

U.S. Troops Out of Iraq, Near East Now!

U.S. Imperialism Hands Off the World!

We print below, slightly edited, a presentation by Spartacist League Central Committee member Joseph Seymour at an SL/Spartacus Youth Club public educational in Chicago on April 27.

A couple of weeks ago, thousands of people gathered in the center of the northern Iraqi city of Mosul to protest the U.S. occupation of their country. One of Washington's Iraqi stooges tried to address the crowd, telling them to welcome the Americans as liberators. When some people started throwing stones at him, the Marines opened fire, killing at least ten and wounding many more. This scene foreshadows things to come in Iraq over the next months.

What has already happened there was not so much a war as a one-sided slaughter. Untold thousands of Iraqis, civilians as well as soldiers, were killed mainly through American air strikes, against which that country had no defense whatsoever. Some Iraqi forces fought the U.S. invaders with great heroism and a lot harder than the Pentagon strategists had expected and planned for.

But the courage and determination of these Iraqi soldiers were of course no match for the overpowering military technological capacity of the U.S. The Pentagon budget for this war alone was twice the entire annual national output of Iraq. Moreover, the Iraqi armed forces were massively reduced, weakened and degraded since the 1991 Gulf War with the U.S., by 12 years of imperialist economic sanctions carried out under the authority of the UN. The U.S. war against the Iraqi armed forces is now over. But the U.S. war against the Iraqi people continues in the form of a colonial occupation.

The occupation is going to be much more difficult and very possibly much more deadly for the U.S. forces than the invasion was. To begin with, in order to get Saddam Hussein, the Americans deliberately manipulated the country's murderous ethnic and religious conflicts, pitting Kurds against Arabs, Shi'ite against Sunni Muslims. One of the prominent Iraqi oppositionists who is supporting the U.S. takeover and is slated for a role in the new government is Adnan



Pachachi, who once served as the country's foreign minister. And this guy is very worried about the outcome of the occupation. He says, "It is not in the interest of the U.S. to prolong its military presence." Tell that to Bush. The soldiers will be at greater risk as time goes on.

The Bush gang, supported by Congressional Democrats, is already threatening Syria, accusing the Assad regime in Damascus of giving aid and comfort to Saddam Hussein as well as other sundry

crimes. At the same time, the main U.S. ally in the Near East, Zionist Israel, is celebrating the American victory in Iraq by escalating its own one-sided war against the Palestinian Arab people under its military occupation. Israeli leaders think that the U.S. takeover of Iraq has radically and fundamentally changed the balance of forces in the region in their favor. And that means there's a greater danger that they will move toward the expulsion of the Palestinians from the Occupied

Territories and the accompanying massacres.

In a statement issued by the Spartacist League at the outbreak of the war (see "Defend Iraq Against U.S./British Attack!", WV No. 800, 28 March), we wrote, "It is in the class interest of the international proletariat to clearly take a side in defense of Iraq without giving any political support to the bloody Saddam Hussein regime. Every victory for the U.S. imperialists can only encourage further military adventures. In turn, every humiliation, every setback, every defeat they suffer will serve to assist the struggles of working people and the oppressed around the globe."

Given the overwhelming U.S. military superiority, and also the widely and very justly hated nature of the Saddam Hussein regime, we emphasized that the defense of Iraq was crucially dependent upon class struggle internationally, especially in the United States itself, against the Pentagon war machine.

AP

We pointed to Italy, where transport workers and antiwar militants successfully blocked the shipment of weapons to U.S. NATO bases. Now, likewise, opposition to the U.S. colonial occupation of Iraq and also defense of the Palestinians against Israeli terror demands class struggle against the capitalist rulers, especially here.

Democrats: Party of Imperialism and War

I assume that all of you have been involved in the antiwar protests. So have we, mainly in the form of revolutionary contingents. However, the large demonstrations were organized on the basis of so-called broad antiwar coalitions: ANSWER, Not In Our Name, United for Peace and Justice. The main organizing force and political direction of these coalitions were provided by leftist groups which claimed to be anti-imperialist, revolutionary, Marxist-Leninist, whatever—like the Workers World Party, International Socialist Organization (ISO), Revolutionary Communist Party (RCP). Nonetheless, these coalitions embrace and were designed to embrace liberal Democratic Party politicians and pro-Democratic Party liberal celebrities, intellectuals, notables. The big-name speakers at the big protests leading up to the war were Jesse Jackson, Al Sharpton, black California Congresswoman Barbara Lee, Hollywood celebrities like Martin Sheen, Susan Sarandon, Danny Glover, well-known supporters of the

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AP

Falluja, April 30: U.S. occupation troops open fire on Iraqis protesting massacre of anti-American demonstrators earlier in the week.



On the LRP and Arab Nationalism

8 February 2003

Comrades,

Precisely because the Workers Vanguard is usually very careful in its historical analysis, I would like to point out the following minor, but not insignificant, mistake: In its January 31, 2003 edition, WV gives as the source of a quote from Karl Liebknecht “Die Röte Fahne.” It should be “Rote Fahne,” with a simple “o” rather than an umlaut.

On the other hand, your article “LRP: Apologists for Arab Nationalism” in the same edition was the most intelligent piece I’ve read on the subject in a long time. My wife, who is not a Marxist but who is an Israeli Jew, said: “That’s my position!” Good work.

In solidarity,
Bernhard Rohrbacher

10 February 2003

To Workers’ Vanguard:

I feel compelled to respond to your polemic, “LRP: Apologists for Arab Nationalism.” I won’t address the LRP’s position since I haven’t read it. However,

the trumpeting revisionism of the SL comes through loud and clear.

Every time the SL wants to justify its imperialist chauvinist appetite, out comes the so-called “theory” of interpenetrated peoples. Whether it is to justify the bigotry of northern Europeans towards Mediterranean immigrants (as was done in the first Workers’ Vanguard article on this theory), or capitulating to the vicious prejudices of Zionism, this approach is the enemy of Bolshevik internationalism and working class unity.

When Lenin defended the right of self-determination for oppressed nationalities, he did so with the aim of smashing the shackles that keep oppressed workers chained to their own ruling class because of their distrust of workers from the oppressor nation. To extend this strategy to an oppressor nation could only be seen by the oppressed as an attempt to maintain the status quo. That is, it would put up an obstacle towards united working class struggle. It would turn Lenin on his head.

That is exactly what the SL does. Where did Lenin ever support the right

for self-determination for *all* nations, oppressed and oppressor alike? You will not be able to find a single example comrades because such a notion is completely contrary to Lenin’s method.

Yet the SL insist in their defense of a “socialist” two state solution as though the actual imperialist two state solution, which has resulted in horrific oppression for the Palestinians, has no bearing on the course of revolutionary development. Instead of recognizing the inevitable national character of the Palestinians’ struggle, the SL frets out of fear over “reversing the terms of oppression” when it comes to implementing a Leninist perspective. That is, fighting for a united democratic secular Palestine as a transitional demand that can only be achieved through social revolution.

Such an overarching concern regarding so-called “reverse racism” is typical of those who have not broken from the social pressures that divide our class. Unity will not be achieved by wringing our hands over the possibility of the oppressed nationality becoming the oppressor. Rather, unity can only be achieved by whole-heartedly fighting for the liberation of the oppressed through socialist working class revolution. Workers of an oppressed nationality are under no obligation to wait for their counterparts of the oppressor nationality to catch up with them. Rather, the advancement of the oppressed struggles can show the way to those class brothers and sisters who are lagging behind.

Of course the reactionary leadership of the Palestinians, with their suicide bombings that strengthen the hand of Sharon, creates a huge obstacle. However, as terrible as the suicide bombings that victimize Jewish workers are, they don’t hold a candle to the systematic genocidal campaign of the U.S. backed Zionist state against the Palestinians.

Even with the lack of a revolutionary leadership, this truth combined with the Jewish workers’ increasing exploitation, is already producing cracks in the Zionist consciousness of Israelis that indicate revolutionary potential. For instance, in the last elections the Israeli Russian Slavic Union threw its support behind HADASH, a predominantly Palestinian organization associated with the CP. They wrote: “We, the Russians were brought here as cheap labour force and cannon meat in order to displace and fight the native Palestinians. But we have no truck with this dispute. Let us join forces with the Palestinians against racism and poverty, for equality and democracy.”

The SL are dead wrong in not supporting the creation of a workers’ Palestine on top of the ruins of Israel. You end up perpetuating the same racist fear campaign against the Palestinians as the fascistic

Zionists. Bolshevik-Leninists know better. Trotsky wrote in “The Agrarian and National Questions, Remarks on the Draft Theses of The Workers party of South Africa” [published in Trotsky *Writings, 1934-35* under the title “On the South African Theses”]:

“A victorious revolution is unthinkable without the awakening of the native masses; in its turn it will give them what they are so lacking today, confidence in their strength, a heightened personal consciousness, a cultural growth. Under these conditions the South African Republic will emerge first of all as a “black” Republic; this does not exclude, of course, either full equality for whites or brotherly relations between the two races (which depends mainly upon the conduct of the whites). But it is entirely obvious that the predominant majority of the population, liberated from slavish dependence, will put a certain imprint on the State.

“Insofar as a victorious revolution will radically change not only the relation between classes, but also between races, and will assure to the blacks that place in the State which corresponds to their numbers, so far will the *Social* Revolution in South Africa also have a *national* character. We have not the slightest reason to close our eyes to this side of the question or diminish its significance. On the contrary the proletarian party should in words and in deeds openly and boldly take the solution of the national (racial) problem in its hands.”

The smashing of Israel through a workers’ revolution will also have a national character. Considering that the great majority of workers who call the area their home are Palestinian, it will have a Palestinian character. Jewish workers in the region have more to gain by fighting for this than in demanding their own sliver of a sliver of a state.

Supporting the right of Jewish self-determination in the Middle East under today’s concrete conditions plays into the hands of the Arab nationalists and gives credence to the Zionists’ claim that Jews constitute a nationality rather than a religious caste. It capitulates to imperialist chauvinism by holding back the demands of the Palestinians out of fear of offending those most susceptible to U.S./Zionist promoted racism. Rather than building workers’ unity in the Middle East, it gags the most powerful motor force to achieve this, the struggle for Palestinian liberation.

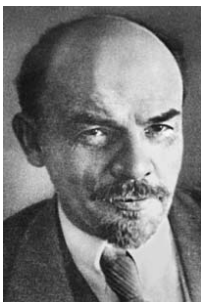
Comradely,
Mark Ness
Workers’ Action

WV Replies:

Mark Ness of Workers Action (which Ness informed us is a small, U.S.-based group with as yet no publications) is manifestly unserious: he has bothered neither to address the arguments we raised in our polemic against the League for the Revolutionary Party (LRP) nor even to read the LRP article against



TROTSKY



LENIN

The Russian Question and the Class Line

The counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union, homeland of the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution, was a historic defeat for working people and the oppressed around the world. As American Trotskyist leader James P. Cannon stressed in a 1939 speech, those who reneged on defense of the gains of that first workers revolution thereby demonstrated their acceptance of the imperialist order. Cannon’s speech was directed

against the Burnham-Shachtman opposition, whose capitulation to petty-bourgeois anti-Sovietism provoked a fierce factional struggle within the then-Trotskyist Socialist Workers Party.

The October revolution put socialism on the order of the day throughout the world. It revived and shaped and developed the revolutionary labor movement of the world out of the bloody chaos of the war. The Russian revolution showed in practice, by example, how the workers’ revolution is to be made. It revealed in life the role of the party. It showed in life what kind of a party the workers must have. By its victory, and its reorganization of the social system, the Russian revolution has proved for all time the superiority of nationalized property and planned economy over capitalist private property, and planless competition and anarchy in production.

The question of the Russian revolution—and the Soviet state which is its creation—has drawn a sharp dividing line through the labor movement of all countries for 22 years. The attitude taken toward the Soviet Union throughout all these years has been the decisive criterion separating the genuine revolutionary tendency from all shades and degrees of waverers, backsliders and capitulators to the pressure of the bourgeois world—the Mensheviks, Social Democrats, Anarchists and Syndicalists, Centrists, Stalinists....

Conclusions on the Russian question lead directly to positions on such issues as war and revolution, defense and defeatism. Such issues, by their very nature, admit no unclarity, no compromise, because it is a matter of taking sides! One must be on one side or another in war and revolution.

—James P. Cannon, “Speech on the Russian Question” (October 1939),
Struggle for a Proletarian Party (1943)

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9 May 2003

DEBATE

Spartacist League vs. League for the Revolutionary Party

“The Fight Against Imperialist War: Which Way Forward?”

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EPA

Left: Palestinians expelled from their homes in Haifa, 1948. Right: Zionist tanks wreak death and destruction in Occupied Territories, 2003.



Getty

which we polemicized. As we noted in “LRP: Apologists for Arab Nationalism” (WV No. 796, 31 January), “Any socialist worth his salt solidarizes with the Palestinians who defend themselves against the murderous Zionist occupation forces in Gaza and the West Bank.” But vicarious cheerleading for the Palestinian national struggle to the last drop of Palestinian blood in the face of the overwhelmingly more powerful Zionist state is the trademark of a cynical adaptation to Arab nationalism.

The LRP reaffirms its advocacy of national war as against internationalist class struggle in an attempted rejoinder to our article in the latest *Proletarian Revolution* (Spring 2003). Thus it upholds its call for the Arab bourgeois states—enforcers of the exploitation and oppression of workers, women and religious and national minorities, not least the Kurds of Iraq and Syria and, in the case of Jordan and Lebanon, the Palestinians—to provide “arms for the Palestinians”! The current article also upholds the LRP’s longstanding position in support of the Arab

begs the question of how such a social revolution is going to be achieved. As we stressed in our article:

“If the Zionist citadel is not cracked from within through workers revolution, all talk of national justice is simply empty rhetoric that does nothing to advance the cause of the Palestinians. But there is no way the Hebrew workers will be won to the need for common class struggle against the Israeli capitalist rulers if their own right to a national existence is threatened.”

Ness sneers, “Where did Lenin ever support the right for self-determination for *all* nations, oppressed and oppressor alike?” In “On the Question of National Policy” (1914), Lenin wrote: “Wherever we see *compulsory* ties between nations



Sebastian Scheiner



Reuters

April 30: Prime Minister Sharon and Finance Minister Netanyahu at Knesset budget session at outbreak of massive public employees strike. Deserted Ben-Gurion airport on second day of strike.

rulers in the Arab-Israeli wars of 1948 and 1967. Following the 1973 war, the LRP’s predecessor, the Revolutionary Socialist League, declared: “We attack the Arab rulers for not fighting Israel in a revolutionary manner, for conservatism, for timidity, for capitulating to imperialism, for *merely* seeking a better deal with Israel rather than thoroughly smashing Israel” (*Torch*, February 1974). These “socialists” side with the reactionary Arab bourgeoisies against the reactionary Israeli bourgeoisies.

In the 1948, ’67 and ’73 wars, Marxists had a position of revolutionary defeatism on both sides—having no reason to choose between the equally reactionary sides involved—calling to turn the national war into a class war. In the 1956 war, Marxists had a revolutionary defensist position on the side of Egypt because the Israeli attack on the country was in concert with and subordinated to the decisive military intervention of French and British imperialism.

For his part, Ness embraces the Arab nationalist call for a “united democratic secular Palestine,” tacking on the phrase “as a transitional demand that can only be achieved through social revolution.” This

we, while by no means insisting that every nation must secede, do *absolutely* and emphatically insist on the *right* of every [!] nation to political self-determination, that is, to secession.” He added, “True democracy, headed by the working class, holds aloft the banner of complete equality of nations and of unity of the workers of all nations in their class struggle.”

This theme was repeated in *all* Lenin’s writings on the national question, and in the interest of Marxist sanitation we will cite a handful. In “Critical Remarks on the National Question” (1913), Lenin stressed: “It is the Marxist’s *bounden* duty to stand for the most resolute and consistent democratism on all aspects of the national question. This task is largely a negative one. But this is the limit the proletariat can go to in supporting nationalism, for beyond that begins the ‘positive’ activity of the *bourgeoisie* striving to *fortify* nationalism.” Again in his 1914 pamphlet *The Right of Nations to Self-Determination*, he insisted: “We fight against the privileges and violence of the oppressor nation, and do not in any way condone strivings for privileges on the part of the oppressed nation.”

The notion that “progressive” (oppressed)

nations have the right to exist and “reactionary” (oppressor) nations don’t is not Leninism but rather its Stalinist perversion. While Ness scoffs at the very idea of “reversal of the terms of oppression,” such a possibility becomes particularly acute precisely in cases of interpenetrated peoples. Following the NATO occupation of Kosovo in 1999, the formerly oppressed ethnic Albanians began driving out the formerly dominant Serbian population. Today in northern Iraq, where the Kurdish population was terrorized for years by Sunni Arab forces, Kurdish forces are driving Sunni Arabs out of their homes and towns. Which are the good/oppressed and which the bad/oppressor people here? Ness and the LRP’s logic—like that of all nationalism—is genocidal irredentism.

The absurd notion propounded by the LRP that Israel is today a “settler colonial” state is belied not least by the public sector strike that just rocked Israel, pitting 700,000 of these supposed “settler colonists” (Arab as well as Hebrew) against the Israeli capitalists and their state. Ness’s quote from Trotsky on South Africa is very relevant...to South Africa. It is that understanding which informed our call for a black-centered workers government throughout the anti-apartheid struggle.

But where the Afrikaner (and English) colonizers sought to subjugate and *exploit* the black population, the vast majority, as laborers, the Zionist colonizers sought to *exclude* Palestinian Arabs with the aim of building a closed national economy relying on “Jewish labor only.” And they succeeded in creating a Hebrew-speaking *nation* encompassing all classes of modern capitalist society. Moreover, since the signing of the 1993 Oslo accords, Israel’s reliance on Palestinian labor is qualitatively diminished.

According to an article by Yossi Schwartz of the “Socialist Workers League of Palestine” in the February/March issue of the British *Workers Action* (which to our knowledge has no affiliation with Ness’s Workers Action):

“Due to their late appearance in history, in the epoch of the decline of capitalism, the Jewish colonists in Palestine have not been able to separate themselves from Zionism and imperialism and this has prevented them from becoming a nation....

“The Palestinian people, on the other hand, constitute a people in the modern sense of the term because they have been formed in the struggle against imperialism and Zionism.”

This is petty-bourgeois moralism, not Marxist materialism. To paraphrase Engels, all nations have historically been consolidated on a mountain of skulls. And, in fact, the leadership of the Palestinian nation, no less than the Zionists, sought to make common cause with the various imperialist powers to further their aims—but they lost out. Schwartz knows this. He was instrumental in shaping our understanding of the birth of the Zionist state and our revolutionary defeatist line on the 1948 war (see “On the First Arab-Israel War,” WV No. 35, 4 January 1974).

Schwartz’s moralistic preaching is particularly hypocritical given that when he

exited our international party in 1994 he was trumpeting the virtues of the Great Russian chauvinist “red-brown coalition” of ex-Stalinists and outright fascists (while also upholding extrasensory perception and opposing the Big Bang theory as a violation of Marxist theory!).

To equate the proletariat of oppressor nations with the bloodthirsty capitalist ruling class of those states is the methodology of petty-bourgeois nationalists—not revolutionary Marxists. As Lenin wrote in “Critical Remarks,” polemicizing against the Ukrainian nationalist “socialist” Lev Yurkevich:

“If a Ukrainian Marxist allows himself to be swayed by his *quite legitimate and natural* hatred of the Great-Russian oppressors *to such a degree* that he transfers even a particle of this hatred, even if it be only estrangement, to the proletarian culture and proletarian cause of the Great-Russian workers, then such a Marxist will get bogged down in bourgeois nationalism. Similarly, the Great-Russian Marxists will be bogged down, not only in bourgeois, but also in Black-Hundred nationalism, if he loses sight, even for a moment, of the demand for complete equality for the Ukrainians, or of their *right* to form an independent state.”

The logical outcome of the LRP’s declaration that “Israelis unwilling to live in a Palestinian workers’ state will have the right to leave” is fratricidal slaughter. It is reprehensible from the standpoint not only of consistent democratism but of revolutionary strategy. And it will only lead the Palestinian people into more bloody defeats. For if Israeli society is not shattered along *class* lines, then the nuclear-armed Zionist rulers are quite capable of obliterating the Palestinians and all the Arab countries.

The Hebrew proletariat must be won to defense of the national rights of the Palestinians; but this will not happen if Hebrew workers perceive Palestinian national rights coming at the expense of their own national rights. As we have stressed repeatedly, it will likely take great historic events to unlock the Zionist stranglehold over the Hebrew proletariat. But the only road to national justice for the Palestinians and all the peoples of the Near East lies in winning the working masses—Arab, Hebrew, Kurdish and other—to the program of proletarian revolution against all the murderous ruling classes of the region. ■

LRP: Apologists for Arab Nationalism

The question of the right of nations to self-determination is a central issue in the struggle for socialism. The LRP's position on this issue is a clear example of its revisionist and defeatist tendencies. In its latest issue, the LRP publishes a special section on the national question, which is a collection of articles by its members. These articles are a clear example of the LRP's revisionist and defeatist tendencies. In its latest issue, the LRP publishes a special section on the national question, which is a collection of articles by its members. These articles are a clear example of the LRP's revisionist and defeatist tendencies.

Defend the Palestinians!

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LRP: Apologists for Arab Nationalism

Article from WV No. 796, 31 January 2003

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Young Spartacus

A leaflet distributed on the East Coast by the Open City Anarchist Collective of the Northeastern Federation of Anarcho-Communists (NEFAC), titled “Anarchists Against the War” (15 February), stands out from all other anarchist antiwar statements we have come across in that it takes a side in the U.S. war on Iraq. It states, “We hope the U.S. is defeated in its aggression.” Anarchists typically call for neutrality in the face of wars between colonial or semicolonial countries and the most deadly imperialist power on the planet. For example, a principal slogan of NEFAC has been: “No war between nations, no peace between classes.” The logic of this superficially radical slogan is ultimately chauvinist, damning the struggle for self-defense of oppressed nations in the same breath as they condemn pillage and rape by the imperialists.

It is the duty of revolutionaries to defend oppressed and dependent countries against imperialist attack. Easy wins for the imperialists, as the war in Iraq has been, embolden them to undertake further rampage and bloody conquest. A defeat of the U.S. would be a victory for workers of the world, not least in allowing more room for class struggle to emerge. Since the U.S. war moves against Iraq began, we emblazoned on our banners: “Defend Iraq Against Imperialist Attack!” Defense of Iraq no more means political support to the bloody Saddam Hussein regime than defense of protesters against a police assault means political agreement with them.

On some level, NEFAC and Open City agree that wars are inherent to the capitalist system in the age of imperialism. NEFAC’s “Aims and Principles” states that war is a manifestation of imperialism, and the Open City leaflet says, “Capitalist states like the U.S. exist to wage war.” So from these observations it should be elementary that to successfully oppose war it is necessary to shatter the war-driven system we live under today. Yet, despite their call for a “social revolution,” Open City offers no alternative to the strategy of the reformists whose “anti-war” coalitions are consciously designed to build a platform for Democratic Party politicians! Thus, its commendable position in siding with Iraq against U.S. imperialist aggression is undermined by its pushing the same old pressure politics.

So they say, “A large movement is necessary, including a wide range of viewpoints and methods, operating in a democratic and pluralistic fashion. As anarchists, we are prepared to work in a united front of anti-war forces.” But as American Trotskyist James Burnham stated in *War and the Workers* (1936):

“To suppose, therefore, that revolutionists can work out a common ‘program against war’ with non-revolutionists is a fatal illusion. Any organization based upon such a program is not merely powerless to prevent war; in practice it acts

NEFAC Statement “Anarchists Against the War”: Pressure Politics in Militant Clothing



Boston, March 29: NEFAC anarchist slogan equates victims with their oppressors in face of imperialist onslaught. We Marxists called to defend Iraq against U.S. attack.

to promote war, both because it serves in its own way to uphold the system that breeds war, and because it diverts the attention of its members from the real fight against war. There is only *one* program against war: the program *for* revolution—the program of the revolutionary party of the workers.”

The Open City leaflet continues, “We need a movement that does not rely on or work with the Democratic Party.” But behind the “broad” antiwar coalitions is the false idea that to stop war requires consummating a political bloc with representatives of the capitalist class in whose interests imperialist war is waged. So while the leaflet aptly describes the role of the “peace” Democrats as to “divert the dissent of the anti-war movement to permissible, diffuse channels that won’t upset the status quo,” Open City’s left criticism of the Democrats is empty inasmuch as it finds no application in what it actually advocates *doing*—working in coalitions that presuppose the inviolability of capitalist class rule!

The attempt to distance the “large movement” from the Democratic Party is simply a cover for pressure politics. Pro-imperialist liberals would not join coalitions that did not cater to them. ANSWER, Not In Our Name and United for Peace and Justice court the Democrats and look to “unite” antiwar youth behind them. The coalitions as well

reached out in the spirit of “unity” to those who opposed this war because they felt it was not in the best interests of the U.S., that the U.S. should save its strength for “more important” wars, like against North Korea. And Open City accepts the rationale behind a pro-imperialist “peace” movement, terming it a “united front of anti-war forces.”

It was with pious declarations about the sanctity of a “united front” of anti-fascist forces “including a wide range of viewpoints and methods” that anarchists became ministers of the *bourgeois state* during the Spanish Civil War of the 1930s, their opposition to “all states” notwithstanding. Only months earlier in 1936, victorious anarchist-led workers militias in Catalonia were betrayed when the anarchists *renounced the consolidation of a workers state*, voluntarily leaving a severely crippled bourgeoisie in power. Thus the anarchists—in virtually the only country in the world where they ever had a mass proletarian following—along with all the other reformists, like the Stalinist Communist Party, prevented the insurgent working class from toppling the Republican government and taking state power. This betrayal led to Franco’s victory and decades of murderous reaction in Spain and robbed the proletariat throughout Europe of a powerful impetus in their own revolu-

tionary struggles. The Spanish Trotskyists fought for the mobilization of the proletariat *independent* of the class enemy, the starting point in the struggle for socialist revolution.

For a Revolutionary Vanguard Party!

What is necessary is not more “unity” with those who defend, and indeed thirst to run, the capitalist system. The first step toward revolutionary consciousness is to break ruthlessly from the supporters of the rule of capital. Revolutionary-minded youth and workers need to be won away from leftists who peddle an alliance with the class enemy. But to win them requires they be won to something—a revolutionary program and party. The anarchist infatuation with leaderless movements misses the essential point: there will *always* be leadership, and if it is not revolutionary it will be counterrevolutionary.

Nowhere has a spontaneous, atomized movement overturned an old social order. The ruling class is organized, and it has a state to protect its interests. It is conscious of its class aims. In order to smash capitalism, the workers must be equally organized and conscious of their class interests: the ending of capitalism and the establishment of socialism.

The leaflet contends, “Unions are relatively weak and top-heavy with bureaucrats. But a real class struggle program would shake up the capitalists and their state.” Too true. But who is to fight for this “class struggle program”? Someone must or else the pro-Democratic Party union misleadership will remain at their posts. Revolutionaries must intervene into the unions to fight against the illusions that workers have in the Democrats. Marxists seek to forge a class-struggle leadership of the unions that champions the cause of the oppressed and mobilizes the social power of the proletariat in struggle against the bosses and their system.

Fighting Imperialist War: Liberal Reformism or Class Struggle?

Open City proposes a two-stage program: for now pressure the capitalists, later revolution in the indefinite future. They say, “To limit their wars, we must put pressure on these states [like the U.S.]. To end their wars, we must end all states.” It is a common illusion that the “excesses” of capitalism can be curtailed by exerting enough pressure through appeals to the “good” conscience of the capitalists. But it is not a question of greed, lack of morals or other personal failures of a handful of capitalists.

The capitalist produces for profit by exploiting labor or is no longer in business. Imperialism is the stage of capitalism marked by competition among the advanced industrial nations for control of markets, raw materials and spheres of exploitation in pursuit of such profits. This control over and subjugation of other parts of the world is enforced militarily in the final analysis. Likewise, the competition to exploit and plunder the world leads sooner or later to wars between the imperialist ruling classes, as was demonstrated in two bloody world wars.

It should be clear to all that the broad antiwar coalitions that mobilized millions across the world in protest did *nothing* to stop or even “limit” the desires and the ability of the world’s bloodiest imperialist power to devastate Iraq. It is a good thing that millions took to the streets. But it is a crime that their just anger over the attack on Iraq was channeled into avenues safe for the bourgeoisie. The Spartacist

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Historia 16

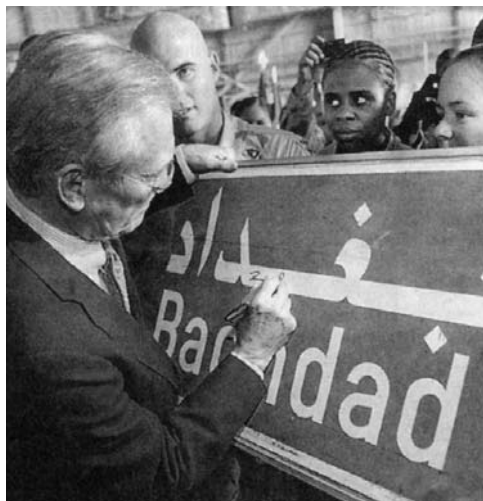


Barcelona, July 1936: Workers militias were victorious on battlefield. Shortly after, anarchist leaders (above) joined capitalist coalition government, sabotaging proletarian revolution.

(continued from page 1)

Not only did we not participate in these coalitions, but we are in principle opposed to building an antiwar movement with the liberal representatives of American capitalism and imperialism. To begin with, as we predicted, once the war started the Democratic Party lined up staunchly behind Bush in the name of “supporting our troops in Iraq.” The Senate unanimously endorsed Bush’s “firm leadership and decisive action in the conduct of military operations in Iraq.” A similar resolution was passed with an overwhelming bipartisan majority in the House of Representatives, with only a handful of Democrats voting against or abstaining. And even most of them declared their support to “our troops,” that is, the imperialist invasion force killing thousands of Iraqis and laying waste to their country.

For those of you who have first become involved in leftist politics in opposition to



Luke Frazza

that war, it's important to understand that the Democratic Party, including its liberal wing, has permitted in the past, is supporting in the present, and will commit in the future atrocities every bit as great, if not greater, than what Bush is now doing in Iraq. The U.S. has been waging a one-sided war against Iraq for 12 years. This is not new. Beginning under Bush Sr., the killing economic sanctions and periodic terror bombing were continued under his Democratic successor, Bill Clinton. In the eight years of the Clinton administration, an estimated one and a half million Iraqis died of starvation, malnutrition and disease as a result. A third of them were children. In 1996, Clinton's Secretary of State, Madeleine Albright, was interviewed by the TV journalist Lesley Stahl, on *60 Minutes*, who asked her, "More than 500,000 Iraqi children are already dead as a direct result of the UN sanctions. Do you think the price is worth paying?"

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Reuters

This was not the only such atrocity carried out by the Clinton administration. There was also the 1999 U.S./NATO air war against Serbia. This was carried out in the name of liberating—sound familiar?—the Albanians of Kosovo from the oppressive rule of Serbian nationalist strongman, Slobodan Milosevic. For more than two months, U.S. warplanes systematically demolished the economic infrastructure of this small Balkan country in southeastern Europe. Toxic chemicals were released into the air and waterways by the bombing of petrochemical plants and the Pentagon's use of shells made of depleted uranium, a radioactive waste product. Liberal Democrats did not merely support war against Serbia, they were the ones who campaigned for it. It was liberal intellectuals and activists and some so-called leftists, not right-wing Republicans, who were the main anti-Serb war hawks. For example, *In These Times*, a



Private Eve

Underlying the atrocities committed by Democratic presidents from the A-bombing of the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki by Harry Truman in the Second World War to the war against Serbia conducted by Clinton is a basic truth. All political parties which support the capitalist system, the Democrats in the U.S., the Social Democrats and Greens in West Europe, support war as a means of defending and advancing the interests of the financiers and industrialists whom they serve. They may oppose a particular war at a particular time, but they support imperialist militarism in general.

Since we oppose building an antiwar movement with the representatives of the capitalist class, does that mean that we only do our own thing? That we oppose working with any group that doesn't share our basic opposition to American imperialism? No, not at all. We have engaged and will engage in common actions, concrete actions against American imperialist militarism. We call these united-front actions with groups that are quite distant from our revolutionary

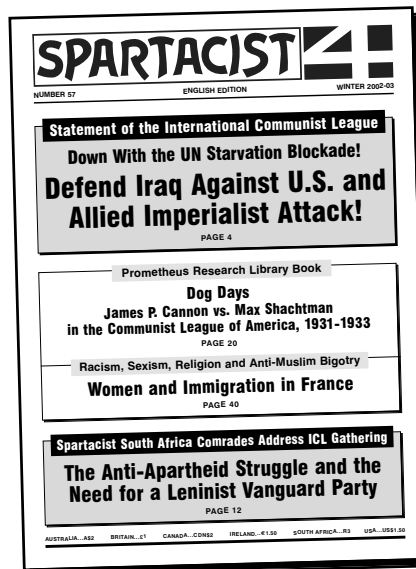


AP

When the strategists of American imperialism talk about future potential military competitors, they mean the other

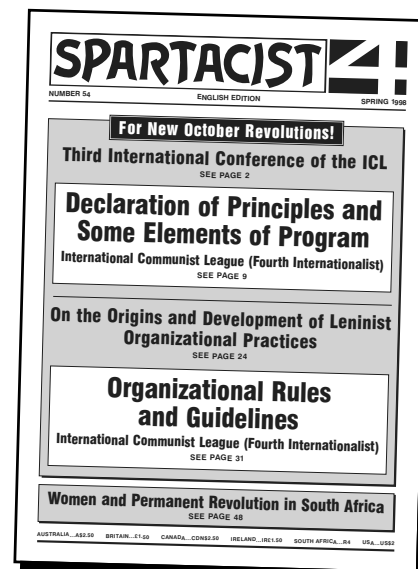
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U.S. Imperialism...

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major capitalist countries. There’s Japan. The Japanese economy has been in the doldrums for a decade or more, but it still is the second-largest economy in the world. In the last war between imperialist states, the U.S. fought Japan, mainly over which country would subjugate and exploit China. There’s Germany, the strongest economic state in Europe. The U.S. fought Germany in both the first and second world wars. And then there’s Russia. Capitalist counterrevolution has led to a catastrophic economic and social decline unprecedented in any advanced industrialized country. Nonetheless, Russia’s new capitalist rulers, who have their own imperialist ambitions, inherited from the Soviet Union a powerful nuclear arsenal and strong conventional armed forces. An alliance between Germany’s economic and technological resources and Russia’s military potential would create a formidable challenge to American global dominance.

How do the U.S. rulers expect to maintain their exceptional level of military superiority? The answer can be found in a Pentagon document which came out early last year called “The Nuclear Posture Review.” “U.S. military forces themselves, including nuclear forces, will now be used to dissuade adversaries from undertaking military programs and operations that could threaten U.S. interests.” The official military doctrine of American imperialism now is pre-emptive war, including the use of nuclear weapons against any country deemed a potential



Kosovo city of Pec devastated in 1999 U.S./NATO war of terror against Serbia.

what we Trotskyists call a bureaucratically deformed workers state; the others today are China, Vietnam and Cuba. These are countries in which the capitalist system has been overthrown and replaced by a collectivized economy. But the governing apparatuses of these countries are in the hands of a nationalistic, parasitic bureaucracy which opposes and betrays the prospect for world socialist revolution and in so doing undermines and weakens the workers states that they misrule.

The head of North Korea, Kim Jong Il, is officially known as the “Dear Leader.” He inherited the job, literally, from his father, Kim Il Sung, who is known as the

what bizarre nature of its ruling Stalinist dynasty. They view North Korea as a defiant Communist country, one which, moreover, has proclaimed the right to develop nuclear weapons to defend itself. And now says it has a few of these. Good. We hope it does.

The American ruling class has a special hatred for North Korea because its very existence is a reminder of the humiliating military setback, if not the outright defeat, the U.S. suffered in the Korean War of 1950-53. U.S. forces invaded Korea—incidentally under a UN mandate—and they were on the verge of victory. The American commander, Douglas MacArthur, proclaimed that the troops would be “home by Christmas.” But then the Chinese People’s Liberation Army intervened militarily in force and drove the Americans back.

This was the biggest battlefield defeat the U.S. had suffered up till then in the modern era. The war dragged on for another two and a half years. In strictly military/political terms, the war ended in a stalemate. The armistice agreement restored the division of Korea which had existed before the war began. North Korea remained a deformed workers state allied with China and the Soviet Union. South Korea remained a capitalist state with a U.S. puppet government. But in the U.S., at the time and later, the Korean War was widely seen as a defeat. The greatest military power on earth had been fought to a standstill by Red China and North Korea. That wasn’t supposed to happen.

Malcolm X later commented on the Korean War with his usual perceptive wit. He said something like, “If you get into the ring with Joe Louis (who was the great heavyweight boxing champion of the 1930s and ’40s) and the fight ends in a draw, man you’ve won!” Well, the American ruling class thought the Communists had won the Korean War because they hadn’t lost it. Now, with the deterrent force of the Soviet Union no longer in play behind North Korea, they’re looking for a rematch.

One of the reasons the U.S. invaded Iraq was precisely because it did *not* have nuclear weapons or other so-called weapons of mass destruction. As the North Korean foreign ministry quite rightly

stated, “The Iraqi war shows that to allow disarming through inspection does not help avert war but rather sparks it.”

There is another very different, but potentially immensely powerful weapon for the defense of North Korea against American imperialism. And that is the proletariat of South Korea, which has one of the strongest, most combative and most politically advanced working classes in the world. The U.S. military threat against North Korea takes place against the background of a rising level of popular opposition to American imperialism in South Korea. A new generation of workers and leftist intellectuals has come to the fore whose political consciousness was shaped by their own struggles against the U.S.-backed right-wing military regimes which ruled that country until the late 1980s.

For example, in 1980 there was a popular uprising in the major South Korean city of Kwangju. Hundreds of thousands of working people took to the streets, they drove out the army units and they took control of the city for five days. In order to dispatch special forces, who were stationed on the border of North Korea, to suppress the uprising, the military regime in Seoul had to first get the approval of the Americans, because the Americans exercised very tight control over the Korean armed forces. The decision to approve the sending of South Korean troops into Kwangju, where they killed some 2,000 people, was made at the very highest levels of the U.S. government under the Democratic administration of Jimmy Carter, well known for his human rights rhetoric. Probably most of you have not heard of the Kwangju uprising and massacre. But everyone in South Korea knows about it.

U.S. Troops Out of Korea!

The U.S. buildup to the invasion of Iraq coincided with mass protests in South Korea against the U.S. military presence there. These were touched off last summer when American soldiers driving an armored personnel carrier killed two Korean schoolgirls in a training exercise. And then they escalated when a U.S. military court acquitted the soldiers involved. But this was not just a momentary upsurge of popular outrage. Opinion polls show that a substantial majority of South Koreans, especially in the younger generation, now want to get rid of the American military presence so they can reunite with the North. Many of the protesters openly state that the North has the right to defend itself, including with the development of nuclear weapons, against the U.S. So if the U.S. bombs nuclear facilities in North Korea as they are threatening to do, this could well detonate a social explosion in South Korea.

Now at the same time, we recognize that the increasing popular opposition to the U.S. military presence and the pro-North sentiment represents to a large extent nationalist attitudes. Nationalist attitudes can be exploited and to a degree have been exploited by the big South Korean capitalists, the so-called *chaebol*. Hyundai et al. have their own strategy for reunifying Korea on a capitalist basis. They call it the “Sunshine Policy.” It aims to economically subvert North Korea, corrupt its officials and eventually buy out the Stalinist ruling clique in



Chinese war heroes hailed by North Koreans celebrating 1953 cease-fire ending Korean War. Chinese forces were critical in defeating U.S. attempt to overrun North Korean deformed workers state.

threat to the interests of Wall Street banks and the Fortune 500 corporations.

The Iraq war above all was a demonstration of American military power and the will to use it. The bombs and cruise missiles raining down on Baghdad were intended as a message written in Iraqi blood to the ruling circles in Paris and Berlin, Moscow and Tokyo. The real meaning of this war was clearly and succinctly stated by a student protester in South Korea: “The whole war is for strengthening U.S. power over the world.”

Now, it’s very significant that this young Korean leftist intellectual grasped that this was not just a war for Iraqi oil. Early this year, a senior White House official gave an interview with the *Far Eastern Economic Review* in which he summed up the administration’s policy toward North Korea. “First is regime change.” Sound familiar? “It need not be military but it could lead to that.” Sound familiar?

Defend North Korea!

While Bush linked North Korea with Saddam Hussein’s Iraq (and also Iran) as part of a so-called axis of evil, the two are fundamentally different kinds of states. Iraq is a capitalist state—a neocolonial country which was dependent upon Western imperialism. As we pointed out, the U.S. supported and armed Saddam Hussein and his political godfathers in the past. North Korea is, in conventional political parlance, a Communist country,

ICL Declaration of Principles and Some Elements of Program

The Declaration of Principles of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist) is a concrete expression of our purpose: to build national sections of a democratic-centralist international which can lead the struggle for worldwide socialist revolution. This important document, which was adopted at the Third International Conference of the ICL in early 1998, was published in the four language editions of *Spartacist* and additionally in nine other languages.

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9. Perjuangan: Perjuangan dan Perjuangan Internasional
10. Perjuangan: Perjuangan dan Perjuangan Internasional

Pyongyang. We oppose the “Sunshine Policy” and we counterpose to it the revolutionary reunification of Korea, that is, through proletarian socialist revolution in South Korea and political revolution in the North.

The future of Korea, like its past, will not be determined solely by developments in that East Asian peninsula. Across the northern border of Korea is China, by far the largest and most powerful of the remaining states in which capitalism has been overthrown. Having succeeded in their decades-long goal of destroying the Soviet Union, the American imperialists view the continued existence of the People’s Republic of China as a very large piece of unfinished business. Their goal: to reverse the 1949 Chinese Revolution in order to subjugate and exploit China, to turn China into a gigantic sweatshop. Their means: to combine increased military pressure from without with increasing capitalist penetration internally facilitated by the so-called market reforms of the venal Beijing Stalinist bureaucracy. Now, unlike North Korea, China has a small but effective nuclear arsenal which affords it a certain degree of protection against an immediate American military attack. So it’s more likely that the decisive battles determining the fate of China will be fought internally, between the forces of capitalist counterrevolution in and around the bureaucracy on the one side and the workers and rural toilers on the other.

Key to a victory to our side is the building of a Leninist-Trotskyist party to lead what we call a proletarian political revolution, that is, the ouster of the Beijing Stalinist bureaucracy and its replacement by a government representing the genu-

commander MacArthur wanted to go nuclear. Now MacArthur was a right-wing megalomaniac. But the supposedly more rational and moderate American leaders, like the liberal Democratic president Harry Truman, also considered using nuclear weapons. Truman secretly had the components to assemble atomic bombs placed on an aircraft carrier stationed off the Korean coast.

The American ruling class considered using nuclear weapons against China and North Korea and they planned how to use them. But in the end they didn’t actually use them, mainly for fear that this would lead to an all-out war with the Soviet Union, which had its own nuclear arsenal. Likewise, a decade later the deterrent force of the Soviet Union was a major factor which prevented the U.S. from reducing North Vietnam to irradiated rubble, although they bombed the hell out of it as they had earlier done to North Korea. At the same time, the common hostility toward the Soviet Union tempered the economic conflicts of interest between the major capitalist states, those states which in the first part of the 20th century had fought two wars against one another.

In the late 1940s and early ’50s, Britain, France, West Germany, Japan formed military alliances with and led by the U.S. against the Soviet Union and its allies. But since the demise of the Soviet Union, the economic conflicts of interest between the capitalists of these states have necessarily and increasingly come to the fore. Thus the period preceding the U.S. invasion of Iraq saw escalating trade disputes between the U.S. on the one side and the European Union led by Germany and France on the other. Capitalists in Europe and some other coun-



Paris, March 5: Foreign ministers Ivanov of Russia, de Villepin of France and Fischer of Germany announcing intent to block UN resolution authorizing war. Today they clamor for share of spoils.

repatriation of profits.

One of the casualties of the Iraq war is the ideology of “globalization,” especially in its left-wing version. This is or was the notion that big, so-called multinational or transnational corporations now operate above the nation-state system, that Citibank and General Motors are no longer really American companies dependent upon American state power to defend and further their interests. Likewise, the Deutschebank and Siemens are seen as no longer really tied to the German state. According to the left-wing theorists of globalization, nation-states are no longer the main actors shaping the world economy. Their role has been supposedly replaced by international economic and financial institutions like the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank, the World Trade Organization. Yeah, right. How many cruise mis-

and Russian companies signed contracts with the Saddam Hussein regime to exploit major oil fields in Iraq. Guess what’s going to happen to those contracts under the American occupation? They’re going to be ripped up and the fields turned over to American companies. Likewise, Bush is telling the French and the Russians: forget about getting back the money you lent to the Baghdad regime over the years—you ain’t getting it back.

So the Iraq war demonstrates that economic conflicts between the imperialist states are ultimately resolved at the military level. Shortly before the bombs started falling on Baghdad, the French ambassador to Washington commented that reading the newspapers on the two sides of the Atlantic, one would think the impending war was between the U.S. and France. But in reality, the diplomatic salvos that were exchanged over the Atlantic in the run-up to the U.S. invasion of Iraq do point to future wars between the imperialist powers and rival blocs, wars which could plunge all of humanity into a nuclear holocaust. Welcome to the post-Soviet world.

The Russian Question

But to understand the post-Soviet world, one first has to understand the Soviet Union: the contradictory nature of that state; its conflict with capitalist imperialism, centrally American imperialism; the factors that led to its destruction in 1991-92. The Soviet Union was born in October 1917 amid the blood and gore of the first interimperialist world war. After three years of military slaughter, Russian workers, peasants and soldiers, the latter mainly peasant youth, rose up and overthrew the tsarist autocracy, which had ruled the country for centuries. Six months later, the Bolshevik Party under Lenin and Trotsky led a workers revolution against the weak capitalist Provisional Government, a coalition between a handful of bourgeois liberals and the social democrats, the Mensheviks, who were the Russian analogue at the time of the ISO.

For the first time in history, the working class took political power on the basis of its own institutions, a government of workers and peasants soviets (soviet simply being the Russian term for council). For the first time, the capitalists and landowners were expropriated and the economic resources of society were

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Moscow, August 1991: Boris Yeltsin waves Russian flag on barricades of capitalist counterrevolution. Right: Moscow street market. Capitalist restoration has devastated lives in former USSR.



ine interests of the workers and toilers. Such a government would expropriate the new capitalist enterprises, foreign and domestic. It would reintroduce centralized planning and management and would appeal with enormous political and moral authority to the workers and oppressed masses throughout East Asia, especially and including the proletariat of Japan, which is the industrial powerhouse of the region.

Imperialist Rivalries Sharpen

All of the major events and developments in the world today—the U.S. invasion and occupation of Iraq, the U.S. military threats against North Korea, the looming crisis in China, the sharp division over the Iraq war between the U.S. and Britain on the one side and France, Germany and Russia on the other—are decisively conditioned by the destruction of the Soviet Union. The USSR emerged from the Second World War in 1945, having defeated Nazi Germany, as a military and industrial power second only to the United States. And during the next four and a half decades, the era of the Cold War, the Soviet Union acted as a partial counterweight to American military and political global dominance.

Let’s look again at the Korean War in that regard. Since the U.S. could not defeat the Chinese and North Korean forces on the ground, the American

tries, such as Japan, South Korea, Brazil, were especially incensed that Bush, to protect the beleaguered American steel industry, imposed sharply higher tariffs on U.S. steel imports, a flagrant violation of existing trade agreements.

Business Week, which is one of the more intelligent journals of American capitalism, warned, “A long heavy-handed U.S. military occupation of Iraq dominated by American companies and a go-it-alone foreign policy could further inflame anti-Americanism abroad and reshape the U.S. and global economy in unforeseen and unwanted ways.” A subsequent issue noted, “U.S. companies could face boycotts and other roadblocks in global markets.” *Business Week* points out that not only European but also Japanese and even Canadian companies are infuriated that the contracts that the U.S. has already granted for the “reconstruction of Iraq” have frozen them out.

Germany and France cannot now challenge the U.S. at the military level in the Near East or elsewhere in the so-called Third World. But they can retaliate against U.S. economic interests in Europe. That they can do. They can increase tariffs and other restrictions on imports from the U.S. They can exclude American companies from lucrative government contracts. They can discriminate against American corporate investment in Europe through higher taxes or restrictions on the

siles does the IMF have?

The basic point is that property rights are meaningless unless they can be enforced by state power, the core of which is, in the words of Friedrich Engels, armed bodies of men. If you don’t pay your rent or you don’t meet your mortgage payments, it is not the landlord or the bank officers but the police who will come and throw you and your family out of your home. The same principle operates at the international level, except that there you have a multiplicity of competing and conflicting state powers. French

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U.S. Imperialism...

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reorganized and directed in the interests of the workers and other toilers.

The Bolshevik Revolution had an enormously liberating effect on all aspects of social and cultural life. Contrary to popular opinion, the first country to outlaw discrimination against homosexuals was not San Francisco—it was Soviet Russia. Russian modernist artists like Wassily Kandinski who had lived and worked in West Europe returned to Soviet Russia to participate in what they considered the building of a radically new and better society. The Bolshevik Revolution was made *in* Russia but was not made only *for* Russia. Not only the Bolshevik leaders but the mass of Russian workers saw October 1917 as the beginning of a world socialist revolution. And in fact the Bolshevik Revolution *did* inspire revolutionary movements and the formation of new communist parties around the world.

But in no other country was capitalism overthrown. A major reason is that in no other country was there a pre-existing revolutionary vanguard party—such as the Bolshevik Party, which Lenin had built over the years in tsarist Russia—which commanded authority among decisive sections of the working class. Soviet Russia emerged in the early 1920s economically and socially devastated by seven years of war and civil war, internationally isolated and surrounded by hostile and more powerful capitalist states. A seemingly unbridgeable gulf opened up between the liberating goals of the revolution and the grim realities of Soviet Russian life. Under these conditions, there was a tendency toward demoralization and depoliticalization among the working class. And there was a parallel tendency among the administrators and officials of the government and the ruling Communist Party, an erosion of revolutionary commitment, a loss of belief in the prospect of world socialist revolution, an increasing concern to maintain and advance one's own social position and relative material well-being.

These tendencies culminated in 1924 in what Trotsky later called a bureaucratic political counterrevolution, which was subsequently represented by and consolidated under the murderous regime of Joseph Stalin. In order to better explain Stalin's Russia in a way that could be understood by workers in the West, Trotsky compared it to a gigantic, highly bureaucratized trade union with a sellout leadership. All workers would and should defend such a union in conflicts with the capitalists and their state. At the same time, class-conscious workers should seek to oust that bureaucracy and replace it with a leadership genuinely representing their interests.

In the late 1930s, Trotsky described the contradictory nature of the Soviet Union as a bureaucratically degenerated workers state, and he projected two basic and opposite ways in which that contradiction would be resolved.

"State ownership of the means of production, a necessary prerequisite to socialist development, opened up the possibility of rapid growth of the productive forces. But the apparatus of the workers' state underwent a complete degeneration at the same time: It was transformed from a weapon of the working class into a weapon of bureaucratic violence against the working class....

"The political prognosis has an alternative character: either the bureaucracy, becoming ever more the organ of the world bourgeoisie in the workers' state, will overthrow the new forms of property and plunge the country back into capitalism; or the working class will crush the bureaucracy and open the way to socialism."

Today, we know what happened. Eventually, it was capitalist counterrevolution which came to pass. However, the USSR survived as a bureaucratically degenerated workers state for a far longer time period than Trotsky, who was assassinated by a Stalinist agent in 1940, had projected. And in doing so, the Soviet Union radically altered the course of world history, from its victory over Nazi Germany in the Second World War to

the decades-long Cold War with American imperialism. The final phase of that global conflict was known as Cold War II. By the late 1970s, the American ruling class had partially recovered from its defeat in Vietnam and launched a new offensive against the USSR and its allies, increasing military, economic and political pressure.

Afghanistan and Cold War II

One of the main battlefields of Cold War II, in the literal military sense of the term, was Afghanistan. In 1978, a group of left-wing, modernizing nationalists with close ties to Moscow—these were mainly military officers and urban intellectuals, like teachers—took power in Afghanistan, which is one of the most wretchedly backward countries on earth. They tried to introduce some modest democratic and progressive social reforms, especially with regard to the hideous oppression

example, that they were using chemical weapons against peaceful Afghan villagers. One could of course expect that from Reagan and the capitalist class. But for those of you who are not familiar, almost every left group in this country echoed and supported the imperialist line on Afghanistan. The Maoist, Stalinist groups like the RCP and Progressive Labor denounced the Soviet Union as imperialist or social-imperialist, whatever that means. The ISO enthusiastically and predictably supported the CIA's *mujahedin* against the Soviet forces. One of the small anarchist groups back then retailed the lie of the Reagan White House that Soviet warplanes were dropping poisonous chemicals on the Afghan countryside. I'm not making this up.

More generally, not only liberals but the overwhelming majority of self-described leftists in this country supported and cheered on every anti-Communist

that happened, Gorbachev unilaterally and unconditionally surrendered on all of the fronts of the Cold War. He pulled Soviet troops out of Afghanistan, thereby allowing the CIA's Islamic cutthroats, the forerunners of the Taliban, to come to power. He sold out the German Democratic Republic to the Deutschebank and the other heirs to Hitler's Third Reich. And he tacitly supported the U.S. in the 1991 Gulf War against Iraq, which up until then was significantly dependent on Soviet aid. On the eve of launching Operation Desert Slaughter against Iraq, Bush Sr. declared, "This was the beginning of a new world order, one henceforth completely dominated by the United States." Within the next two years, the Soviet Union itself had ceased to exist. The rape of Iraq today is but the latest grim consequence of that world historic defeat for the international working class and oppressed peoples.

Karl Marx once wrote, "Men make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly encountered, given and transmitted from the past." Now today, the second part of that statement is especially in evidence, because we operate in the aftermath of the destruction of the Soviet Union and the consequent strengthening of American imperialism. But the first part of Marx's statement is just as true and in a sense more important. Men make their own history, the past does not predetermine the future.

You see, we aim to make history and we can. As the American section of the International Communist League, we are trying to build in this country a revolutionary party, centrally based on the multiracial working class and the black, Latino and other oppressed sections of American society. The goal of such a workers party will be to destroy American imperialism from within, and in doing so open the road to world communism. Since the concept of communism has been subjected to such grievous, many-sided abuse and distortion, not the least by its professed adherents, I want to conclude by indicating our vision of a communist future as stated in our program:

"The victory of the proletariat on a world scale would place unimagined material abundance at the service of human needs, lay the basis for the elimination of classes and the eradication of social inequality based on sex and the very abolition of the social significance of race, nation and ethnicity. For the first time mankind will grasp the reins of history and control its own creation, society, resulting in an undreamed-of emancipation of human potential, and a monumental forward surge of civilization. Only then will it be possible to realize the free development of each individual as the condition for the free development of all."

For those of you who find this vision of the future attractive, you might consider joining us and then you, too, can make history. ■



October Revolution led by Lenin's Bolsheviks pointed way out of imperialist slaughter of World War I. Banner at December 1917 Russian workers demonstration includes call: "Long Live Soviet Power Which Has Paved the Way for Peace Among Nations."

of women under Islamic traditionalism. For example, they instituted elementary education for young girls in a country where 98 percent of women were illiterate. The U.S., under the Democratic Carter administration and continued by Reagan, moved to overthrow what it viewed as this new radical, Soviet-allied regime in Afghanistan. The CIA organized and armed Islamic fundamentalist tribesmen called the *mujahedin*. This is where the Taliban comes from. Osama bin Laden got his military training as a CIA operative fighting the Soviet forces and their left-nationalist allies in Afghanistan.

In order to prevent the U.S.-backed reactionaries from taking over Afghanistan, which shared a long border with the USSR, the Soviet regime of Leonid Brezhnev intervened militarily in force, and that was a very good thing. It was a rare, genuinely progressive action undertaken by the Kremlin leadership, which usually conciliated and sold out to American imperialism in the name of pursuing peaceful co-existence. Recognizing that, we raised at the time the slogans "Hail Red Army in Afghanistan!" and "Extend the social gains of the October Revolution to the Afghan peoples!"

The Carter administration latched onto the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan to declare Cold War II. Imperialist propaganda was now revved into high gear. The government immediately denounced Soviet expansionism and glorified the *mujahedin* cutthroats as "freedom fighters." Atrocities were fabricated concerning the Soviet forces in Afghanistan, for

NYC NOTICE

The New York Spartacist League's public office will not be open on Saturday, May 10. The SL will be debating the League for the Revolutionary Party on that day. For details, see page 2.

group and current in the Soviet sphere: Solidarność in Poland, right-wing nationalists and pro-Western dissidents elsewhere in East Europe and in the USSR. Uniquely, our tendency, the International Communist League, defended the Soviet Union on all the major fronts of Cold War II: Afghanistan, Poland, East Germany—officially the German Democratic Republic—and finally in the USSR itself. In the late 1980s, under the impact of the new imperialist offensive, the Soviet bureaucracy began to disintegrate and also to splinter along national lines. This happened under the new, liberal Stalinist regime of Mikhail Gorbachev.

A few years later, Gorbachev was ousted by one of his former top lieutenants, Boris Yeltsin, who then carried out the capitalist counterrevolution. But before

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Zimbabwe...

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A Dutch journalist of evident left-wing sympathies, Bram Posthumus, neatly cut through the cant and hypocrisy on both sides:

“Most ‘Rhodies’ are unreformed racists and I would not want to be in the company of any of them.

“On the other hand, the Zanu-PF [ruling Zimbabwe African National Union—Popular Front] top brass was cashing in on white largesse when it suited them. They did not question the economic models that they now claim were foisted upon them by the IMF and World Bank. Why should they? Capitalism has suited them fine ever since they came into power....

“The point here is, very basically, that neither of these two groups, white farmers and Zanu-PF chiefs, deserve a shred of sympathy, let alone support.”

—*New African*, February 2002

The land seizures in Zimbabwe have resonated strongly in South Africa, where white farmers still own 80 percent of the land even though Nelson Mandela’s bourgeois-nationalist African National Congress (ANC) replaced the white-supremacist government in 1994. Indeed, in the countryside the conditions of the black toilers have changed little from the days of apartheid. In some ways they’re even worse. Seeking to forestall land seizures, white farmers have evicted increasing numbers of blacks from land they have worked for generations. At the same time, South African president Thabo Mbeki has acted as the “soft cop” for British and American imperialism vis-à-vis Mugabe. While Mbeki and Nigerian president Olusegun Obasanjo are loath to publicly denounce Mugabe, as this would reveal them as pawns of the imperialists in Africa, they are currently embarked on a visit to the Zimbabwean capital of Harare to press Mugabe to resign.

An article by our comrades of Spartacist South Africa, titled “Hue and Cry over Land Seizures in Zimbabwe” (WV No. 741, 8 September 2000), explained:

“In countries such as Zimbabwe and South Africa, the burning democratic tasks such as agrarian revolution, equality for women and tribal/ethnic minorities and breaking the yoke of imperialist domination can only be realised through the Trotskyist programme of permanent revolution: the seizure of state power by the proletariat standing at the head of the peasantry and all the oppressed....

“Especially in a small country like Zimbabwe, a socialist revolution would inevitably and almost immediately pose the task of international extension—in the first instance to neighbouring South Africa, which supplies most of Zimbabwe’s petrol and electrical power, and beyond that to the imperialist centres.”

South Africa holds the key to the future of all of sub-Saharan Africa. The rule of the capitalist ANC means continued brutal exploitation and oppression of South Africa’s black, “coloured” (historically derived from the offspring of Boer settlers and the indigenous Khoi people and later Malay slaves) and Indian working masses by the white racist bourgeoisie and the enforcing of the imperialists’ plundering of the region. Under a workers government, South Africa’s industrial and mineral wealth, as part of an international planned economy, would be used to develop the vast resources of the region for the benefit of the former colonial slaves in a socialist federation of southern Africa.

Zimbabwean ISO in Bloc with White Farmers, Capitalists

The counterpart to the current hostility of Western, especially British, imperialism to the Mugabe regime is the imperialists’ support for the MDC. The MDC is an unholy alliance between black trade-union bureaucrats, represented by former ZCTU head Morgan Tsvangirai, and white capitalists and farmers. Currently, the regime is staging a sham trial of Tsvangirai, who during last year’s presidential elections was riding a wave of popular support as an MDC candidate. Tsvangirai and two others are accused of plotting to kill Mugabe. The regime’s star witness in this frame-up is a former secret



Reuters

Election rally of Movement for Democratic Change (left), headed by trade-union leader Morgan Tsvangirai (right). Zimbabwean ISO supported imperialist-backed party of white landowners.



no credit

service agent who admits to being on Mugabe’s payroll.

For its part, the MDC’s main economic spokesman is Eddie Cross, former vice president of the Confederation of Zimbabwe Industries, who is an ardent champion of “free market” neoliberalism and a strong advocate of IMF/World Bank guardianship over the Zimbabwean economy. The MDC receives financing from the likes of the London-based Westminster Foundation for Democracy, which in turn is partly funded by the British government.

A group that occupied the left fringe of the MDC until recently is the Zimbabwean International Socialist Organisation (ISO), part of the British-centered international tendency founded and led for many decades by the late Tony Cliff. While claiming (at times) to uphold the Leninist and Trotskyist tradition, the Cliffites are in fact left social democrats, i.e., a pro-capitalist, pro-imperialist tendency which falsely claims to represent the interests of the working class.

The social-democratic character of the Cliffite tendency was clearly exposed in Zimbabwe, where they were in a political bloc with the colonial-derived and imperialist-backed white propertied classes against the Mugabe regime. In 2000, Munyaradzi Gwisai, then a senior leader of the Zimbabwean ISO, ran for and was elected to parliament as a representative of the MDC for the Highland district of Harare. At the time, Gwisai & Co. portrayed the MDC as some kind of workers party which could be pressured into carrying out radical socialist policies. An ISO “Action Programme” for the first MDC congress proclaimed: “MDC is primarily a working people’s party: that is workers, the unemployed, peasants and students and it is they who must fund and lead the party” (*Socialist Worker* [Zimbabwe], December 1999). Although the mass of white farmers supported and some joined the MDC, the Cliffites ludicrously demanded that its parliamentary representatives “must vote in support of the taking of farms without paying compensation for the land” (*Socialist Worker* [Zimbabwe], August 2000).

By the time of last year’s presidential elections, it was no longer credible to deny that the MDC was a right-wing, pro-imperialist bourgeois party. Alex Callinicos, a central leader of the Cliffite tendency internationally, now lamented that Tsvangirai had fallen under the influence of evil advisers: “Despite his origins as a union leader, MDC leader Morgan Tsvangirai has, with the encouragement of both Western governments and local bosses, adopted a neo-liberal programme that amounts to handing the economy over to the IMF” (*Socialist Worker* [Britain], 19 January 2002). Nonetheless, the Zimbabwean ISO still **supported** the MDC leader in the election against Mugabe. Gwisai stated: “We will vote for Tsvangirai because it will mean more space for us to operate.... We want to strengthen the anti-capitalist elements in the MDC” (*Socialist Worker* [Britain], 9 March 2002).

Interestingly, Callinicos came from the white colonial stratum in Rhodesia/Zimbabwe before emigrating to England. There is, of course, nothing reprehensible in that. Many left-wing leaders (Engels, Lenin, the anarchist Peter Kropotkin) and militants came from socially privileged backgrounds. But they then sought to lead the struggles of the exploited and oppressed against the propertied classes into which they were born. However, Callinicos and his Zimbabwean colleagues were in a bloc with white landowners against a black bourgeois-nationalist regime which, for its own ignoble reasons, is expropriating them.

The April 2002 issue of *International Socialism*, the main Cliffite theoretical journal, has a major article, “Crisis in Zimbabwe,” by Leo Zeilig. Predictably, he directs almost all his fire at Mugabe with only the mildest criticism of the MDC, that it “holds none of the answers to the poverty and misery crippling Zimbabwe.” This is scarcely surprising for a party which represents the main body of (white) agrarian and industrial capitalists in Zimbabwe and their British imperialist godfathers.

Zeilig points to and implicitly criticizes the propaganda campaign in British ruling circles against Mugabe. But



AP

April 16: Women collect food at emergency distribution center. Over 60 percent of population of Zimbabwe faces starvation.

he then concludes in this regard: “There is not much to choose between the violence and repression of a dying regime, and the hypocrisy and colonial morality of [Britain’s] New Labour.” This self-styled revolutionary socialist here *equates* British imperialism with a bourgeois-nationalist government in an African neocolonial country. That is, he *equates* an imperialist state with a semicolonial country.

But in fact Zeilig, Callinicos and Gwisai do choose between British imperialism and the government of Zimbabwe. They choose the former. Indeed, in his article, Zeilig boasts of Gwisai’s parliamentary victory in 2000 as a representative of the MDC—a party openly financed by the British ruling class—writing: “The International Socialist Organisation (ISO) won an important seat in a working class area of Harare in the 2000 parliamentary elections as part of the MDC and, despite continued opposition from the party leadership, remains in the organisation.”

As is often the case, what the *International Socialism* article omits is just as telling politically as its content. Zeilig does not mention that all Western governments have cut off economic aid to Zimbabwe mainly to strengthen the hand of the MDC against Mugabe. Nor does he mention that the Blair government in Britain is campaigning for international economic sanctions against Zimbabwe. These omissions amount to tacit support or at least non-opposition to imperialist economic warfare against the impoverished southern African country.

From Ian Smith’s Rhodesia to Mugabe’s Zimbabwe

Having preserved and protected the white farmers for almost two decades, why did Mugabe then turn on them, thereby provoking the wrath of British and American imperialism? To answer that question, it is necessary to review the history of Southern Rhodesia/Zimbabwe from the last period of colonial rule through the present.

In the mid 1960s, Britain, with America’s backing, moved toward a standard neocolonial solution in Southern Rhodesia, i.e., the smooth transfer of governmental office to a pliant black regime. However, under the leadership of Ian Smith—who professed his support for the MDC last year—the white colonialist stratum, though only 4 percent of the population, rebelled against this policy and declared “unilateral independence” from Britain. “Independent” Rhodesia was supported economically by white-supremacist South Africa, the most powerful state in the region.

Seeking to overthrow white-colonialist rule, the black nationalist forces launched a rural-based guerrilla insurgency which convulsed the country during the 1970s. However, the Ian Smith regime, with South Africa’s backing, was able to hold at bay the black insurgency while resisting pressure from London and Washington to come to terms with the insurgency’s leaders. The black liberation struggle was also weakened by a murderously hostile tribalist division between Robert Mugabe’s ZANU, based on the majority Shona people, and Joshua Nkomo’s Zimbabwe African

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People’s Union based on the Ndebele.

Finally, in 1979 Thatcher’s Britain brokered a compromise—the Lancaster House agreement. Mugabe’s ZANU took over the government while the whites retained control of the economy. The Lancaster House agreement stipulated that for ten years the government could not take over white farmland without the consent of the owners, and then compensation had to be in “hard” (Western) currency. The property rights of the white colonialists were also written into Zimbabwe’s new constitution.

A recent book on the Zimbabwean economy by two British academics described the structure of ownership at the time of independence:

“Although they made up only 3.8 per cent of the population, at Independence the modern sector of the economy was almost entirely owned and managed by whites. For example, over 90 percent of marketed output came from white- (or foreign-owned) farms, which provided 35 per cent of formal-sector employment and over one-third of exports. The manufacturing and financial sectors were also almost exclusively a white preserve.”

—Carolyn Jenkins and John Knight, *The Economic Decline of Zimbabwe: Neither Growth Nor Equity* (2002)

In the decade after independence, little had changed in this respect. Academic studies in Britain indicated that the white propertied classes were economically better off after ten years of Mugabe’s rule than they had been in the last years of the Ian Smith regime.

While maintaining the wealth of the white propertied classes, the Mugabe regime also built up a privileged black elite via the state treasury. A large government bureaucracy was formed under ZANU-PF’s patronage. Outright corruption was systemic and massive while the government set up and financed numerous black-owned businesses. The Mugabe regime therefore consistently ran large government budget deficits even in fairly prosperous years. These deficits were initially financed by borrowing heavily from City of London and Wall Street banks at commercial rates of interest. Consequently, the burden of foreign debt doubled from a third of Zimbabwe’s gross domestic product (GDP) in 1986 to two-thirds of its GDP by 1994.

The counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union in 1991-92 led to the intensification of imperialist bloodsucking in Africa, and with it increased starvation and bloodshed. Specifically, the IMF and World Bank demanded payment on the money they had previously given to these African countries as a counterweight to Soviet influence during the Cold War. In order to roll over Zimbabwe’s foreign loans, the IMF/World Bank demanded the standard combination of fiscal austerity and “free market” liberalization: slashing expenditure for social programs; eliminating or cutting back the wide array of government subsidies; dismantling tariff protection for the country’s manufacturing industries like textiles, clothing and footwear.

The effects were predictably devastating for almost all sectors of the urban-based labor force. Employment in the textile industry fell by half, from 25,300 in 1990 to 12,400 in 1995. Also hit hard were the more privileged (“middle class”) sections of the black populace which had hitherto been the core support for the Mugabe regime—government functionaries, university students expecting upon graduation to get government or government-subsidized jobs. Some 25,000 civil service jobs were eliminated by 1995.

The stage was thus set for mass labor struggles for the first time since the black bourgeois-nationalist regime replaced white colonial rule a decade and a half before. A successful strike of public-sector employees in 1996 was followed by a general strike, with broad popular support, against increased taxation at the end of 1997. Immediately thereafter food riots led by working-class women erupted

in Harare. The ZCTU emerged as a potent oppositional force enjoying substantial and increasing popular authority, especially in the cities.

Mugabe responded by seeking to refurbish the regime’s nationalist credentials by declaring economic warfare on the white farmers. The ZANU-PF tops demagogically revived the rhetoric of the 1970s independence struggle, denouncing “white racism,” “Western imperialism” and “the heritage of colonialism.” The ZCTU bureaucracy under Morgan Tsvangirai played into the regime’s hands, espe-

can hardly expect the British ruling class to subsidize the expropriation of Zimbabwe’s white farmers with whom, in some cases, they have family as well as financial ties.

In an interview in December with the state-controlled newspaper *The Herald*, Mugabe admitted: “We took it for granted that the supplies would be adequate.” But, he continued, “it then proved that we were mistaken. Seed is short, fertilizer is short and tillage is inadequate.” According to UN sources, more than half the government’s tractor fleet—which was



Len Kumalo

Massive public workers’ protest in Johannesburg, 1999. South African proletariat is key to emancipation of sub-Saharan Africa from imperialist domination.

cially among the peasant masses, by forming a political bloc with the white farmers and other capitalists through the MDC.

The Land Seizures and Economic Collapse

The land seizures began in early 2000 with the invasion of white commercial farms by veterans of the independence struggle and unemployed urban youth. In several instances, this resulted in violent clashes with farm workers fearful of losing their jobs. Today, almost all the white farmland has been taken over and many of the former owners have left the country.

An apologist for the Mugabe regime, Gregory Elich, recently declared:

“Temporary economic dislocation is an unavoidable by-product of land reform, but genuine and lasting progress in Zimbabwe can only be achieved through land redistribution.

“In the West, the gross imbalance imposed by colonial theft is accepted as the natural order in Zimbabwe, with the indigenous population lacking any claim to the land. The government’s fast track land reform is intended to rectify historical injustices and to ensure a more equitable division of the land.”

—*New African*, October 2002

To begin with, the redivision of the land has been far from equitable. Of the first 600 white farms taken over three years ago, 200 of the largest were given gratis to officials of the ZANU-PF and to Mugabe’s cronies and relatives, including his wife. Inspecting her new 2,500-acre estate, Grace Mugabe announced to the assembled agricultural laborers: “I am taking over this farm” (*Guardian Weekly* [London], 21-27 November 2002). Only such members of the post-colonial black ruling elite have the money to operate the commercial farms at a profit. The mass of black peasants who now occupy much of this land in most cases don’t even have seeds to plant next year’s crop to feed their families.

Let us consider the arguments of Mugabe apologists like Gregory Elich at face value and assume the Zimbabwean government is genuinely committed to bettering the conditions of the black peasantry through an equitable division of land. Where would it get the financial resources to supply seeds, fertilizer and farm machinery to hundreds of impoverished black smallholders? The country is already massively in debt to British and American banks. And one

supposed to plow fields for poor farmers—is out of service because of shortages of spare parts and fuel.

During the 1990s, Zimbabwe produced an average annual grain (corn and wheat) crop of almost two million metric tons. Last year, the grain crop was less than half a million tons. (A contributing factor was lack of rainfall, which resulted in crop failures throughout southern Africa.) One doesn’t have to be an apologist for the white farmers or Western imperialists to recognize that millions of people in Zimbabwe now face conditions of famine. Indeed, it is a measure of the bankruptcy of Mugabe’s neocolonial regime that the transparently direct benefactors of British imperialism, the MDC, could have any level of popular support.

Agriculture in Modern World Capitalism

In his *Herald* interview, Mugabe triumphantly proclaimed: “For us, the most valuable resource and source of our wealth is our land.” But land as such is no longer the most valuable non-labor resource in agricultural production. Chemical fertilizer can enhance the natural fertility of the soil. Irrigation can supplement inadequate rainfall. In general, a modern commercial farm, producing for the world market, employs a level of technology comparable to that of an industrial enterprise producing for the world market. To effectively manage such a “factory in the field” requires years of

specialized education and training.

The development of modern agriculture was projected a century ago by Karl Kautsky, then considered the leading Marxist theorist, in a major work, *The Agrarian Question* (1900). Lenin regarded *The Agrarian Question* as a very important contribution to a Marxist understanding of the changing world capitalist economy. (Kautsky’s later rightist revisionism and hostility to the Bolshevik Revolution does not negate the value of his earlier works.)

Kautsky recognized that just as developments in science and technology had transformed small-scale handicraft manufacturing into large-scale mechanized industry, similar developments, albeit later and more slowly, were occurring in agriculture:

“Within a few years agriculture, traditionally the most conservative of occupations, nearly devoid of progress for almost an entire millennium and utterly devoid for several centuries, suddenly became one of the most revolutionary branches of modern industry, if not the most revolutionary. This transformation meant that agriculture progressed from being a *handicraft*, whose routines were passed down through the generations, to being a *science*, or rather a complex of sciences, undergoing a rapid expansion in both its empirical and theoretical knowledge. Any farmer not fully at home with such sciences, the mere ‘practician,’ will be helpless and baffled in the face of current innovations, yet cannot continue in the old ways.” [emphasis in original]

Kautsky pointed out that the economic size of a modern capitalist farm is to be measured not in acreage per se but rather in capital per acre, which is directly related to crop yield per acre:

“The law according to which the more intensive the cultivation of the farm, the smaller its area must be for a given volume of capital also works in the same direction. An intensively farmed small estate represents a larger enterprise than a large, extensively cultivated one.”

While Kautsky foresaw the direction of agricultural development, he misjudged its pace. Small-scale, traditional peasant farming remained economically viable even in West and Central Europe, not to speak of more backward regions of the world, for several decades. His description of a scientifically managed, mechanized farm was not so much an empirical picture of European agriculture at the time as an anticipation of the future.

Following the Second World War, the revolution in agricultural technology, the beginnings of which Kautsky had analyzed, radically altered both the structure of agricultural production and pattern of trade throughout the capitalist world. The United States came to dominate the world market for basic foodstuffs, including rice and soybeans, the traditional staples of East Asian civilization. At the same time, a number of major “Third World” countries (e.g., Mexico, South Korea, Indonesia) now export industrial products and cash crops and import foodstuffs, mainly from North America.

For a Socialist Federation of Southern Africa!

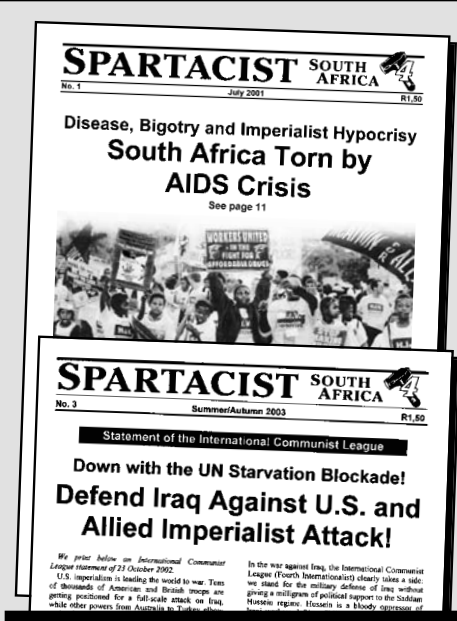
The desperate plight of Zimbabwean peasants who now occupy the former white-owned commercial farms was

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described in Kautsky’s classic work on the agrarian question:

“The independent peasant farm has become untenable: it can only continue by being associated with a large establishment. If a nearby large industrial enterprise employs peasants as wage-labourers, or specialised workers, they will become its slaves. Where no such establishment exists, the peasant needs a large agricultural enterprise to avoid sinking into extreme poverty.”

In all likelihood, most peasants on the former white farms will revert to the kind of subsistence agriculture which they practiced on the so-called “communal” lands. Since agricultural produce (especially tobacco) has accounted for half of Zimbabwe’s export earnings, a large-scale reversion to subsistence farming will lead to further massive contraction of the modern urban-based sectors, from factories to universities. What then is to be done? The answer does not lie purely within the boundaries of this poor southern African country.

However, across Zimbabwe’s southern border is South Africa, the one relatively industrialized country in sub-Saharan Africa. For example, South Africa generates more than half the electric power in the entire continent. The key force for social progress throughout the region is South Africa’s large, powerful and combative proletariat, predominantly black but with important coloured and Indian components. What is key is to mobilize that power in a struggle for socialist revolution.

But to realize that program, black workers must be broken from their current political allegiance to the ANC regime, the black front men for the white capitalists who still own the country’s factories, mines and farms. Spartacist South Africa, section of the International

Communist League, seeks to build a Bolshevik workers party that will lead the struggle against all forms of national and social oppression—the mass homelessness in the black townships, the hideous conditions of millions still trapped in the former “tribal reserves” (bantustans), the degradation of women through reactionary tribal traditions such as *lobola* (the bride price), government persecution of and vigilante attacks on immigrants from other African countries.

The land question is an important motor force for socialist revolution in South Africa. Some 55,000 white commercial farmers own 250 million acres of the most fertile land upon which work about a million black agricultural laborers and their families. At the same time, 1.2 million black households, numbering some seven million people, are crowded into 40 million acres in the former “tribal reserves.” Here are concentrated the poorest of South Africa’s poor. Largely women, children and the aged, they are mainly supported by remittances from husbands, brothers, sons and other relatives working in the country’s factories and mines. Insofar as the inhabitants of the former “reserves” earn their own money, it is mainly from seasonal, migrant labor on nearby white-owned farms. The large majority of South Africa’s rural toilers are thus agricultural proletarians rather than smallholding peasants. A workers revolution in South Africa would expropriate the highly mechanized and capital-intensive white-owned farms and transform them into modern, large-scale collective and state farms, thereby providing a decent living for South Africa’s rural toilers.

The agrarian question in Zimbabwe and elsewhere in southern Africa is sig-

nificantly different. While 350,000 agricultural laborers and their families worked on the white-owned commercial farms, their number was dwarfed by the six to seven million peasants engaged mainly in subsistence farming in the “communal” lands. As we have seen, the Mugabe regime was able to exploit and manipulate the land hunger of these dispossessed peasants against the MDC opposition (and also against the agricultural laborers).

A workers and peasants government in Zimbabwe, in the context of a socialist federation of southern Africa, would establish soviets (councils) of rural toilers, both poor peasants and agricultural laborers, which would democratically determine which land was organized as collective or state farms and which was kept by (or distributed to) individual peasant families. But a workers state in such a backward country will be immediately faced with the problem of how to acquire items like tractors and other farm machinery, which are essential to the collectivization of agriculture. The solution to this fundamentally lies outside the borders of Zimbabwe or, indeed, southern Africa as a whole. Only an expanding collectivized economy, based on the necessary extension of proletarian revolution to the advanced industrial countries and an internationally planned economy, could provide the necessary resources and technology to free rural workers from backbreaking labor while absorbing in industry or construction those former peasants and agricultural workers no longer needed to work the land.

It is not only the land question which unites the Zimbabwean and South African masses. The Ndebele people, for ex-

ample, reside on both sides of the border, which was arbitrarily drawn according to the interests of British colonialism. Furthermore, Zimbabweans make up a sizable proportion of migrant workers who slave in the mines and on the commercial farms of South Africa. These face constant persecution and deportations by the state and murderous attacks by anti-immigrant vigilantes, and are used as scapegoats by the ANC for the massive unemployment. At the same time, the migrant workers are a living link between the South African proletariat and the toiling masses throughout the region. Spartacist South Africa fights for the labor movement to take up the defense of migrant workers and all immigrants, demanding full citizenship rights for all immigrants.

This is part of our larger struggle for a socialist federation of southern Africa, in which there will be a place for all the myriad peoples of the region, including those whites who accept the rule of a government centrally based on the black proletariat and rural toilers. Only workers rule can break the yoke of imperialist domination. This program is necessarily linked to the perspective of proletarian revolution in the advanced capitalist countries of North America, West Europe and Japan. A workers revolution in Zimbabwe would spark revolutionary upheavals throughout the area, particularly in South Africa. And a proletarian victory in South Africa would inspire workers across the world, not least black workers in the U.S. To fully provide the resources and technology to liberate the peoples of Africa from famine and desperate poverty requires the international extension of the revolution.■

NEFAC...

(continued from page 4)

League and Spartacus Youth Clubs intervened to win antiwar protesters to the understanding that the working class must take up defense of Iraq against the U.S. and that only socialist revolution can end imperialist war. To that end, we mobilized our Revolutionary Internationalist Contingents in many of the nationwide demonstrations under the slogans: *All U.S. troops out of the Near East now! Down with U.S. imperialism! Defend Iraq! For class struggle against U.S. capitalist rulers!*

Since the mass antiwar rallies proved ineffectual, many youth took up direct action protest. But through this direct action—without a force of sufficient social weight animated by a revolutionary program—the same dead-end pressure politics are at work. Behind the more attractive militancy is the timeworn pacifist idea that if courage is shown in taking the blows of the oppressor, the “evildoers” will undergo a moral regeneration and work for the betterment of humanity. A ruling class that glories in mass slaughter in Iraq will not mind dishing out cop attacks or jail sentences to its perceived opponents at home. Moreover, as the anti-globalization protests of the late 1990s showed, setting oneself up as an easy target for state repression is hardly inspiring to the oppressed masses who face factory exploitation and police terror on a daily basis. It is the potential for *victory*, not victimization, that will rally the oppressed masses to a revolutionary movement.

The proponents of direct action think that if you “disrupt business as usual” through acts of civil disobedience you can “force the rulers to listen” and thereby create a real democracy. This falsely assumes that the ruling class, or a section of it, would “do the right thing” if only we could grab their attention and show the way. Some of those who engage in civil disobedience locate the problems of capitalism in the appetites of a few corporations, specially targeting them for “correction.” But it’s a

system that’s at work.

Open City also hopes that the military’s “business as usual” can be disrupted. Thus they state, “The rank-and-file of the military can do this [stop war], by refusing orders.” But the army is not a democracy! Rank-and-file soldiers who refuse to obey the officer corps can be court-martialed and shot. A perspective of individual martyrdom can never generate a mass revolutionary movement of the working class. The idea that war will end when individual soldiers, one by one, decide to refuse to fight is an old and discredited notion. It properly belongs to religious pacifists like the Quakers, who believe that what happens in society is the sum total of the moral decisions of each individual. But in capitalist class society, the ruling class has the power to compel the young workers to fight its wars or face the consequences. The working class must organize to take that power away from them through socialist revolution.

Leon Trotsky, co-leader of the only successful workers revolution in history, the Russian Revolution, and later commander of the Red Army, observed in his *History of the Russian Revolution* (1932):

“There is no doubt that the fate of every revolution at a certain point is decided by a break in the disposition of the army. Against a numerous, disciplined, well-armed and ably led military force, unarmed or almost unarmed masses of the people cannot possibly gain a victory. But no deep national crisis can fail to affect the army to some extent. Thus along with the conditions of a truly popular revolution there develops a possibility—not, of course, a guarantee—of victory.”

As in Russia in 1917, the military can be split only when bourgeois rule is in the grip of a deep social crisis and the proletariat shows itself to be a real contender for power, organized and conscious of its aims through the active intervention of a vanguard party.

For New October Revolutions!

But even when proletarian power is realized, anarchists deny the revolution the right to consolidate its gains in the form of working-class rule. Just as the capitalist state is the fundamental force for defending the capitalists and their

interests against the workers, so too is the workers state the central organization for defending the workers and their interests against counterrevolution. Anarchists renounce the state in general, which explains why they renounced defense of the Russian Revolution.

To justify their refusal to stand with the gains the working class has already won, the anarchists of NEFAC and Open City claim that capitalism was never overthrown, just restructured into “state capitalism.” Thus Open City writes, “With the collapse of the state capitalist Soviet Union, a struggle for dominance is also fought out behind the scenes with wealthy competitors [to the U.S.], the imperialist states of Europe and Japan.” But if the Soviet Union was just “state capitalist,” why did it make such a difference that it became supposedly plain capitalist and changed its name to Russia?

The destruction of the USSR has emboldened the U.S. bourgeoisie to pursue its unbridled appetites for world domination. We Trotskyists of the International Communist League fought until the end in defense of the deformed and degenerated workers states of the USSR and East Europe, and those leftists who capitulated to anti-Soviet bourgeois public opinion and cheered counterrevolution can only be seen as complicit in the horrors inflicted in consequence. And the question is not merely a historical one: the devastation that counterrevolution has wreaked on the former Soviet Union shows graphically why all those who support the international proletariat must defend the remaining deformed workers states—China, North Korea, Vietnam and Cuba.

At the same time that they recoil from defense of gains already won, anarchists shun the task of party building essential to new victories. Although radical youth by their own “direct actions” will never actually disrupt the system of profit and war, historically mass working-class movements, with the social power to effectively paralyze capitalist society, have done so. In Italy in the early 1920s, the radicalized proletariat engaged in nonstop strikes and general strikes for two years. But the workers lacked the res-

olute revolutionary leadership to take the offensive against the ruling class and fight for state power. While capitalist society was held hostage, it was never dealt its death blow. The crisis drove the desperate middle classes into the arms of reaction, and Mussolini’s Fascists came to power, welcomed by the bourgeoisie in the name of restoring order.

Capitalism cannot be reformed; it must be overthrown. We fight to build the party that can make the revolution possible. Even if today’s anarchists could somehow win mass support, they would have no more of a clue than the Spanish anarchists or Italian syndicalists of how to finally put an end to this hateful system. Youth serious about wanting to change the world would do well by studying the lessons of history and Marxist theory with the SYCs while intervening in social struggles alongside us.■

SYC Class Series

CHICAGO

Tuesday, 7 p.m.

May 20: **For Black Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!**

University of Chicago, Cobb Hall
5811 S. Ellis, Room 204

Information and readings: (312) 563-0441
or e-mail: spartacist@iname.com

LOS ANGELES

Saturday, 2 p.m.

May 17: **Labor, Latinos and the Fight for Immigrant Rights**

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

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

TORONTO

Saturday, 2 p.m.

May 17: **Revolutionary Marxism and the Struggle Against Religion**

Ontario Institute for Studies
in Education, Room 8201
252 Bloor St. West
(above St. George Station)

Information and readings: (416) 593-4138
or e-mail: spartcan@on.aibn.com

WORKERS VANGUARD

New Evidence on Phony “Confession”

Free Mumia Now!

Last month yet another new witness came forward to rip apart remaining shreds of the already demolished frame-up of political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal. One of the main legs of the prosecution’s frame-up of Mumia for the 1981 killing of police officer Daniel Faulkner was that Mumia supposedly confessed while in a hospital emergency room profusely bleeding from a gunshot wound to the stomach. That this “confession” was a police concoction was exposed long ago. Now, in an April 18 declaration, Kenneth Pate, step-brother of Priscilla Durham, the Jefferson Hospital security guard who testified at Jamal’s 1982 trial that he “confessed,” disclosed that she subsequently recanted to Pate during a telephone conversation some 18 months after the trial.

As Pate describes, Durham told him that when Mumia was brought to the hospital he was “all bloody and the police were interfering with his treatment, saying ‘let him die’.” Cops pressured her that as a security guard she “had to stick with them” as part of the “‘brotherhood’ of police” and to “say that she heard Mumia

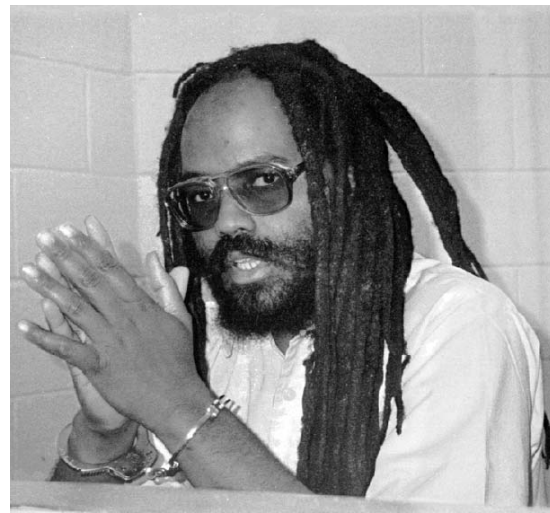
say that he killed the police officer, when they brought Mumia in on a stretcher.” She confided to her brother, “All I heard him say was: ‘Get off me, get off me, they’re trying to kill me’.”

At trial, Durham and police officer Garry Bell testified to hearing Jamal shout out, “I shot the mother f---r, and I hope the mother f---r dies.” Yet not a word was said about this “confession” until more than two months after the fact, after a “round table” meeting called by the District Attorney’s office to orchestrate the cops’ trial testimony. It was not in Bell’s police log that night nor in a statement he gave a week later. Gary Wakshul, the cop assigned to guard Jamal and who was with him the entire time between his arrest and medical treatment, gave an official report to homicide detectives an hour later that “during this time, the negro male made no comments.”

Over two years ago, Jamal’s attorneys submitted to court the sworn affidavit of Arnold Beverly that he, not Jamal, killed officer Faulkner. But to date, the courts have refused to even consider Beverly’s

confession. In December 2001, a federal court overturned Jamal’s death sentence while affirming the frame-up murder conviction, condemning Jamal to a life behind bars. The state appealed, seeking the reinstitution of the death sentence, while Jamal’s attorneys appealed, seeking to have the conviction overturned. Both appeals are on hold, pending a Pennsylvania Supreme Court ruling on another appeal by Jamal’s attorneys of a state court order barring Beverly’s testimony. Last month Pate’s declaration was submitted to both appeals courts.

Despite conclusive evidence of his innocence, April 24 marked Mumia’s 22nd consecutive birthday on Pennsylvania’s death row. His fight for freedom illustrates that for a defiant and outspoken opponent of this racist system like Jamal, there is no justice in the capitalist courts. As the introduction to the Partisan Defense Committee pamphlet *Mumia Abu-Jamal Is an Innocent Man!* explained:



WV Photo

“The long hidden and suppressed evidence of Mumia’s innocence is the truth. But in this capitalist system of injustice, the truth is insufficient to secure Jamal’s freedom. What we need is not just more truth but more social power. It is elementary that if labor’s power is to be brought to bear in a mighty blow on Jamal’s behalf, it must be mobilized independently of the very forces of the capitalist state that have worked for years to frame up and kill this innocent man.” *Mobilize now to free Mumia! Abolish the racist death penalty!*■

Zimbabwe: “Land Reform” and Imperialist Hypocrisy

Zimbabwe today is a country on the brink of famine and total economic collapse. Since last year, inflation has skyrocketed at a rate of 228 percent and unemployment stands at more than 60 percent. Tobacco production, which generates 31 percent of the country’s foreign currency, is projected to plummet by a third. And with no seed for corn, Zimbabwe’s primary food source, at least 60 percent of the population faces food shortages—this in a country which was once one of Africa’s largest exporters of foodstuffs.

When the government, pressed for funds, raised gas prices by at least 200 percent, the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) launched a three-day general strike in late April, to which the government responded in its usual repressive fashion, using troops to force closed shops to open. Dozens of ZCTU officials have been rounded up, including nearly the entire union leadership in the city of Bulawayo. The previous month, the British-supported “Movement for Democratic Change” (MDC) staged a two-day strike, which was followed by a government crackdown where hundreds of MDC supporters were arrested.

The current crisis in Zimbabwe is largely a product of the imperialists’ cut-off of economic aid for the country after President Robert Mugabe initiated his program of seizing land owned by white farmers, remnants of the former colonial occupation. The bourgeois press in Brit-



Rob Carter

Imperialists have raised hue and cry over Mugabe regime’s seizure of white-owned farms. Satisfying needs of impoverished black masses requires socialist revolution extending to South Africa and imperialist centers.

ain, Zimbabwe’s former colonial master, has accused the African leader of unleashing “mob savagery” against the white population. In the U.S., Republican Congressman Ed Royce, chairman of the House Committee on Africa, denounced Mugabe as “a power-crazed, aged dictator literally burning his country down.”

Yet for almost two decades Mugabe was regarded and occasionally praised by London and Washington as a “moderate” African leader because he perpetuated the economic dominance in both agriculture and industry of the former white colonialists. Western bourgeois politicians and the media scarcely noticed, much less

protested, when in the mid 1980s the Mugabe regime waged a war of extermination against the forces of a rival nationalist movement based on the minority Ndebele people. The Zimbabwean army massacred at the time an estimated 10,000 to 20,000 villagers in Matabeleland, homeland of the Ndebele. As long as Mugabe’s regime did not touch, indeed enhanced, the wealth of the white propertied classes, the men who run the City of London and Wall Street couldn’t care less what he did to Zimbabwe’s workers and peasants.

The backdrop to the current crisis was the economic austerity program carried out by the Mugabe regime in the early-mid 1990s at the dictate of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank. This provoked a series of mass strikes spearheaded by government employees like teachers and nurses. So in the name of “fast-track land reform,” Mugabe sought to divert popular hostility away from his own regime and toward the white farmers, the core of the former colonial ruling class in what was then called Southern Rhodesia, who still owned 70 percent of the country’s most fertile land. Almost all of the older white farmers had been officers or non-coms in the Rhodesian army, which fought the black liberation forces led by Mugabe and others. These white colonialists killed some **40,000 black Africans**, many of them unarmed and defenseless rural villagers.

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