the proletariat necessary to the program of socialist revolution against the Spanish bourgeoisie. In contrast, the false leaders of the working class—including the large and influential anarchist CNT/FAI—politically subordinated the workers to the capitalist Republican forces. In late 1936, leaders of the CNT committed **class treason** by joining the capitalist government. Refusing to fight for proletarian power, they thus doomed the revolution, leading to the victory of Franco.

The anarchists' failure to champion the subjugated people of Spanish Morocco against their colonial overlords was particularly treacherous. The Republican government, of which the anarchist CNT was a part, refused to grant independence to Morocco. Far from opposing this, anarchist spokesmen echoed crude nationalist and patriotic sentiments against the Moroccan people. An uncompromising campaign for Morocco's independence would have undermined a base for the Francoists and struck a blow against the French and British colonialists as well. As it was, this chauvinist loyalty to the imperialist oppressor contributed to the defeat of the revolution.

The putative leftist elements among today's anarchists, lacking a program that expresses the independent interests of the working class, end up standing aloof when the biggest imperialists on the planet rain death and destruction on the working people of the "Third World." Our call to defend Iraq against imperialism is aimed above all at the working class here at home, seeking to rally it in class struggle against the imperialist warmongers. As the revolutionary leader Leon Trotsky explained in the founding document of the Fourth International in 1938, "Giving aid in a just and progressive war, the revolutionary proletariat wins the sympathy of the workers in the colonies"; at the same time, this strengthens its ability to struggle for the

overthrow of the imperialist masters.

Anarchist indifference to national oppression also plays out in Canada in the opposition of groups like NEFAC to Quebec independence. The working class of this country is deeply split along national lines, the result of more than two centuries of subjugation of the francophone Québécois by the dominant Anglo ruling class. This has long served to undermine proletarian struggle against capitalism. In their own way, the February 15 antiwar demonstrations reflected this deep national divide. While the protests in English Canada were awash in Maple Leaf flags, the **fleurdelysé** was everywhere at the huge, heavily trade-union demonstration in Montreal. In sharp contrast to the anarchists (and the rest of the left), the TL has prominently featured our call for Quebec independence on antiwar protests. This is crucial for cutting against the dominant Anglo chauvinism and more generally for getting the national question off the agenda, thereby clearing the road for class struggle against both the English Canadian and Québécois bourgeoisies.

Our fight for class struggle against the rulers in this country aims at cutting through the "Canada the good" nationalism of the capitalists, bringing to the workers the understanding that they uniquely have the social power to defeat the system of imperialism through workers revolution. This perspective requires a sharp break with the social-democratic NDP and union misleaders. Far from a partial step toward socialism, they are an **obstacle** which keeps workers shackled to their own exploiters.

It is the working class—men and women, immigrant and native-born, English Canadian and Québécois—that makes the wheels of this society turn. The capitalists' "war on terror" has massively increased the powers of state repression against immigrants and refugees. In the not-so-long term, this is all aimed at the working class and its organizations. Already new "security" regulations target port workers for stepped up surveillance and union-busting repression. It is in the direct interest of the working class, with its large and strategic immigrant component, to oppose the rampage of the capitalist rulers down the line, from the war on

Iraq to the war on workers and immigrants at home.

There is much anger among working people, both against the incessant attacks on jobs and social programs and against the looming war. At a 2,000-strong union protest against health care cuts in Vancouver on March 1, members of the heavily immigrant Hospital Employees Union eagerly bought our press which prominently featured an article on workers struggles against the war in Italy. The impact of labor's collective social power mobilized in strike action in political opposition to this war would be immense. Such opposition to imperialism based on an anti-capitalist perspective would profoundly alter the political landscape in favor of working people and the oppressed.

Reformist leftists like the I.S. 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 the 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."

If today's upsurge of opposition to war is not to be squandered in an "antiwar" movement that at best upholds the racist imperialist status quo, it must be directed against the capitalist exploiters. Our aim is to build a revolutionary workers party that will fuse working-class opposition to war with the simmering discontent over the capitalists' incessant attacks on workers, immigrants and all the oppressed. As the rivalries between the imperialist powers intensify with terrifying rapidity, future full-scale wars are presaged that will encompass all the imperialist powers, posing the spectre of a nuclear holocaust. Only world socialist revolution can save human beings from such barbarism. ■

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MARXISM VS. ANARCHISM

THE ROOTS OF ANARCHISM
From Bourgeois Idealism to "Green Radicalism" 3

FROM 1848 TO THE BOLSHEVIK REVOLUTION
The Origins of Anarchism 11
Mikhail Bakunin—Founder of the Anarchist Movement 17
The Fight in the First International 22
Anarchism and Syndicalism in the Pre-World War I Era 28
The Syndicalists 34
1914-1918: Imperialist War and the Realignment of the Left 41
Red October and the Founding of the Communist International 48

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Women and Revolution



Iraq Women...

(continued from page 12)

and anti-woman bigotry for the glory of god. Just one graphic example now in the news: a nine-year-old girl in Nicaragua was made pregnant as a result of rape. Her parents arranged an abortion for her—and they went through hell to get it. Now the Catholic church has launched a crusade against abortion across Central America to prevent things like this from happening again.

It's a truism to refer to the great Muslim civilization of the eighth and ninth centuries, when Baghdad was the Paris of the world and Europe was in the Dark Ages. They gave us algebra, Arabic numbers and many other key inventions. But do you know about the role of the Spanish crown and the Inquisition in destroying the civilization of Andalus in southern Spain in the later Middle Ages? Not only did they brutally massacre Muslims and Jews of all classes, but they burned thousands upon thousands of books of mathematics, astronomy, medicine, poetry. The Christians also destroyed the public baths because bathing was considered a sign of Muslim faith. Only heretics took baths. Now you know why the Spanish queen Isabella never washed.

The Spanish soldiers went on to become the conquistadors that instigated the genocide of the native peoples of the New World. (The Muslims and Jews were driven out of Andalus in the same year that Columbus discovered America.) Christianity, however, had to adapt with the advent of capitalism in Europe and the development of a modern industrial society—that was basically the reason for the Protestant Reformation and the breaking of the dominance of the Catholic church over much of Europe. Its ideology therefore became more compliant to capitalist social relations, as opposed to pre-feudal or medieval.

In the precapitalist society where Islam first developed (seventh-century Arabia), there was a strategic relationship between the institution of the family, the subordination of women and primitive agricul-

remained, the status of women was not going to improve.

Iraq: Uneven and Combined Development

If anything, it tended to get worse in Iraq into the 20th century, including after the British took over after World War I. As ancient tribal social relations eroded along with the nomadic way of life, they were replaced with virtual serfdom.



Woman doctor in Iraqi clinic. Right: In U.S.-backed Saudi Arabia, women remain imprisoned in head-to-toe veil.



Tribal communal lands became the private fiefdoms of sheiks who became landlords. The former nomadic warriors were subjected to forced labor on the sheik's land. Peasant women were in certain areas little more than chattel; they could be awarded in *fasl*, a way of settling a tribal dispute by giving away a girl or woman instead of drawing blood. This is only one example of women's subordinate status. Relying upon the backing of the sheiks and landlords, British policies strengthened these oppressive customs and sought to reverse the erosion of the tribes. For example, they instituted two separate legal codes in Iraq, one for the countryside based on tribal law and another for the cities (see Hanna Batatu, *The Old Social Classes and the Revolutionary Movements of Iraq* [1978]). This

construction of a modern infrastructure (see Marion Farouk-Sluglett and Peter Sluglett, *Iraq Since 1958: From Revolution to Dictatorship* [2001]).

This could not have happened without massive Soviet aid. Such Soviet government aid in technology, funding and military might enabled Third World countries like Iraq to have some room to maneuver against the imperialist powers. The result of Iraq's modernization was the emergence and expansion of a broad middle class and urbanization of nearly 70 percent of the population by 1980. The growth of the labor force impacted the status of women in a big way, because their labor was needed in Iraq, which, along with Iran, is unique in the Gulf states in having an indigenous working class.

In the late 1970s and 1980s, massive campaigns eradicated illiteracy among both men and women. Schooling was made compulsory for children. As an Arabic adage puts it, "Books are written in Cairo, published in Beirut and read in Baghdad." Iraq produced more doctors, engineers and scientists than any other country in the Near East. All university graduates, men and women, were granted automatic employment. By law women had equal rights to employment. The percentage of women in the workforce reached over 40 percent; in professions like teaching and the pharmaceutical industry, it was well over 50 percent. Laws were passed to enable women to work closer to home and they were provided with free transportation.

Health care and contraception were free and housing was subsidized. A working woman could take a maternity leave of one year, six months with full pay and six months at half pay. Workplaces had free or heavily subsidized day-care centers and nursing mothers were allowed two hours a day to breast-feed their babies. Polygamy was illegal. Iraq had the first and probably the only women's soccer team in the region. Women's sports were regularly broadcast on television where women appeared in shorts and swimsuits, a phenomenon unheard of in the rest of the region, except in Israel.

However, as real as these gains were, they were limited to the urban centers, necessarily partial and highly contradictory. Most fundamentally, their impact rose and fell with the needs of the labor market and the economy. For example,

the eight-year war with Iran had a huge impact on the status of women. With hundreds of thousands of men in the armed forces, women joined the labor force in large numbers. But at the same time, the regime banned the use of contraceptives to force women to "produce" more future citizens to make up for the loss of lives during the war. The end of the war in 1988 and the demobilization of men and their return to the workforce marked the

end of Iraqi women's heyday. Employment for women shrank sharply.

The bourgeois Ba'ath Party espouses a populist-nationalist ideology as it crushes all workers resistance. Its opposition to the U.S.-backed Zionist state of Israel and its drive to wrest its oil industry from the imperialists resulted in a certain empty anti-imperialist rhetoric. So, for example, the Iraqi government declared fulsome support for the Palestinian cause. During the 1970 massacre of Palestinians by the Jordanian army, known as Black September, Iraq pledged aid for the Palestinians. But this did not happen.

The regime that postured as "progressive" also espoused rhetoric about the liberation of women. Saddam Hussein called for "the complete emancipation of women from the ties which held them back in the past" (quoted in Doreen Ingrams, *The Awakened: Women in Iraq* [1983]). While it's hard to imagine George W. Bush even saying that, Hussein didn't mean it. The Ba'ath declared Islam the state religion in 1969. Countries of the Near East, Israel included, never realized the ideal of separation between established religion and state. Centuries of decay under Ottoman rule effectively sealed the region from the effects of the Reformation and the European bourgeois revolutions that broke the hold of the old feudal social relations there. The imperialist rule that followed arrested the development of the Near East and reinforced the existing backward precapitalist order. After independence these countries co-opted religion and incorporated it into the state apparatus. With no exception, Muslim countries in the region inscribe in their constitution that "Islamic law is the principal source of all legislation."

Family law in Iraq is largely drawn from the Islamic code of the *sharia*. By law, as of 1983 a woman could inherit only half of what her brother or other male relative inherits (this is straight from the Koran), and she could not divorce her husband unless this right was recognized in the marriage contract before the marriage. While Muslim men can legally marry non-Muslims, Muslim women cannot. Abortion is illegal. The General Federation of Iraqi Women, the Ba'ath Party's women's wing, defends Islam as providing "equality for both sexes." Its president, considered to be the First Lady of Iraq, wears the veil.

Even in the cities, the modern existed

continued on page 10



1997: Baghdad soup kitchen. UN starvation sanctions have led to deaths of some 1.5 million Iraqis.

tural production, herding, land and water rights. Women were their father's means of exchange through the bride price and were their husband's chattel. The polygamous family became the mechanism by which inheritance and property was organized. For inheritance to mean anything, of course, the chief has got to be able to be sure it's really his child. The subordination of women through polygamy, the bride price, the veil—these are not "bad ideas" thought up by bossy men or even the result of religious ideology, but a means of enforcing property rights in a very backward rural society. As long as the poverty and backwardness

is a clear example of the Marxist point that imperialism will ally with backward social and political forces to reinforce its power.

Ownership of the land was concentrated in the hands of a few families. Desperate peasants, unable to scratch out a living on tiny plots of arid land, fled to the shantytowns ringing Baghdad, where they lived in one-room mud huts, *sarifas*. Limited land reforms initiated in 1958 broke up much of the large-scale landed property owned by the sheiks and merchants; however, the peasants, unable to afford the costs of modern agricultural techniques, remained as poor as ever.

Iraq Women...

(continued from page 9)

side by side with holdovers from the ancient ways. Khairallah Tulfah, Saddam Hussein's uncle, who was appointed mayor of Baghdad shortly after the Ba'athists came to power, is best known in the West for his bigoted government pamphlet called "Three Whom God Should Not Have Created: Persians, Jews, and Flies." Baghdad women grew to fear his legion of employed vigilantes who pounced on them in public to paint their legs black if they were considered to be showing too much leg. Finally he got to be too much even for Hussein, who had to remove him.

Women and the UN Sanctions

Under the sanctions, with widespread unemployment and the disappearance of public services such as free transportation and childcare facilities, women were driven back into the home. With over 50 percent of the schools destroyed and the lack of instructional materials (computers and writing materials are not allowed under the sanctions), the literacy rate among women plummeted to 45 percent. Many children no longer attend school; in 1997-98, for example, the dropout rate was 53 percent. And many children work to supplement family income. Many men have either died in the military slaughter of the Iran-Iraq War and the 1991 Gulf War or left the country to escape the bleak economic conditions. This results in a high number of female-headed households, putting the brunt of the sanctions on women. A reported 95 percent of pregnant Iraqi women are anemic. The maternal death rate, 37 per 1,000 in 1990, more than tripled in the next 18 months to over 140 per 1,000. An estimated 4,000 to 5,000 children die every month. And this is before the UN's "food for oil" program was suspended with the beginning of the war.

A country that used to import 75 to 80 percent of its food has been forced to resort to local production, meaning a massive deurbanization of a wide section of the population with attendant conservatizing effects and restrictions that target women. The fathomless misery and fear have driven the population into such despair that, as Nuha Al-Radi writes in *Baghdad Diaries* (2003), a father, no longer able to provide for his family, fed them a poisoned fish and they all died together. She tells stories of parents beating their children so that they would be hospitalized, because the hospital was the only place where they could get fed. The people of Iraq have sought solace in the comfort of religion, what Marx called "the opiate of the people."

In the last decade, the country has seen a surge in religious sentiment that is



New York Times

Mass demonstration in Baghdad, July 1958. Revolutionary upsurge brought Iraqi proletariat to the brink of power.

encouraged by the regime. To appease local and regional reactionary religious forces, Hussein launched a mosque-building spree and adopted the habit of frequently peppering his speeches with religious maxims. He added the words "god is great" to the national flag on the eve of the '91 war. Unable to patch together a national front of rival ethnic groups, Hussein was attempting to rally them under a religious banner. Preachers at Friday prayers invoke historic Islamic battles and urge worshippers to fight the "infidel" invaders. Superstitious beliefs of all kinds are on the increase as people turn to witchcraft and exorcism, or *zar*.

With the surge in religiosity comes an increase in conservative practices that target women. According to the newspaper *Al-Hayat* (15 June 2000), Hussein declared that women should no longer work outside the home—and gave as the reason that they bought dresses and shoes when they did! A Baghdad mullah decreed that the solution to the food crisis included telling girls to fast every other day—until one teenager fainted in her class. In a country where Johnnie Walker whisky once enjoyed a state subsidy, women are now pushed into wearing the veil. Hussein, who once told a congress of the General Federation of Iraqi Women that "polygamy ought to be condemned in every corner of our society," has taken a second wife. Polygamy and forced and arranged marriages, once confined to the rural south, are now common in the urban centers. Nadje Al-Ali, an Iraqi historian who is a professor at the Institute of Arab and Islamic Studies in Exeter, Britain, describes in "Women, Gender Relations and Sanctions in Iraq" (www.acttogether.org) how her aunts and cousins, who had never worn the *hijab* in the past, were now veiled and prayed regularly. And this is the educated, elite layer.

The so-called "honor" killings of women are on the rise across the country and they are sanctioned by the regime. Under recent laws, men who kill female relatives for "immoral deeds" (which include not only having sex outside marriage or getting pregnant but also running away from home or even being suspected of doing these things) are considered innocent, since the murders are committed for the sake of "honor." In December 1991 in a TV broadcast, Hussein told Iraqis, "If you see a woman or her daughters flirting on the street, or if you suspect misconduct, you are a people's council. You are allowed to kick that family out of the neighborhood and confiscate their house" (quoted in Jan Goodwin, *Price of Honor: Muslim Women Lift the Veil of Silence on the the Islamic World* [2003]).

What makes this horror even worse is that, as you would expect, prostitution is on the increase among Iraqi women. So they have to endure not only the degradation of prostitution but the threat of murder from their own families. Most of the female prostitutes in Jordan, for example, are Iraqis. When the Jordanian

government complained about this, Iraq imposed the *mahram* escort for women under the age of 45 who travel abroad. A *mahram* is a close relative who acts as a male chaperon.

The Iraqi Communist Party

The country of Iraq was artificially carved up by the victorious imperialist powers out of the remnants of the Ottoman Empire after World War I. In fact, anticipating the demise of the Ottomans, France and Britain negotiated a secret treaty, Sykes-Picot, sketching out areas of domination in the Near East. Britain got the three former Ottoman provinces that became Iraq, more or less randomly cobbled together out of a part of mountainous Kurdistan to the north, bits of the territories of the Assyrians and Turkomans, and the Arabic-speaking lands to the south. The country was 97 percent Muslim, with 65 percent Shi'ites, concentrated in the south and historically linked to neighboring Persia (Iran).

Kuwait was carved out of the Ottoman province of Basra as a separate country. In the words of the British War Office, the purpose was "to limit [Iraq's] influence in the gulf and keep it dependent on Britain." The wealthier classes and the traditional rulers of the society were primarily Sunni Muslim, as had been the old Ottoman overlords. The British continued this tradition, making the Sunnis their agents and exacerbating ethnic and religious tensions. The so-called king of Iraq was a Hashemite tribal chief—not even from the area—elevated to the throne by his majesty's troops. In 1932 Iraq became formally independent, but Britain continued to dominate the country in every way.

Trotsky's program of permanent revolution teaches:

"With regard to countries with a belated bourgeois development, especially the colonial and semi-colonial countries, the theory of the permanent revolution signifies that the complete and genuine solution of their tasks of achieving *democracy and national emancipation* is conceivable only through the dictatorship of the proletariat as the leaders of the subjugated nation, above all of its peasant masses."

The Iraqi Communist Party (ICP), once the largest and most proletarian Communist party in the Arab world, was based in all sectors of the working class. In 1958-59, the party had probably the best chance at seizing power and overturning the capitalist system of any such party in the Near East, ever. Why this opportunity did not result in a new October Revolution in Iraq is a crucial question, one whose lessons must be assimilated by all revolutionaries seeking to forge genuine Leninist parties in the Near East.

Founded in 1935, by 1948 the ICP was the dominant force in a nationwide upsurge against the presence of British military bases—an example of the necessary leading role of the proletariat. There were mass mobilizations and strikes such as the Communist-led strike of oil workers near Hidatha. The extent to which the

government would go to defend British interests was shown by the crackdown that brought the upsurge to an end. Hundreds of Communists were arrested and ICP leader Fahd and two other members of the Political Bureau were publicly hanged. Their bodies were left on public display for several days as a warning.

The ICP was able to organize across national, religious and ethnic lines and to address the woman question in Iraq. The League for the Defense of Women's Rights, founded in 1952, had 40,000 members at its height, and a Communist women's weekly, *14 July*, was published from 1958 to 1963. The party sought to recruit Kurdish workers and published a Kurdish newspaper. By the early 1950s, one-third of the party's leadership were Kurds. From its inception, the ICP called for the Kurds' right to independence. But this principled position was abandoned in the mid 1950s. Pressured by the Kremlin, Stalinists throughout the Near East courted the Arab nationalist regimes like Nasser's Egypt. The ICP criticized its previous stance "that there exist two main national groups in Iraq," declaring that "the fraternal Kurdish people has no interests which are incompatible with the interests of any of the Arab countries."

Lessons of 1958

After World War II, the support of Britain and the U.S. for the Zionist state of Israel contributed to an upsurge of Arab nationalism across the region. When Britain, France and Israel invaded Egypt in 1956 in response to Nasser's nationalization of the Suez Canal, the ICP launched a campaign against the government that triggered mass uprisings in the Communist strongholds of Najaf and Hayy. Two years later in July 1958, the Free Officers movement overthrew the monarchy. Upon hearing the news, hundreds of thousands of Baghdad's dispossessed poured into the streets screaming their joy and their hatred of the British and the royal family. But the ICP threw its support behind the government headed by Brigadier Abd al-Karim Qasim (Kassem) and called for "a democratic federal republic" with unity of all the Arab peoples "of all classes." Qasim tried to play off the ICP against the pan-Arab nationalists in the officer corps as well as the Ba'ath Party, who were clamoring for Iraq to merge into Nasser's newly formed United Arab Republic. The drive for unity with Egypt was motivated by the desire of the Ba'ath and other Arab nationalists to use Nasser's authority and Egypt's anti-Communist laws to break the growing power of the Communists.

The imperialist overlords in Washington and London were quite alarmed by the downfall of the king and the ensuing revolutionary upsurge, which removed a main pillar of the Anglo-American anti-Soviet alliance in the Near East and threatened capitalist rule itself. American Marines were landed in Lebanon and British paratroopers were flown into Jordan in a menacing move aimed at the Iraqi masses.

By late summer, a peasant insurrection was sweeping across the agricultural plains of Iraq as peasants burned landlords' estates, destroyed the account ledgers and seized the land. The forces of reaction were frantically organizing to crush the revolutionary wave. In March 1959, nationalist officers and the Ba'ath, backed by the large landowners and tribal chiefs, prepared to launch a counterrevolutionary coup starting from the city of Mosul. The ICP wrecked this scheme by organizing a demonstration of 250,000 people, triggering an upsurge that swept the reactionaries from the streets.

The Communists dominated the labor unions, the peasants organizations and the union of students. But with the question of proletarian state power posed, all the ICP demanded was representation in the capitalist government. They continued to hold that the task was to create a native

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Iraqi capitalist government, according to the Stalinist dogma of “two-stage” revolution. Mammoth rallies, some over one million strong, swept Baghdad to support the ICP’s demand. Army units loyal to the ICP broke open arsenals and distributed weapons.

Marxist historian Isaac Deutscher describes what happened next. Soviet Stalinist chief Khrushchev was about to meet with imperialist chief Eisenhower at Camp David. In order to make this meeting more congenial, he ordered the Iraqi CP to stand down. Says Deutscher:

“Most Western observers on the spot agreed that Kassem could hardly hold his ground against an all-out communist offensive. His own following was small, and he refused to try and rally the anti-communist forces which were intimidated and disorganized and for whose support Nasser made a bid when he attacked Kassem as a ‘communist stooge.’

“Then, in the summer, the communist offensive was suddenly called off—on urgent demands from Moscow. In Moscow reports about the rising revolutionary temperature of Iraq had caused alarm. Khrushchev refused to countenance a communist upheaval in Baghdad, afraid that this would provoke renewed Western intervention in the Eastern Mediterranean, set the Middle East aflame, and wreck his policy of peaceful coexistence. He was already reckoning with the prospect of his visit to Washington and was anxious to produce evidence of Soviet ‘goodwill’ in the Middle East.

“A bill of indictment against the Iraqi communist leaders was drawn up in Moscow and the Iraqi Party was ordered not merely to make its peace with Kassem, but to surrender to him unconditionally with only a minimum of face-saving.”

Qassim and the anti-Communist nationalists now took the offensive. Bloody encounters took place between Ba’athist gangs and Communists in Baghdad; Communist trade-union leaders were killed, removed from their posts or rounded up by the police. In Kirkuk, the largely Kurdish CP organization turned an incipient revolt into a communalist massacre of Turkomans, who were prominent in the city’s commercial elite. The Kirkuk massacre was used by Qassim as a pretext for suppressing the Communist Party.

This attempt to make a deal with the ruling class did not gain the Communists any good will—it only allowed the ruling class a breathing space to reassemble their forces. When the Ba’ath came to power briefly in 1963 in a CIA-backed coup, it unleashed the counterrevolutionary furies. With the help of the CIA, an estimated 5,000 Communists were killed and thousands more jailed. After the Ba’athists regained power in 1968, they took up where they had left off—with trials of Jews, Communists and oppositionists, while laying waste to the Kurdish regions.

The intervention of even a relatively small Trotskyist party could have split the Communist organizations, winning revolutionary-minded workers and intellectuals away from their Stalinist misleaders. This is the road to forging authentic Leninist vanguard parties in the region. Such a party must inscribe on its banner the program of the permanent revolution and intransigent opposition to every form of oppression—of women, of national, ethnic and religious minorities, as well as of homosexuals and others.

Today the war brings the question of Kurdistan once more to the fore. Defense of the right of self-determination for the Kurdish people is a crucial obligation for would-be communists in Turkey and Iraq as well as Iran and Syria. The Near Eastern working classes must be won to a perspective of upholding the national rights of the Kurds, defending Kurdish organizations against state terror and championing full and equal rights for the Kurdish language. Only by fighting all manifestations of Turkish and Iraqi chauvinism and national oppression can the road be opened for joint struggle among the workers against their common capitalist oppressors. The rights of the Kurdish people can only be guaranteed by pro-

letarian socialist revolutions to smash the capitalist states that oppress them—Turkey, Iran, Iraq and Syria. To achieve this, it is necessary to build Leninist-Trotskyist parties that unite the working people of different national and ethnic backgrounds. Such parties will inscribe on their banner the call for a Socialist Republic of United Kurdistan, part of a socialist federation of the Near East.

The Rise of Political Islam

The betrayal of socialist revolution, such as happened in Iraq in 1958-59, is the backdrop to the rise of Islamic fundamentalism as a mass movement in the last two decades. With the bankruptcy of the nationalist governments and in the absence of a viable communist alternative, political Islam feeds off the despair and anger of the masses. Islamic funda-



Petrograd, March 1917: Women’s demonstration with banner reading “As Long As the Woman Is a Slave There Can’t Be Freedom—Long Live Women’s Equality.” October Revolution opened the road to women’s emancipation.

mentalism poses as an anti-imperialist force, the savior from mass poverty and the promoter of social justice through upholding the “word of god” and Islamic law.

Imperialism has sought to drown in blood every movement for emancipation from the centuries-old chains of tradition and the exploitation of the landlords and the capitalists. In this aim, institutionalized religion has been one of its main tools and the rights of women one of the main casualties. Arch-Cold Warrior John Foster Dulles—the U.S. secretary of state in 1958 at the time of the Iraqi revolution—earlier urged U.S. imperialism to make common cause with the “religions of the East” against “Communist atheism and materialism.”

While there are many examples of this, probably the most glaring is Afghanistan. In 1979, a civil war between the modernizing Kabul regime and the tribal *mujahedin* broke out. In dispute was the government’s move to introduce a few rather minor reforms—like reducing the bride price, not even abolishing it. To protect its borders from the fundamentalist threat, the Soviet Union sent in the Red Army to defend Kabul. Whatever the Kremlin’s motive, nevertheless the Red Army’s presence was defending the rights of the women of Afghanistan. Its opponents, the *mujahedin*, were shooting schoolteachers for teaching girls how to read and throwing acid in the faces of unveiled women. And on their side was the United States, arming and funding them in what was the largest CIA operation in history.

We said, “Hail Red Army in Afghanistan!” and called on the Soviets to extend the gains of October to the people of Afghanistan. What were those gains? Just across the border, Central Asia had once been exactly like Afghanistan—a miserably backward, desolate and benighted place. But in the 1920s, Soviet power came to Central Asia. To be sure, even the most powerful government cannot decree social advancement—it must be built. In 50 years, Soviet Central Asia had moved forward ten centuries because

it had been transformed from a backward, tribal area by a socialized, planned economy.

The planned economy is a tremendous force for revolutionary change. Because its central dynamic is to maximize the socially productive labor of all citizens, women are a necessary part of the workforce. Stalin—no champion of the liberation of women—nevertheless saw no reason why women should not be drawn into industry. The first Five Year Plans, which transformed the USSR from a largely peasant country into an industrial power, mobilized women en masse, and could not have succeeded without them. In contrast, under capitalist production of commodities for the market, the exploitation of labor for profit drives the capitalist to not hire women at all, or to hire them at a lower wage—because, for example, they

basis for replacing the family with socialized alternatives.

They abolished all laws regarding consensual sexual relations (laws against sodomy, fornication, homosexuality) because they thought the state had no business interfering in private sexual matters. In 1919, the Communist Party created the Department of Working Women and Peasant Women, or Zhenotdel, to organize special work among women, which included building over 25,000 literacy schools and donning the veil to reach the women of the Muslim East.

The gains made by women in the Soviet Union are one of the reasons why Trotskyists stood for unconditional military defense of the USSR against imperialist threats and internal counterrevolution. Stalin turned back the clock on many of the gains of women—for example, abortion was made illegal in 1936—but the enormous power of the planned economy remained, however deformed it was by the Stalinist bureaucracy.

In Iraq today, the task is to fully mobilize the workers and rural toilers against American imperialism. A Leninist-Trotskyist party in Iraq today would seek to combine the struggle for national independence against the U.S. with a social revolution against the Iraqi capitalists and landlords.

Trotsky stressed that “the subsequent fate of the [proletarian] dictatorship and socialism depends in the last analysis not only and not so much upon the national productive forces as upon the development of the international socialist revolution.” Today in the Near East, the struggle against imperialism cannot be resolved within the confines of a single country. Justice for the Palestinian people, national emancipation for the Kurds, freedom from the veil and Islamic law for women require sweeping away the capitalist regimes from Iran to Egypt and establishing a socialist federation of the Near East.

These struggles must be linked to the fight for socialist revolution in the advanced capitalist countries of Europe, North America and Japan. Throughout the imperialist centers, immigrant workers and their children represent a living bridge with the former colonies and link oppressed immigrants to the power of the proletariat as a whole. The fight against war and for the liberation of the workers and oppressed needs a revolutionary instrument of struggle, an internationalist Trotskyist party, to lead the workers to power and wrest the means of production from the hands of the imperialist rulers. We must have an international planned economy in a socialist world. We in the International Communist League are dedicated to this task. ■

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Iraq

Women's Liberation and the Struggle Against Imperialist Subjugation

We print below in edited form a presentation by Spartacist League speaker and former Women and Revolution editor Amy Rath at a forum in New York City on March 29.

Women and Revolution



As we meet here today, American and British forces are moving north toward Baghdad and bombs rain down on the city. In the war against Iraq, the International Communist League clearly takes a side. We stand for the military defense of Iraq without giving an ounce of political support to the Saddam Hussein regime. Hussein is a bloody oppressor of Iraqi workers, leftists, Shi'ite Muslims and the Kurdish people. His Ba'ath Party regime defends the existing social relations in Iraq and perpetuates the enslavement of women.

I'm speaking here today in honor of International Women's Day. In 2003, the women of Iraq illustrate the status of most of the world's women, caught between the domination of imperialism and the oppression of stifling ancient "customs" like the veil, holdovers from a more backward era. For the past 12 years, American imperialism, under the guise of the United Nations, has imposed death and disease on Iraq through the starvation blockade. Out of a population of some 23 or 24 million, one and a half million Iraqis have already died from the effects of the sanctions—from starvation and lack of medical supplies. Between the blockade and the bombing, the economic infrastructure of the country has been damaged or destroyed—including power, sewage and water plants, food

processing plants, irrigation facilities, pharmaceutical plants and hospitals. And Iraqi women have suffered more than their share of this misery. The imperialist vendetta against Iraq has thrown the country backward, reviving and reinforcing conservative and patriarchal practices that oppress women.

The history of the Near East shows over and over again the bankruptcy of reform schemes, of deals with the impe-

rialists, of relying on the so-called "progressive" Arab nationalist bourgeoisie to break the chains of imperialism. The idea that the working class and the oppressed can move forward by pressuring the rulers to make reforms, or by joining with them in administering their state, has led to one bloody defeat after another. The imperialists and bourgeois nationalists are utterly hostile to women's emancipation, which can only be achieved through a thoroughgoing socialist revolution that shatters capitalist property relations and all associated social institutions.

The war on Iraq is the shape of the "New World Order" emerging from the demise of the Soviet Union in 1991-92. That counterrevolution, which restored the capitalist profit system, was a huge defeat for the world's working class that has defined the past period. In 1917 the October Revolution, the world's first and to date only victorious workers revolution, marked the seizure of power by the working class. It was a beacon of hope for the millions of oppressed and exploited.

Upon coming to power as the leadership of the working class, the Bolsheviks proclaimed the goal of the full political and social participation of women. Insofar as they were able, the Bolsheviks instituted concrete measures to make this possible, such as day-care centers and cafeterias. Activists in the Bolsheviks' women's bureau donned the veil to work among the oppressed women of the

Muslim East in Soviet Central Asia.

Despite its Stalinist degeneration beginning in 1924, the Soviet Union represented the industrial and military powerhouse for every state that overthrew capitalist rule, from Vietnam to Cuba. Today, without Soviet military might to stay its hand, U.S. imperialism is expanding its military presence on every continent.

What force can act against this lone superpower? We need class struggle in the imperialist centers. Every strike, every labor mobilization against the war, every mass protest against attacks on workers and minorities, every struggle against domestic repression puts a dent in the imperialists' war drive. To put an end to imperialist war once and for all, the capitalist system that breeds war must be swept away through a series of workers revolutions. We must establish a planned socialist economy on a world scale in which the great wealth and technology of the imperialist centers can be deployed to wipe out the poverty of the Third World.

Women and Religion

In Iraq, many women, especially in the rural areas, live under the hideous oppression of a backward, tradition-bound society. They are subjected to tribal practices of forced and arranged marriages, polygamy, the "bride price" where women and girls are bought and sold, and the head-to-toe black *abaya*, the Iraqi form of *hijab*, or veil. But Iraq is not Afghanistan. Side by side with these ancient "customs" is a modern oil industry and a powerful working class with a history of revolutionary struggle. And not coincidentally, in the last 30 years many women in the cities have gained an education, held professional jobs and benefited from what used to be the Near East's best medical system.

What accounts for the higher status of women in Iraq compared to most other countries of the Near East? Is it because Islam has less of a hold over the population? In fact, liberals and nationalists often describe Iraq as a secular state. Well, that is a misleading way to pose the question. In any society, the relationship between the classes is the starting point for understanding what is happening there. We Marxists see the institution of the family as the main source of women's oppression in class society, and we understand that the family as an institution functions according to the needs of the ruling class in any given society.

Institutionalized religion plays a crucial role in reinforcing this oppression, but it is not its origin. Islam is no different from Christianity or any other religion—they all reinforce the family, authority and the particular sexual and moral codes of their respective societies. Certainly Islam has no corner on savagery

continued on page 9



AP

Iraqi women at Baghdad protest against U.S. war threats in January.



Getty

Development of oil industry in Iraq gave rise to powerful proletariat.