



Ahmed Velazquez photos

Defend the Cuban Revolution!

On the heels of the colonial invasion and occupation of Iraq, the imperial regime in Washington has intensified its decades-long counterrevolutionary crusade against Cuba. Seizing on the trials and convictions in April of 78 Cuban pro-imperialist “dissidents,” Colin Powell raged that Cuba is an “aberration in the Western hemisphere” (*New York Times*, 29 April). The U.S. expelled 14 Cuban diplomats, canceled all educational travel to Cuba and is threatening to cut off family remittances to Cuba amounting to as much as \$1 billion a year. The bipartisan hue and cry over “repression” in Cuba has been echoed by petty-bourgeois liberal and “leftist” intellectuals who lend their “anti-imperialist” credentials to U.S. imperialism’s drive to overthrow the Cuban Revolution.

One of seven countries targeted for a potential nuclear first strike, Cuba is squarely in the cross hairs of the American rulers. With the aid of his brother Jeb, the governor of Florida, President Bush plays to the counterrevolutionary *gusanos* (worms)—the former pimps and torturers of the Batista dictatorship overthrown by Castro’s forces in 1959—who continue to wage a campaign of terrorism supported by their CIA masters. Bush’s administration is rife with *gusanos*, such as “presidential envoy to the Americas” Otto Reich. Other prominent members of the Bush team include John Negroponte and Elliot Abrams, who in the 1980s directed the CIA-backed contra terrorists in Nicaragua and the death squad regime in El Salvador.

Ever since the government of Fidel Castro expropriated the capitalist class in Cuba in 1960-61, establishing a bureaucratically deformed workers state, the U.S. ruling class has worked relentlessly to undermine the Cuban Revolution and re-establish the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie—from the 1961 Playa Girón (Bay of Pigs) invasion to repeated attempts to assassinate Castro; from funding *gusano* terrorists in Miami to the ongoing eco-

Washington’s “Dissidents”—Trojan Horse for Counterrevolution

May Day celebration in Havana’s Plaza de la Revolución. Banner calls for freeing the Miami Five, imprisoned in U.S. for “crime” of monitoring activities of counterrevolutionary Cuban exiles.

nomic embargo. For more than three decades, the biggest obstacle to Washington’s drive for capitalist restoration in Cuba was the existence of the Soviet Union, which supported Cuba with some \$4 billion a year in aid and provided a crucial military shield against imperialism. In the wake of the destruction of the Soviet degenerated workers state in 1991-92, the imperialist rulers saw their big chance to bury the Cuban Revolution once and for all.

The collapse of the USSR also enabled the American bourgeoisie to pursue different means of promoting counterrevolution in Cuba, combining military provocations and economic strangulation with policies aimed at strengthening pro-capitalist forces within Cuba. President Clinton twice tightened the embargo in the mid 1990s in an attempt to squeeze Cuba into submission. However, many U.S. corporations that seek to compete with capitalists from West Europe and Canada in exploiting Cuba have long pressured the government to ease restrictions and loosen the 44-year-long

economic embargo.

Representative of the strategy of “constructive engagement” was last year’s visit to Havana by former U.S. president Jimmy Carter. Carter’s visit was timed to coincide with the Varela petition campaign, whose supporters form the bulk of those recently imprisoned by the Cuban government. In addition to calling for freedom of expression and association, the Varela petition also demands “free elections and the right to private enterprise”—demands that amount to a call for “democratic” counterrevolution, the “electoral” rise to power of capitalist-restorationist forces financed by American imperialist largesse, which would be accompanied by a bloodbath of workers and Communists. Yet Carter was welcomed by Castro and offered a platform on Cuban TV and radio to spew his imperialist propaganda.

The Varela project, named after a 19th-century Cuban priest, was launched around the time of the 1998 visit by Pope John Paul II to Cuba—again with Castro’s blessing. It is led by the head of the “Chris-

tian Liberation Movement,” Oswaldo Payá, and supported and funded by the U.S. State Department, the National Endowment for Democracy, and the Catholic church. The U.S. imperialists see Varela as a Cuban version of counterrevolutionary Polish Solidarność, as the *Washington Post* (13 January) made clear in a feature on Payá headlined “Solidarity, Cuban-Style.”

While some of the recently jailed “dissidents” are described as “independent journalists,” “independent economists” or “independent librarians,” most, if not all were apparently working with James Cason, who runs the U.S. Interests Section in Havana as an open rallying center for counterrevolution. Cason’s first act upon arrival in Cuba last year was to hand out short-wave radios tuned to the CIA’s Radio Martí. Since then he has been busy hosting “dissidents” at his home, funneling money to them and publishing the work of “independent journalists.”

The round-ups in Cuba coincided with the terrorist hijackings of two Cuban airliners and a passenger boat (on top of four other hijackings in the preceding six months), at least implicitly encouraged by Washington. Indeed, one of the hijacked planes was impounded by the American government as payment for a lawsuit by the terrorist “Brothers to the Rescue” against the Cuban government, while a U.S. judge ordered that a number of the hijackers be released on bail. Imagine what the U.S. government would do if these hijackers were from any other country!

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“This Country Is Tyrannical”

Partisan Defense Committee secretary Kevin Gilroy received the following letter from Janine Phillips Africa, one of the nine MOVE members who were framed up and sent to prison for life, one of whom has since died, after the massive cop assault on the Philadelphia MOVE commune on 8 August 1978.

6 April 2003

On the Move Kevin

I got your news letter and stipend. Thank you.

We're following the attack on Iraq and it's *shameless*. I don't know anything about Saddam Hussein because I know how corrupt govt. is and he probably is guilty of atrocities against his citizens but so is the U.S. I, my family are examples of this country's brutality.

We know the strike against Iraq has nothing to do with weapons of mass destruction or the liberation of the Iraq people. It's *political*, the U.S. wants the oil and control of the Middle East. They are no different than the other warmongers thru-out history that plundered other countries to gain power.

The attack on Iraq reminds us so much of this country's attack of MOVE. They couldn't control us, make us stop confronting their corrupt officials and policies so they made up the lie that our house was a health code violation and demanded to inspect our house. They claim the attack on 8/8/78 was because

we refused to leave the house. They said we had a bomb in our basement, like they said Iraq has weapons of mass destruction. But if they really felt that way why would they attack? If we had a bomb attacking us would have been deadly. Just like bombing Iraq would be foolish if they really felt they had such dangerous weapons.

The U.S. wanted to get rid of MOVE so they prefabricated a platform to attack, just like they have done with Iraq. And *now* the cause has gone from weapons of mass destruction to liberating the Iraqis. When has bombing and shooting down people been equated with liberating them. It must be under the same definition of flooding, gassing, shooting at our children to save them. This govt. uses the same tactic, the same outline in every situation *they* cause. But just like their attack on MOVE has back-fired in their face, this attack on Iraq will also.

It's just a shame how this govt. has duped people. The people who support the attack on Iraq are only feeling this way because they *believe* all the lies this govt. is feeding them. Just like people allowed the govt. to attack MOVE, put us in prison for 30-100 yrs., murder our family because they believed all the lies this govt. fed them thru the media about MOVE.

If people knew the truth about the situation in Iraq and the *real* motives of this country, they wouldn't support this mer-

ciless murdering of innocent people. Just like if people knew the truth about our situation, they would be demanding the release of the MOVE 9.

This is why *John Africa* fights this system so hard because it's not the cops, armies, navies, MOVE is against, it's the *mentality* that is dangerous. The poison this system is feeding folks to turn them into their legal henchman. That's what's dangerous. And this system is feeding it to people daily, thru their schools, institutions and *media*, that is the main source of

poisoning. Look at the mass control govt. has over people because of the media! That's a weapon of mass destruction. Because of the media this country is causing the mass destruction of whole countries.

They're calling Saddam Hussein a tyrant but look at what they are doing to their own citizens just for *demonstrating*, which is people's *constitutional* right! This country is tyrannical because the instant you say anything against it, you're beaten, arrested and thrown in prison and *killed*. Now people can see how MOVE ended up in prison. It's the *same* pattern.

Well Kevin I'm going to stop now. This country is spiralling to a bad situation. Take care!

On The Move
Janine

New Legal Papers Filed Free Mumia Now!

On May 23, attorneys for Mumia Abu-Jamal filed a 43-page motion demanding that the Pennsylvania Supreme Court order Mumia's former lead counsel Leonard Weinglass to testify in court. In a blistering indictment, the document cites the "complex web of duplicity and sabotage" and the "conflicts of interest" of Weinglass and his cohort Daniel Williams, who "were responsible for their intentional burying of evidence that proves" Jamal's innocence in the December 1981 killing of Philadelphia police officer Daniel Faulkner. The new motion sets forth 15 specific charges against Weinglass, including his scrapping of the 1999 confession of Arnold Beverly that he, not Jamal, shot and killed Faulkner.

The new papers rely heavily on the work of Partisan Defense Committee counsel Rachel Wolkenstein and Jonathan Piper, another attorney associated with the PDC, who both resigned from Jamal's legal team in July 1999 rather than be complicit in Weinglass and Williams' betrayal. Wolkenstein provided a detailed account of Weinglass' treachery in a July 2001 affidavit (reprinted in the September 2001 PDC pamphlet, *Mumia Abu-Jamal Is an Innocent Man!*). The new legal papers describe how Weinglass refused to investigate evidence proving Jamal's innocence and then actively suppressed Beverly's confession. Referring to "a wealth of evidence...in the possession of Weinglass which corroborated Beverly," the papers declare: "A stack of memoranda approximately the size of a New York City phonebook were written by attorneys Wolkenstein and Piper and their investigative staff detailing how this evidence corroborated the Beverly confession."

The disloyalty of Weinglass and Williams was made clear with Williams'

publication—just before the release of the Beverly confession—of his scurrilous book *Executing Justice*, which purported to be an "inside account" of Jamal's case. Written with Weinglass' knowledge, the book falsely presented the facts of the case, disclosed confidential information and repeatedly implied that Mumia was guilty. In a letter to Mumia, Weinglass acknowledged that the book was a "pre-emptive strike" against use of Beverly's confession—and that is precisely how it has been used by the prosecution in preventing the admission of this crucial evidence in court for over two years.

In December 2001, a federal court overturned Jamal's death sentence while affirming the frame-up murder conviction, condemning Mumia to a life behind bars. The state appealed to reinstate the death sentence, while Jamal's attorneys appealed to have the conviction overturned. Both appeals are on hold pending a Pennsylvania Supreme Court ruling on another appeal by Jamal's attorneys against the barring of Beverly's testimony.

From the time the PDC took up Jamal's case in 1987, we have sought to ensure that every legal avenue was pursued to free him while fighting against illusions in the capitalist state. As stated in the introduction to *Mumia Abu-Jamal Is an Innocent Man!*: "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." *Free Mumia now! Abolish the racist death penalty!* ■



TROTSKY

For the Right of All Nations to Self-Determination!

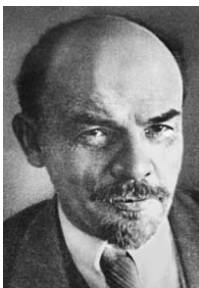
In its epoch of imperialist decay, particularly since the victory of counterrevolution in the former Soviet Union and East Europe, capitalism has intensified national oppression around the world. In fighting against all national privilege and for the right to self-determination, i.e., political independence, we are guided by the proletarian internationalist understanding of V.I. Lenin, whose Bolshevik Party led the multinational

working class of the Russian tsarist prison house of peoples to power in 1917.

The interests of the working class and of its struggle against capitalism demand complete solidarity and the closest unity of the workers of all nations; they demand resistance to the nationalist policy of the bourgeoisie of every nationality. Hence, Social-Democrats [i.e., communists] would be deviating from proletarian policy and subordinating the workers to the policy of the bourgeoisie if they were to repudiate the right of nations to self-determination, i.e., the right of an oppressed nation to secede, or if they were to support all the national demands of the bourgeoisie of oppressed nations....

Successful struggle against exploitation requires that the proletariat be free of nationalism, and be absolutely neutral, so to speak, in the fight for supremacy that is going on among the bourgeoisie of the various nations. If the proletariat of any one nation gives the slightest support to the privileges of its "own" national bourgeoisie, that will inevitably rouse distrust among the proletariat of another nation; it will weaken the international class solidarity of the workers and divide them, to the delight of the bourgeoisie. Repudiation of the right to self-determination or to secession inevitably means, in practice, support for the privileges of the dominant nation.

—V.I. Lenin, "The Right of Nations to Self-Determination" (1914)



LENIN

WORKERS VANGUARD

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The Right to Protest Under Attack
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Down With Anti-Basque Repression in Spain!

The Spanish state landed yet another blow in its chauvinist campaign to stamp out Basque nationalist militancy with the March 17 Spanish Supreme Court ruling outlawing the Basque political party Batasuna under the government's new "anti-terror" Law on Political Parties. This is the first time since the end of the Francoist dictatorship in 1975 that a political party has been banned, a qualitative step toward banning any organization advocating the Basque right to self-determination.

Batasuna and its previous incarnations, Euskal Herritarrok and Herri Batasuna, have had to fight for their legality for over 23 years. Under the new law, the Supreme Court banned Batasuna for the "crime" of not condemning attacks carried out by Basque-separatist ETA. That silence is tantamount to being a terrorist is but one chilling example of how the capitalist rulers from the U.S. to Europe have cynically wielded the September 11 attack on the World Trade Center to vastly expand their powers of repression against workers and the oppressed.

Having supported the U.S. in its colonial war against Iraq in the face of overwhelming opposition at home, rightist Spanish prime minister José María Aznar had the favor returned by the U.S. when the State Department added Batasuna to its list of terrorist organizations. Spain continues to campaign for the European Union to do likewise, while the political heirs of Generalissimo Franco in Aznar's rightist Popular Party gloat over a recent statement signed by several prominent novelists including Nadine Gordimer, Günther Grass and Mario Vargas Llosa denouncing Basque nationalists and lauding Spanish "democracy"!

The Basque region represents a classic case of an oppressed nation forcibly denied the right of self-determination, that is, the right to form an independent state. While the heart of the Basque country is in northern Spain, the Basque nation extends into southern France; both countries have sought to repress the Basque language and culture. The Ligue Trotskyiste de France, section of the International Communist League, forthrightly calls for the right of self-determination for the Basque people in both Spain and France.

Batasuna represents the second-largest political party in the Spanish Basque country, with 10 percent of the vote in the regional elections of 2001. Since last August, under an initial "temporary" ban ordered by Judge Baltasar Garzón, Batasuna had its assets seized, its offices shut down, its demonstrations and public meetings banned and many of its members arrested and jailed. Not content with having outlawed the largest pro-independence party, the Spanish Constitutional Court upheld a ban on candidates who had *ever* been associated with Batasuna or its predecessors from running in the May 25 regional elections. This meant that 1,500 candidates and 225 electoral lists were banned. Yet Batasuna, regrouped as Autodeterminaziorako Bilgunea (AuB), scored a victory when some 120,000 voters—approximately 10 percent of the electorate—defied the government by filing ballots for proscribed candidates or submitting slips of paper containing ETA's political demands.

The Spanish state's vendetta against pro-independence forces was met with massive protest on May 10 in Bilbao when 20,000 took the streets in a banned march which the police were powerless to stop. The Spanish state's attack is so clearly aimed at anyone who supports Basque independence that even the

respectable "moderate" Basque nationalists, like the Partido Nacionalista Vasco (PNV), had been compelled to come to Batasuna's defense. The PNV was one of *only* two parties to vote against the parliamentary motion calling for banning Batasuna.

On February 20, the government closed the only remaining newspaper printed exclusively in the Basque language, Euskara, in a dawn raid by hundreds of hooded police officers. On the basis of an indictment that is being kept secret, ten journalists and managers of the

ported the recent anti-Basque repression, was compelled to admit that he believed the reports of torture by the arrested editor. Demonstrating that innocence or guilt is hardly the point of the state's prosecution of "terrorism" is the fact that the staff of *Egin*, the Basque newspaper shut down by the Spanish state in 1998 under similar charges of aiding ETA, are still awaiting trial.

For years, France has collaborated with Spain in waging a brutal campaign of repression against Basque militants, deporting many to face torture in Spanish



September 2002: Protest in San Sebastian against banning of Basque nationalist Batasuna party and for release of Basque political prisoners came under police attack.



Basque-language *Euskaldunon Egunkaria*, a paper funded in large part by the vehemently anti-ETA Basque regional government, were arrested for allegedly colluding with ETA. One of those arrested, a former editor of the paper, tried to commit suicide after being held incommunicado by the police for five days. The current editor, Martxelo Otamendi, reported having been subjected to torture, including having plastic bags placed over his head such that he could not breathe and having a pistol held to his temple. After making their accusations, Otamendi and three other newspaper directors were sued by the government for "collaborating with an armed band" on the basis that, by "falsely" accusing their jailers of torture, they reinforced ETA-inspired attacks on the government.

It is no surprise that the Spanish state, which was exposed for deploying GAL (Grupos Antiterroristas de Liberación) death squads against Basque militants throughout the 1980s, routinely uses torture against arrested Basque militants. However, the arrests and torture of *Egunkaria* staff have elicited broad protest. Even a senior minister of the Socialist Workers Party of Spain (PSOE), which oversaw the GAL death squads when it headed the government and has fully sup-

ported the recent anti-Basque repression, was compelled to admit that he believed the reports of torture by the arrested editor. Demonstrating that innocence or guilt is hardly the point of the state's prosecution of "terrorism" is the fact that the staff of *Egin*, the Basque newspaper shut down by the Spanish state in 1998 under similar charges of aiding ETA, are still awaiting trial.

For years, France has collaborated with Spain in waging a brutal campaign of repression against Basque militants, deporting many to face torture in Spanish prisons while keeping dozens locked up in French jails. During the 1980s, under Socialist president François Mitterrand, the French police worked hand in hand with the GAL death squads, which operated with impunity in France. Today, the government of conservative neo-Gaullist Jacques Chirac has stepped up repression against Basque militants in France. French anti-terrorist police last month even arrested a Spanish lawyer, Unai Errea, accusing him of passing Basque-language documents to an accused ETA member imprisoned in Paris.

It is urgently necessary for this state repression to be met with mobilizations of the working class in opposition to the sinister campaign aimed not only against fighters for Basque national rights but ultimately at the working class as a whole. If the Spanish workers movement does not come to the aid of the oppressed Basque people and persecuted militants, then it will be unable to effectively fight in its own defense against a ruling class that has assembled a vast array of "anti-terror" powers to use against *any* militant opposition to Spanish capitalist rule. **Down with the ban of Batasuna and AuB! Free the hundreds of Basque nationalist prisoners in Spain and France!**

While millions in Spain, including

powerful trade unions, protested the Spanish-backed U.S. slaughter in Iraq, it is criminal that there has been essentially no protest outside of the Basque country in opposition to Aznar's war against the Basque people at home. The obstacle to working-class struggle in defense of the Basques is not only the social democrats of the PSOE who promote the reactionary chauvinism of the Castilian bourgeoisie and stand in opposition to the right of self-determination for the Basque people. It is also the United Left (IU) coalition led by the Spanish Communist Party (PCE) and including several pseudo-Trotskyist organizations. While the IU recently stated that the Spanish prime minister is imitating "the international terrorist Bush" with measures such as the banning of Batasuna, this is fairly cynical given that IU *abstained* on the motion to ban Batasuna when it came up for a vote in parliament. Furthermore, IU leader Gaspar Llamazares in a 5 May statement effectively blamed Batasuna for the government ban, claiming that it had chosen confrontation instead of distancing itself from violence.

Following last week's electoral results, a bomb planted under a police car killed two cops last Friday in the Navarre town of Sangüesa. In February, ETA killed the police chief in the northern Basque town of Andoain. For Marxists, such attacks on agents of bourgeois state repression are not crimes from the standpoint of the working class. While defending ETA against state repression, Marxists oppose the desperate petty-bourgeois strategy of individual terrorism as an obstacle to proletarian, internationalist class struggle: the elimination of individual oppressors does not address the fundamental issue of getting rid of the capitalist system itself, which requires collective struggle by the working masses. Moreover, indiscriminate terror against innocent civilians, which ETA has also perpetrated in the past, is a crime from the standpoint of the working class, serving only to provoke violence between different peoples and to feed the fears and hatreds inherent in all nationalism.

Castilian chauvinism is used to divide and weaken the workers movement in the same way that anti-immigrant racism is used to pit workers against each other. According to the Association of Immigrant Moroccan Workers in Spain, in the past five years **4,000 people** have lost their lives at sea in the attempt to make it to Europe through Spain. For those who succeed, their lives are a living hell of racist discrimination, repression and violence. According to a study published last year by Amnesty International, fully 40 percent of Spain's prison population consists of immigrants. We fight for full citizenship rights for all immigrants.

It is the duty of revolutionary Marxists to defend the right of self-determination for oppressed nationalities such as the Basques in both Spain and France. The rich history of united working-class struggle in Spain—from the Spanish Revolution of the 1930s to the pre-revolutionary upsurge that followed the death of Franco in 1975—has demonstrated that the resolution of the national question in Spain is inextricably linked with the struggle for workers power throughout the Iberian peninsula. Only a Leninist vanguard party defending this democratic right will be able to unite the Basques with workers throughout Spain—as well as with workers in Portugal and across the Pyrenees in France—in a common struggle for workers power. **Down with anti-Basque repression in Spain and France! For Trotskyist parties in Spain and France, sections of a reformed Fourth International! ■**

NOTICE

Workers Vanguard skips alternate issues in June, July and August. Our next issue will be dated July 4.

For a Socialist Republic of United Kurdistan!

The Kurdish People and the U.S. Occupation of Iraq

The following is the concluding part of an edited presentation by Workers Vanguard Editorial Board member Bruce André at a Spartacist League/Spartacus Youth Club public educational in Berkeley on May 3. Part One appeared in WV No. 804 (23 May).

PART TWO

As I mentioned, the carving up of the Kurdish nation dates back to the close of WWI, when the British and other colonialist powers drew the borders of Iraq and the other countries of the Near East. It is useful to review this history, not only in laying bare the workings of imperialist domination; it also shows the tremendous impact the Russian Revolution had on the peoples of the Near East and how that impact helped shape the modern Near East. The guiding principle for the imperialists was “divide and rule.” The Arabs of Palestine, including what is today Jordan, wanted to be united with the Arabs of what is now Syria and Lebanon; they were divided into separate countries. In what is now Iraq, Shi’ite and Sunni Muslims and Kurds and Turkmens wanted to live separately; they were forced to live under a single roof.

Before WWI was even finished, the British and French imperialists divided up the spoils of their impending victory in the secret Sykes-Picot Treaty of 1916. The publication of that document by the Bolshevik workers state exposed the imperialists’ machinations and had an electrifying effect across the region. Simultaneously, the British secretly promised Sharif Hussein of Mecca that he could be king of a united Arab state in return for siding with the British. This so-called “Arab revolt” against the Turks was important propagandistically for the British, because the troops that were essential for controlling the British empire, the armies of India and Egypt, consisted mainly of Britain’s Muslim colonial subjects; many of them saw the war against the Ottomans as a war against Islam.

Obviously, all these cynical promises—the British even promised in the Balfour Declaration to grant the Zionists a Jewish homeland in Palestine—were mutually contradictory. The Kurds were also promised their own state—albeit a truncated one—in the 1920 Treaty of Sèvres. But they never got even that deformed expression of national self-determination. By 1920, it was becoming clear that the former Ottoman *vilayet*

(province) of Mosul, which had been assigned to France under the Sykes-Picot Treaty, had much more oil than was originally thought. So Britain decided to keep it, creating a new country called Iraq that basically corresponded to the concession of the British-controlled Turkish Petroleum Company. Incidentally, you may find this interesting: in deciding how Iraq would be compensated for its oil, the precedent used was “the way in which the United States government had dealt with the sale of the lands of the Osage Indians”



Sir Ernest Goodale

1918: British troops train for poison gas attacks against rebels in Iraq during colonial occupation following World War I. Right: British forces round up Kurds in Baghdad during period of nationalist uprisings in mid 1920s.



Bettmann

(Edith and E.F. Penrose, *Iraq* [1978]). The splitting of Kurdistan was duly approved by the League of Nations, which Lenin called a “den of thieves.” It served—as the UN does today—as a fig leaf for imperialist interests.

Meanwhile, the Bolshevik Revolution—and its extension to largely Muslim Central Asia in the course of the bloody three-year Civil War against the imperialist-backed counterrevolutionary White armies—triggered a series of national revolts and popular uprisings in the broad swath occupied by British forces from Egypt through the Fertile Crescent to Iran. The Turks, under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal (a/k/a Ata-

türk), waged a national war—backed by the Soviet power under Lenin—to drive out the British-backed Greek army and secure the borders of the modern Turkish state, including northern Kurdistan. (By the way, Atatürk was backed by the Kurds in Turkey, who were rewarded with merciless repression.) In Egypt, as strikes and demonstrations swept the country in 1919, one observer reported that “news of success or victory by the Bolsheviks” in the Russian Civil War “seems to produce a pang of joy and content among all

the closed doors of the British government over how to administer the Near East territories occupied by British troops. The debate was framed by the revolts sweeping the region and by the victories of the Bolsheviks in the Civil War against the counterrevolutionary White armies and the imperialist troops sent to crush the Russian Revolution.

Some colonialists like Churchill were arguing that it would be less costly and more stable to set up formally independent states and impose imperialist domination

through indirect rule. But the rulers of British India who held sway opposed any concession to rising nationalism, which they feared would set a dangerous example in India and the rest of the empire.

It is fascinating to trace this debate in Churchill’s personal papers. Churchill was obsessed by the danger of what he called the “bacillus” of Bolshevism infecting India. He wrote to the secretary of foreign affairs: “The ruin of Lenin and Trotsky and the system they embody is indispensable to the peace and revival of the world” (Aaron Klieman, *Foundations of British Policy in the Arab World* [1970]). The British had been counting on Georgia and other British client states in the Caucasus to serve as a buffer between the Russian Revolution and the lands under British colonial occupation. With the Red Army driving against the troops of British-supported General Deniken, Churchill wrote frantically in February 1920 that British forces in Iraq were “totally insufficient to...enable us to offer effective resistance to a Bolshevik advance short of the main frontiers of India.” In April, the Red Army destroyed Deniken’s forces; a soviet republic was declared in Baku. Churchill wrote: “Are we to defend Persia or not? If we do not, Persia will be demoralized by Russian Bolshevism.... If we do we shall, in all probability, find ourselves drawn into a very considerable and indefinite entanglement.”

Meanwhile, the Bolsheviks, counter-attacking against an invasion by Pilsudski’s Poland, drove to the gates of Warsaw, hoping to draw the Red Army up to the German border and touch off social-

classes of Egyptians” (Hanna Batatu, *The Old Social Classes and the Revolutionary Movements of Iraq* [1978]). Also in 1919 open rebellion broke out in the Punjab in India; hundreds were shot down by British troops.

That same year, the Kurds rose in revolt against British occupation. One Kurd declared: “We will have no foreign power over us, we are Bolsheviks and will rule ourselves” (David McDowall, *A Modern History of the Kurds* [1996]). The British crushed the Kurdish revolt, using air bombardment against civilians for the first time in history. One of those who got his start bombing Kurdish families was Arthur “Bomber” Harris, the ghoulish war criminal who later oversaw the firebombing of Dresden. Anticipating Rumsfeld by 80 years, Winston Churchill, at the time secretary for war and air, hailed the use of air power against Britain’s colonial subjects for allowing “a very large reduction to be made in the size and consequently the cost of the garrison” (Martin Gilbert, *Winston S. Churchill, Volume IV* [1978]).

The following year, the Arabs of Mesopotamia (southern Iraq) rose in revolt and stood up to the more than 130,000 British troops, costing the British 2,500 casualties before their revolt was drowned in blood. Churchill clamored for using mustard gas bombs against the Iraqi rebels; it was decided instead to bombard them with poison gas artillery shells. Maybe that example helped inspire Saddam Hussein when he in turn gassed the Kurds.

Meanwhile, a debate was raging behind



Reuters

Baghdad: Iraqi Shi’ites protest U.S. colonial occupation, April 21.

ist revolution in Germany. But the Red Army was driven back. In October, Churchill wrote with relief: “We well know the shocking dangers from which we were miraculously rescued by the Battle of Warsaw.” By the end of the year, almost all the foreign and White armies had been driven from Soviet soil. The rebellion in southern Iraq had been crushed. The British now moved swiftly to create a new line of formally independent states in the Near East. The minutes of the December 31 cabinet meeting report that the government now took up a proposal to make Sharif Hussein’s son, Faisal, king of Mesopotamia:

“His advent would serve to satisfy national sentiment for a year or two and to keep the country contented, in which case the Army of Occupation might be reduced.... “It was pointed out that if Feisal was made King with the assent of the Arabs, ...Mesopotamia would probably settle down and would then be comparatively easy to administer.”
—Gilbert, Winston S. Churchill, Volume IV

In March 1921, the successful but exhausting Civil War concluded, Lenin launched the New Economic Policy, conceived as a temporary retreat and stabilization. The same month, the lines of the new order in the Arab Near East were drawn at a conference in Cairo. With Churchill, now secretary for colonies, chairing the session, the final division of the Near East was carried out: the kingship of Iraq was turned over to Faisal. A piece of the British mandate in Palestine was chopped off, named Transjordan (today it’s Jordan) and offered as a kingship to Abdullah, Faisal’s elder brother. The previous year, France had split off Lebanon from Syria. The map of the Near East had been drawn pretty much as it is today.

The Kurds and the Leninist Position on the National Question

The policy of “divide and rule” worked wonders in the Near East by turning the colonial subjects against each other instead of against the imperialist masters. As Arab nationalism developed in the 1920s and ’30s, it took as its model not the Great French Revolution of 1789, but rather Bismarck’s unification of Germany. (The Zionists hark back to Bismarck, too—that’s “nation-building” in the epoch of imperialism.) Every Arab strongman, from Iraq’s King Faisal to Gamal Abdel Nasser of Egypt to Saddam Hussein, put himself forward as the Arab Bismarck, who would unite the Arabs in a single state. Thus the so-called “Arab Revolution” was not directed against the imperialists or the capitalist ruling classes in the Near East. Instead, it boiled down to power plays by Arab countries seeking to dominate their neighbors, all the while carrying out vicious repression against the working class and national, religious and ethnic minorities.

As everywhere, attempts in the Near East to consolidate homogenous nation-states under capitalism meant “ethnic cleansing” of national minorities like the Kurds—forced assimilation or armed terror to drive them out. The Ba’ath Party—classic Arab nationalists represented by Assad’s Syria and Saddam Hussein’s Iraq—was all in favor of an independent Kurdish state—but in Turkey and Iran, not in lands they claimed for the Arab nation: “The generous Arab nation has taken all these minorities under its protection...to leave them the choice of either remaining within the Arab homeland or else of emigrating” (Uriel Dann, *Iraq Under Qassem* [1969]).

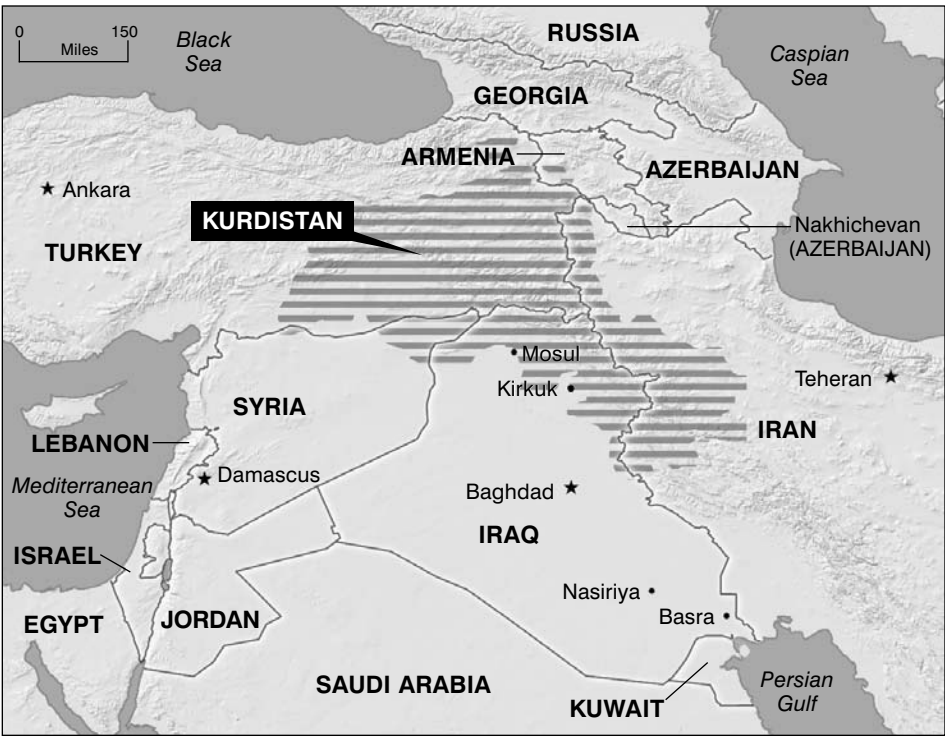
Of course, that’s also the position of Arab nationalists concerning the Jews of Israel, or to be more precise, the Hebrew-speaking people. In a recent polemic against us, the League for the Revolutionary Party (LRP), whose position on the Near East is an almost word-for-word parroting of the Arab nationalists’, expressed it this way: “It can be said that Israelis unwilling to live in a Palestinian workers’ state will have the right to leave” (*Proletarian Revolution*, Spring 2002).

The LRP article does not so much as mention, much less defend, the rights of women in the Arab countries or of non-Muslim minorities or non-Arab ones like the Kurds.

This blindness to the Kurdish question is not an accident and it is not limited to the LRP. The Kurds are largely invisible to most of the left internationally. It’s not like the Kurds have not been in the news. For example, in 1999, PKK leader Öcalan was arrested—with a key role being played by the CIA—and sentenced to death by a kangaroo court in Turkey. Tens of thousands participated in emergency protests around the world against his arrest and, later, against the verdict. The ICL organized contingents in those demonstrations and widely distributed a declaration issued by our comrades of the Spartakist Workers Party of Germany published in Turkish, German, Italian, French and English. But other left groups were conspicuous by their absence at many of those demonstrations. WV ran a series of front-page articles demanding “Freedom for Öcalan!” But you can search in vain in the back issues of the LRP’s *Proletarian Revolution* for any headlines about these events.

One group even comes out in *opposition* to independence for Kurdistan, the International Bolshevik Tendency (IBT), a clot whose founding leaders dropped out of our organization in the 1980s under the pressure of Reagan’s anti-Soviet Cold War campaign. Claiming to uphold the “right of self-determination” for the Kurds, the IBT in 1993 declared that the PKK’s call “for an independent capitalist Kurdistan against the wishes of the feeble Kurdish bourgeoisie, and with the bulk of the Kurdish people indifferent, makes no sense at all” (1917, 1993). The IBT lectured that an independent Kurdistan “would be a society characterized by backward, pre-capitalist social structures. Because of its underdevelopment, an independent Kurdistan would find itself at the mercy of the regional as well as imperialist powers.”

This is such an open capitulation to the designs of the imperialists and to the national chauvinism of their client states that it almost leaves one speechless. Let me point out that the IBT’s article was reprinted from the press of their comrades



in Germany, where the bourgeoisie—and their social-democratic lieutenants in the labor movement—are virulently hostile to Kurdish nationalism. Even displaying the Kurdish national colors is illegal in Germany, as it is in Turkey. To answer the IBT, let’s go back to basic Leninist principles:

We are opposed to nationalism as an ideology, a bourgeois ideology that is counterposed to the principle of class struggle; nationalism means unity of all classes in defense of the nation. But we are far from indifferent to national oppression. In fact, on this as on all questions of oppression, we Marxists are the most intransigent fighters for liberation. Our starting point is the strict equality of nations; we defend the right of all nations to national self-determination; that means the right to secede and form an independent state. This applies to all nations. We don’t pose preconditions as the IBT does in the quote I just read, demanding that, before the Kurds can be independent they must be free of “backward” social structures and not be at the “mercy” of imperialist powers—which is impossible in any case for small countries in the epoch of imperialism.

First and foremost, we want to take the

national question off the agenda. We say to working people of oppressed nations: The revolutionary proletariat fights for your democratic national rights; break with your capitalist oppressor and join us across national lines in common class struggle against our joint enemy, the capitalist class. As a general rule, our approach on this question is essentially negative. We are against national oppression and we fight for the right of national self-determination. But that doesn’t necessarily mean that we are for the exercise of that right, i.e., the setting up of an independent state. Lenin compared this to divorce: we are for the defense of the right of divorce, but we are not necessarily for a particular couple getting one.

However, there are cases in which we are for national independence. Again, our starting point is the question of what is in the interests of the struggle for socialist revolution—remember, we want to take the national question off the agenda. A case in point is Quebec, an oppressed nation confined within Canada (which is the IBT’s home territory, by the way). There, the national divide has poisoned relations between the working class of English Canada and of Quebec to such a point that the recognition by the workers of each nation that the enemy is their respective capitalist rulers and not each other can only come through the setting up of an independent Quebec. This question was not decided in a referendum; it was basically decided back in 1970 with the introduction of French-only language laws in Quebec. (If you want to follow up on this question, we dealt with it in depth in *Spartacist* No. 52, Autumn 1995.) The IBT opposes independence for Quebec, which is an open capitulation to Anglo chauvinism in English Canada.

Now, what about Kurdistan? You’re certainly not going to see a democratic referendum on this question in any country of the Near East. How can one determine if the road is still open to assimilation of Kurds into the dominant Arab nation or if the national lines are too deeply drawn? To simply ask the question is to answer it! The Kurdish people’s history of tenacious rebellion against their oppressors—at the cost of incalculable human losses—goes back more than 80 years. Iraqi Kurds fought almost uninterruptedly against the British and their quisling regimes from 1919 through the 1930s. Despite the betrayals by their nationalist leaders, the Kurds continued their revolts against savage repression at the hands of the Ba’ath Party after the British-backed monarchy was overthrown in 1958. In Iran, Kurds fought the British following World War II, leading to the establishment of the independent Mahabad republic in Iranian Kurdistan; they took up the revolt again against Khomeini’s Islamic Republic.

In Turkey, a series of Kurdish revolts continuing from the 1920s into the late ’30s was crushed with more than 1.5 million Turkish Kurds either massacred or

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July 1958: Mass demonstration in Baghdad as Iraqi officers’ coup toppled British-imposed monarchy. Opportunity for workers’ revolution was derailed by Soviet Stalinist bureaucracy and Iraqi Communist leadership.

“State Department Socialists”

LRP Exposes Itself

Some 200 people attended a public debate between the Spartacist League and the League for the Revolutionary Party (LRP) on May 10 in New York City, titled “The Fight Against Imperialist War: Which Way Forward?” In a 23 May Web posting, the LRP announced with typical bombast, “LRP Trounces SL in Imperialism Debate.” The postscript to the LRP’s account reads: “We have no doubt the Spartacists will claim to have won a great victory over the LRP in the debate.” It is difficult to imagine just how one could claim “great victory” on the basis of defending elementary Leninism and Trotskyism against the vicarious “Third World” nationalism and garden-variety reformist practice—occasionally masked by radical-sounding rhetoric—of this minuscule “third camp” outfit.

Given that the Trotskyist Spartacist League and the LRP were literally on opposite sides of the barricades during Cold War II, much of the debate necessarily had the quality of ships passing in the night. The LRP’s forebears—the petty-bourgeois opposition led by Max Shachtman within the then-Trotskyist Socialist Workers Party (SWP) in 1939-40—took flight from the Trotskyist program for unconditional military defense of the Soviet Union under the pressures of petty-bourgeois public opinion. SWP leader James P. Cannon’s injunction that when you touch the Russian question,

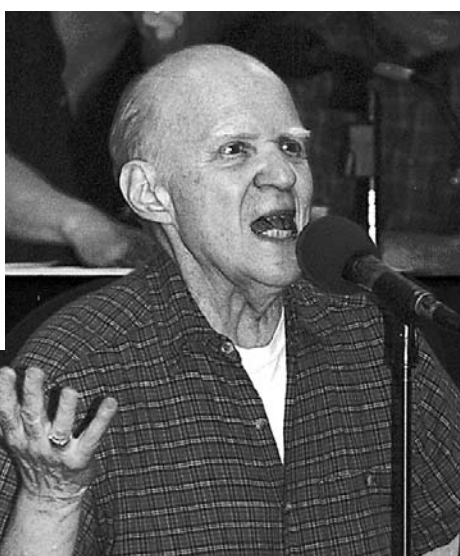


Frederick A. Praeger



Donald Press

LRP’s founder/leader Sy Landy (right), a pale shadow of his anti-Soviet forebears Karl Kautsky (left) and Max Shachtman.



WV Photo

the LRP. With their grotesque and vicarious enthusing over ghetto upheavals and petty-bourgeois Arab nationalism, the LRP seeks to pander to those who share the 1960s New Left “white skin privilege” outlook—that the most fundamental division in the world is between the impoverished and oppressed dark-skinned peoples and the “privileged” white peoples in North America and West Europe. But where many New Leftists at least had a healthy gut hatred for the racist capitalist status quo, the LRP devotes its energies primarily to opportunist tailing after pro-Democratic Party

The LRP’s professed “anti-imperialism” has more to do with liberalism turned inside out than anything Lenin or Trotsky ever fought for. The LRP tails bourgeois and petty-bourgeois nationalism from the Near East to Ireland, promoting the notion of “progressive” and “reactionary” peoples—the latter having no rights, the former supposedly incapable of carrying out any atrocities (see “LRP: Apologists for Arab Nationalism,” WV No. 796, 31 January). A Spartacist spokesman said from the floor:

“We are for an international communist classless society. To that end, in Lenin’s words, we are for the unity of the workers of all nations on the basis of class against class. That means we are against *all* national privilege, that means we are for the right to self-determination for *all* nations. Now, in a case of interpenetrated peoples—I know the LRP believes that bourgeois democracy can accomplish wonders—but you cannot always get such democratic rights realized under capitalism. So, no, the democratic right of self-determination of the Hebrews and the Palestinian Arabs cannot be satisfied under capitalism. Your conclusion is one wins, the other loses. Our conclusion is international socialist revolution.

“The LRP, aside from the Zionist Ministry of Information, are about the only two entities in the world who don’t seem to acknowledge that Israel has several hundred nuclear weapons. So you want to deny them their national rights? Get those weapons!”

A young leftist speaking from the floor at the debate was ignored by the LRP when he pointedly asked:

“You claim that in the ‘48 war you took a side with the Arab bourgeoisie because they’re anti-imperialist. How can the Arab bourgeoisie be anti-imperialist when the governments of Egypt, Iraq, Jordan and pretty much every other Arab government in the Middle East was either a puppet government of either the French imperialists or the British imperialists?... How can they be anti-imperialist, and how can you say that Hebrew-speaking

Jews, especially those that were forced to flee to Palestine by British imperialism and were kicked out of Europe and banished and forced to go to Palestine after the Holocaust, how can you say that these people are no different than the Afrikaner fascists in South Africa? To me that’s ludicrous. Your position of all Israel is occupied territory is basically saying, ‘These people don’t have a right to live.’”

“Thank You, Greg”

In his presentation, Richardson intoned that although a united working-class struggle against racism is the “strongest and most preferable answer,” “it’s not going to happen any time soon and it would be criminal to tell black people to pin their hopes on an interracial defense that won’t come in time to save them.” God forbid the role of revolutionary leadership is to actually *fight* for such a strategy.

Instead, the audience was treated to the sickening spectacle of one after another LRP speaker hailing “ghetto riots” as a strategy for struggle. A former supporter of the Black Panther Party and new member of the Labor Black League, which is fraternally allied with the SL, commented after the debate that the LRP sounded much like the “pork-chop nationalists” the Panthers denounced, and said: “I can’t believe some of the LRP’s rhetoric. Where are they in the black areas? They are armchair revolutionaries.”

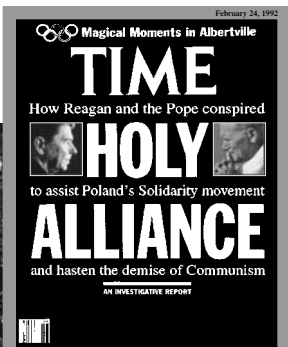
At the debate, a young woman cadre of the SL and Spartacus Youth Club explained, “The LRP looks to the black ghetto revolts because they don’t see the possibility of building a revolutionary party that is integrated and internationalist. They say that black people should not wait for white workers, and they lump the white workers with the racist ruling class. This objectively helps the bourgeoisie to keep the working class divided.”

In contrast, we fight to mobilize labor to defend the ghetto masses. During the 1992 upheaval in Los Angeles following the acquittal of the cops who beat Rodney King, the Partisan Defense Committee issued a statement declaring: “The working class must not allow the black population to be isolated—the *powerful L.A. unions such as longshore, aerospace and city workers should organize work stoppages and mass mobilizations to solidarize with and defend the black community* as the LAPD looks to spill more blood to ‘celebrate’ their racist victory over Rodney King” (see WV supplement, 4 May 1992). The statement also explained: “The point is not to seize articles of consumption but to expropriate the means of production. That’s a big leap, representing the shift in consciousness from that of

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Lech Walesa oversees mass at Gdansk shipyards, 1980. LRP hailed Vatican/CIA-backed Solidarność counterrevolution in Poland.

Der Spiegel



you touch the question of proletarian revolution—if you go wrong on the Russian question, you necessarily lose your compass and will deviate on every other key question—was fully borne out by the LRP’s performance at the debate.

As our comrade Don Alexander explained in his presentation at the debate (see page 7), the LRP’s “theory” of “statified capitalism” goes back to such renegades from Marxism as Karl Kautsky, who was a vehement opponent of the Russian Revolution. “State capitalism,” in all its variants, does enormous violence to Marxism. It is neither based on scientific socialism nor does it explain or predict anything of value. It is merely a “theoretical” justification for capitulating to one’s “own” bourgeoisie and abandoning the defense of the most important gains of the international working class.

In our fight for working-class liberation, we uphold the beliefs and values of rational humanism which underlie Marxism. We stand by Marx and Engels’ *Communist Manifesto* which stated: “The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles.” That is, that the fundamental division in modern society is between classes and their relationship to the means of production. Not so

“antiwar” movements and union-suing labor bureaucrats.

LRP: Trade Union Opportunism and Vicarious Nationalism

“Nothing would have dealt a blow to Washington’s war drive against Iraq than a strike shutting down the capital of world imperialism, and that’s what almost happened last December when transit workers voted unanimously to strike,” LRP speaker Matthew Richardson said in his presentation. True enough. But the LRP in its own small way helped boost New Directions (ND) leader Roger Toussaint, who deep-sixed a New York transit strike, into the presidency of Transport Workers Union (TWU) Local 100. Speaking in support of the Spartacist League from the floor of the debate, a militant transit worker pointed out:

“As soon as Toussaint and New Directions won, they continued courting the Democrats—Hillary Clinton, Schumer and all the candidates for mayor. Toussaint even invited the head of the PBA [Patrolmen’s Benevolent Association] to speak at union rallies. After 9/11 this president—who the LRP supporter voted for—put American flags on every union T-shirt and button, supported the ‘war on terror’ and preached national unity.”

SOCIALIST ACTION

September 1976

Busing - A Ruling Class Attack

At public schools open for the new year, we can expect new outbreaks of violence over the question of busing. Busing has led to bitter clashes between black

reactionary capitalists has been shown by the events in Boston. On February 19, thousands of angry city workers (and city hall police) went sweeping through

Forman/Boston Herald American



1976: As anti-busing racist mobs attacked black people on streets of Boston, LRP joined in denouncing busing for school integration.

WORKERS VANGUARD

Spartacist Speaker at LRP Debate

We Are the Party of the Russian Revolution!

We publish below, slightly edited, the Spartacist League presentation by SL Central Committee member Don Alexander at the May 10 debate with the League for the Revolutionary Party (LRP).

Well, the spirit of the State Department is hovering in this room—and you just heard the speech, a “State Department socialist” speech. The League for the Revolutionary Party is a centrist, fake-Trotskyist organization—that is, revolutionary in words but opportunist in deeds—and an obstacle in the path of proletarian revolution. On every fundamental question confronting the proletariat and oppressed, they bend to the winds of prevailing petty-bourgeois radicalism and cover this over with revolutionary phrasemongering.

How can you be a genuine Trotskyist organization and embrace class-collaborationist unity with the reformists and the liberals in a so-called “common” struggle against war? How can you be a genuine Marxist party and support in the name of “democracy” imperialist-backed counterrevolution from East Europe to the former Soviet Union? And give “critical” support to trade-union bureaucrats who were installed by the Labor Department—which was the case with the so-called reform candidate Arnold Miller’s Miners for Democracy in the 1970s?

**New York, May 10:
SL speaker
Don Alexander
addresses crowd
of 200 which filled
Musicians Union
Hall to hear
debate with LRP.**

WV Photo



elementary democratic rights for black people, such as integration of the schools, which was centered on busing in the '70s? Busing was not a be-all and end-all, but nonetheless a partial step toward black equality which was won through struggle and not through judicial fiat.

How can the LRP claim the mantle of Trotskyism and justify crossing picket lines at Columbia University during a brief graduate student strike? The picket line is the battle line of the class struggle—not just for communists, but for

racism, exploitation and oppression. The fight against imperialist war is part and parcel of the fight against the war against working people here at home. The working class, which produces the wealth of society, bears the full brunt of the attacks of the capitalists internationally, as the competing capitalist powers scramble for new markets, raw materials and spheres of investment—which is what imperialism is. Only the fight for a workers revolution that seizes control of society’s productive forces from the capitalists and reorganizes society on the basis of economic planning for need can prevent future interimperialist wars like World War I and World War II.

The Russian Question: The Question of Revolution

I want to briefly address how the world got to this point in which the nuclear madmen of bloody U.S. imperialism run roughshod over the working class and oppressed of the entire planet. And in that regard, the LRP has performed a certain valuable service in a small way in terms of the present state of affairs. How so? At every juncture, they haven’t missed an opportunity to express an anti-Communist loyalty oath to the American imperialists. In general, like their political godfathers Burnham and Shachtman in the Socialist Workers Party [SWP] in 1940, which I will get into in a minute, they have deserted Trotskyism and Marxism by supporting in the name of “democracy” the capitalists’ rollback of the gains of the October Revolution.

Before they came up with their ingenious theory that Russia was a “statified capitalist society,” there were others

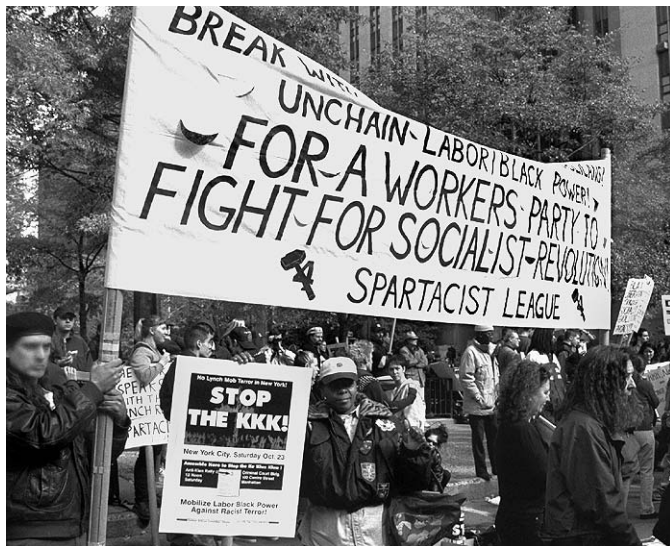
who had beat them to the punch, who had promulgated similar pro-bourgeois democracy rubbish—like the German ex-Marxist Karl Kautsky, a staunch opponent of the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution which swept away capitalism and parliamentary horsetrading and replaced it with the soviets of workers, peasants and soldiers deputies, the democratically elected councils that administered the revolutionary workers government. This was the dictatorship of the proletariat that took power out of the hands of the capitalists.

Lenin and revolutionary internationalists like the German communist and Spartacist Rosa Luxemburg, they had Kautsky’s number. They knew that the centrist politics that he espoused were dangerous, even more so than the reformists. The reformists were openly for reforming and saving the capitalist order, whereas centrists like Kautsky in practice stood for the same thing but fooled some workers with their quasi-Marxist phrases. In *The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky* [1918], Lenin polemicized against Kautsky, the LRP’s ideological forebear: “It is natural for a liberal to speak of ‘democracy’ in general; but a Marxist will never forget to ask: ‘for what class?’”

It’s important to study the Russian Revolution—the only successful workers revolution in history—led by the Bolsheviks who built a vanguard party that was a tribune of the people, that fought against all aspects of social oppression. Now there’s a lot to say about the Russian Revolution and the subsequent political degeneration.

In the 1930s, Leon Trotsky (and also James P. Cannon, who was one of the

continued on page 8



WV Photo

**23 October 1999:
Partisan Defense
Committee-initiated
labor/black
mobilization of
10,000 to stop the
KKK in NYC.
LRP promoted
“united front”
with Latino cops
and Democratic
politicians who
called for
“tolerance
for Klan.”**

The LRP promoted illusions in Roger Toussaint, whose New Directions outfit was boosted to power by a union-suing group, the Association for Union Democracy. This is a direct repudiation of the struggle for working-class independence from the capitalist state. The Spartacist League insisted that the out-bureaucrats that espouse more “democracy” but who embrace class collaborationism, such as Toussaint and New Directions, no less than the “old guard,” would betray, sell out the workers struggle and subordinate the transit workers to the arrogant bosses and the Democratic Party and capitalist state.

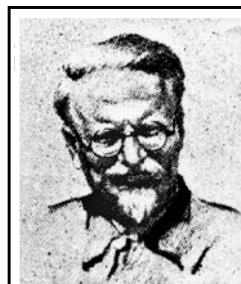
Real Trotskyists tell the bitter truth to the masses. And unlike the LRP we don’t tell the workers: “Hey, go ahead drink this poison. We know it’s poison. If you wake up, we’ll ask you, ‘Now do you know it’s poison?’” That’s fighting for class independence for the LRP! Our role is to bring revolutionary consciousness into the labor movement. That’s the job of a revolutionary party and that’s what we do.

How can the LRP claim to be Trotskyist—that is, fighters for the oppressed—if they reject the fight for the most

trade unionists defending their unions—which at every step the capitalists seek to weaken, undermine and destroy. So you’re not Trotskyists!

For Marxists, the struggle against imperialist war is necessarily a struggle against the capitalist system of production for profit, which is the root cause of war,

For Unconditional Defense of the Soviet Union
A Program Of Victory For The Soviet Union
THE MILITANT
Formerly the SOCIALIST APPEAL



To defend the USSR as the main fortress of the world proletariat, against all assaults of world imperialism and of internal counter-revolution, is the most important duty of every class-conscious worker.

— LEON TROTSKY

**Red Army marches into Austria in 1945.
Trotskyists defended Soviet Union and
hailed victory over Nazi Germany.
LRP doesn’t.**



Y. Khaldei

Spartacist...

(continued from page 7)

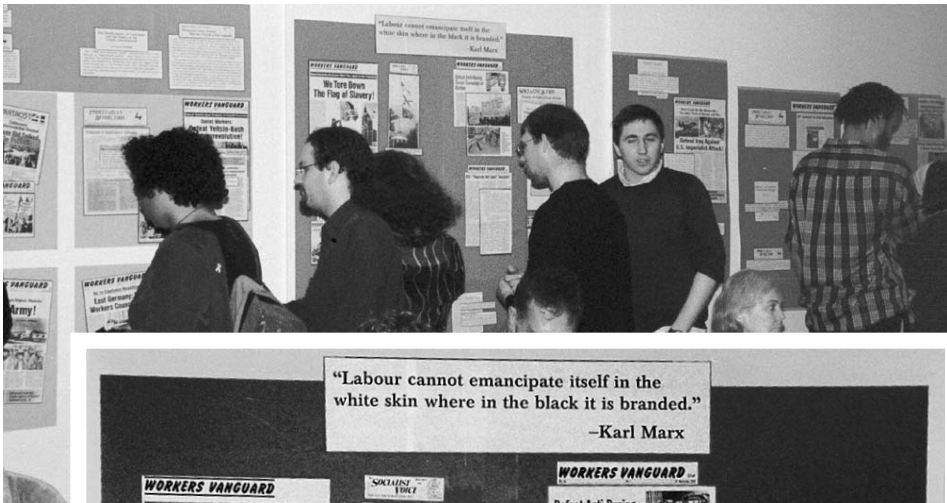
founders of the American Communist Party and of American Trotskyism) presented a very useful comparison of the Soviet Union, comparing it to a gigantic trade union that had fallen under reactionary leadership. Just like we defend the unions—which were gains for the working class wrested from the capitalists—against the blows of the capitalist exploiters while we also work to replace their class-collaborationist leadership with revolutionary leadership, so too was it necessary to defend the Soviet degenerated workers state against imperialism and capitalist restoration.

For the Spartacist League, for the International Communist League, the counter-revolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union was an unprecedented defeat for the international working class. The consequences of the counterrevolution have been total economic collapse; production has fallen at least 50 percent since 1991, capital investment by 90 percent. Today a third of the urban labor force in Russia is effectively unemployed; 75 percent of the population lives below or barely above subsistence level and 15 million people are actually starving.

Life expectancy has fallen dramatically and now stands at a mere 59 years for men, below what it was a century ago, while the overall population actually declined by three and half million from 1992 to 1997. More and more women are forced into prostitution and into being sex slaves and have borne the brunt of the devastating poverty and unemployment. HIV/AIDS has reached astronomical levels and is catching up with the rates of sub-Saharan Africa; and a 16-year-old boy today has less chance to survive to age 60 than in the benighted filth of tsarist Russia!

So now even the LRP has to acknowledge that something has happened in the USSR. Now they claim *after the fact* that somehow Stalin’s so-called “counterrevolution” of the ’30s did not erase all of the gains of the Bolshevik Revolution. Of course, they never once defended these putative gains when they were under attack by capitalist restorationists. For the LRP, the capitalist counterrevolution was a victory. They say in their article, “Twenty Years of the LRP,” [*Proletarian Revolution*, Winter 1997]: “The class struggle received a magnificent shot in the arm when the grip of the Stalinists in the West as well as in the East was shattered.” Well, you should tell that to the impoverished masses of Russia and East Europe who have experienced the “shock and awe” of free-market immiseration.

Moreover, the consciousness of the working class as a result of capitalist counterrevolution has reverted back to pre-Marxist doctrines such as anarchism and syndicalism—which reject the struggle for the dictatorship of the proletariat, the struggle for working-class state power



Spartacist displays document centrality of fight for black liberation through socialist revolution in the U.S.

led by internationalist Leninist vanguard parties. We of the Spartacist League and International Communist League uniquely fought against capitalist counterrevolution in the Soviet Union and East Europe, in defense of the gains of the October Revolution. We fight today for the unconditional military defense of the remaining deformed workers states in China, in Cuba, in North Korea and Vietnam. We fight for proletarian political revolutions to oust the parasitic Stalinist bureaucracies which undermine the defense of those states against imperialism. In short, we struggle for new October Revolutions.

The October 1917 Bolshevik Revolution smashed the capitalist system and gave the struggle for socialism flesh and blood reality. It inspired the working class and oppressed worldwide to intensify the struggle to get rid of their own exploiters. It proved in real life the superiority of a collectivized property system, a planned economy, over the irrational boom-bust system of capitalism.

Shachtman’s Snotty Grandchildren

We are Trotskyists because Trotsky—the co-leader with Lenin of the October Revolution—waged a fight against the subsequent political degeneration of the revolution, against the Stalinist bureaucracy, by fighting for the return to the proletarian, revolutionary, internationalist program that animated that revolution. He fought for that program to the very end of his life.

In the pamphlet written by Trotsky, “The Class Nature of the Soviet State” [1933], he had organizations such as the LRP in mind when he said, “To these gentlemen the dictatorship of the proletariat is simply an imponderable concept, an ideal norm not to be realized upon our sinful planet. Small wonder that ‘theoreticians’ of this stripe, insofar as they do not denounce altogether the very word dictatorship, strive to smear over the irreconcilable contradiction between the latter and bourgeois democracy.”

Trotsky’s last great fight was against a petty-bourgeois opposition in the Socialist Workers Party in the U.S. led by the direct political forebears of the League for a Revolutionary Party. Max Shachtman, James Burnham and Marty Abern split from the American Trotskyist movement in 1940. This was in the period in which there was anti-Communist hysteria following the 1939 Hitler-Stalin Pact and the Soviet invasion of capitalist Finland and Poland at the outbreak of World War II. Shachtman repudiated the Trotskyist program for unconditional military defense of the Soviet Union and the LRP has throughout its existence followed in his footsteps.

In close collaboration with Trotsky,

Cannon fought against this petty-bourgeois anti-Soviet opposition in the Socialist Workers Party that abandoned the defense of the Soviet Union against imperialism. In defense of this revolutionary program, Cannon had the following to say about the gains of the October Revolution in his “Speech on the Russian Question” in 1939:

“The mighty power of the October revolution is shown by the vitality of its conquests. The nationalized property and the planned economy stood up under all the difficulties and pressures of the capitalist encirclement and all the blows of a reactionary bureaucracy at home. In the Soviet Union, despite the monstrous mismanagement of the bureaucracy, we saw a tremendous development of the productive forces—and in a backward country at that—while capitalist economy declined. Conclusion: Nationalized and planned economy, made possible by a revolution that overthrew the capitalists and landlords, is infinitely superior, more progressive. It shows the way forward. Don’t give it up before it is lost! Cling to it and defend it!”

And that is exactly what the Spartacist League and the ICL did and have continued to fight for.

The LRP actually wrote something on this fight, trying to claim it as their own. They happened to omit one tiny little detail—it was over the Russian question! In *The Struggle for the Revolutionary Party*, they wrote, “Trotsky, shortly before his murder at Stalin’s hands, had waged a critical faction fight in the Socialist Workers Party (SWP), the American section of the Fourth International, against the Shachtmanite minority who traitorously split the party on the eve of World War II.”

The fact that they made no reference to the Russian question which was at the heart of this “critical faction fight” is not surprising. There’s a certain method at work in this clumsy and pathetic attempt to evade the fact that their side was the side of the petty-bourgeois, pro-imperialist, anti-Soviet opposition whose progeny they are.

Our tradition is that of the Bolshevik-led Russian Revolution embodied in the program of Leninism and Trotskyism—the continuation of revolutionary internationalism. In the post-Soviet world, we fight to forge the vital instrument for leading a fight for new October Revolutions: a Leninist vanguard party, a tribune of the people, which the LRP contemptuously rejects as an organization of “condescending saviors.”

Class Collaboration in the Antiwar Movement

Our fighting program is class against class, which is directly counterposed to the reformist and centrist swindle of “unity” of all opponents of war. Unity with whom, against whom and for what?

That’s the Leninist way of posing the question. We fought for a revolutionary, proletarian, internationalist perspective in the face of U.S. imperialism’s war preparations against Iraq, for military defense of semicolonial Iraq. We call for an end to the racist colonial occupation—for U.S. and allied troops out!

The LRP charges us with being sectarian and for not understanding that there is a distinction between the movement and the leadership, and says that we’re against united fronts. You wouldn’t know that we were at several demonstrations with our Revolutionary Internationalist Contingents—organized and led by the Spartacist League, Spartacus Youth Clubs and the Labor Black Leagues—to tear militant youth and working people away from the class-collaborationist program of the ANSWER organizers who steered the struggle into the arms of the Democratic Party. We called for: “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!” Our class-struggle program drew a sharp class line against the pro-imperialist pacifists, the bourgeois liberals and reformists. Our program is for the defeat of imperialism through proletarian revolution; the chief means in fighting for military defense is to mobilize the working class here at home.

The LRP talks out of both sides of their mouths. They struck an oppositional posture. They called for “the defeat of imperialism and the defense of the Iraqi people in any war against the imperialist powers” [*Proletarian Revolution*, Fall 2002]. However, they champion unity with the very forces keeping the struggle against war separated from the struggle against capitalism and thereby subordinated to the bourgeoisie. Referring to these antiwar coalitions, they say, “We need also to fight for them to be built as genuine united fronts, where all voices are heard, including that of revolutionaries—not just those who support the Democrats and other pro-imperialist liberals.”

Okay. We are for genuine united fronts—march separately, strike together is the slogan—and not class-collaborationist antiwar coalitions based upon unity with the political representatives of the bourgeoisie. Examples of this: our demonstration last year in the Bay Area which was centered on defense of immigrant rights and against the Patriot Act and the Maritime Security Act, based upon the heavily black longshore union, the ILWU; the Spartacus Youth Clubs had many demonstrations against the racist apologist for slavery, David Horowitz; the recent Spartacus Youth Club united-front demonstration against the ROTC at UC Berkeley, and many others. But they know of this—it’s just that they hate our Leninist program underlying these struggles.

The LRP’s version of real “united fronts” is a caricature and perversion of Trotskyism, which is based upon the fight to mobilize the working class and oppressed *independently* of the capitalist exploiters and their agents. It was Lenin

Agins/NYTimes



LRP Leaflet 19 Oct. 2000

VOTE FOR NEW DIRECTIONS — BUT DON’T TRUST THEM FOR A SECOND!

Despite New Directions’s conservative electoral approach, workers are so fed up with the current misleaders that they are lining up behind ND. Most of the members correctly believe ND to be much less crooked than the old guard. Further, ND, after much hesitation, timidly favored a strike call last December.

LRP urged vote for Roger Toussaint, here embracing MTA chairman Peter Kalikow last December after spiking potential transit strike.

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ENGLISH EDITION
AUTUMN 1999

The Russian Revolution and the Collapse of Stalinism
The Bankruptcy of “New Class” Theories
Tony Cliff and Max Shachtman:
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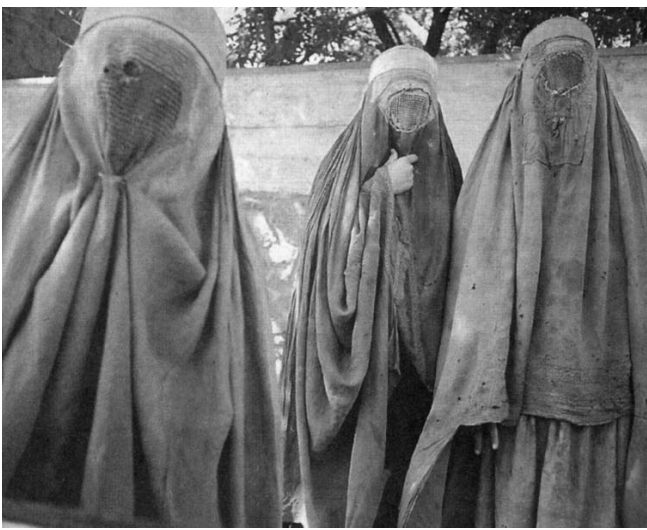
and the Bolsheviks who taught us that the precondition for a revolutionary struggle against imperialist war is embodied in Lenin’s call “to break with the chauvinists and rally about the old banner of Marxism—such is the task of the day” [“Socialism and War,” 1915]. Yeah—and that is the task of today. And they made a revolution.

Well, that was then and now is now, right? In practice, the role of the LRP is politically indistinguishable from garden-variety opportunists. They act as a left cover for the social-chauvinist outfits, which means that they played a role of keeping the struggle against imperialism within the bounds of the capitalist system. It’s all nicey-nicey: unite with and preach unity with the liberals who called for UN sanctions—we’re all part of this one common movement. This is a class-collaborationist program, all right, and it stands in the way of the fight to mobilize the working class against the murderous U.S. imperialists!

We are critical and objective-minded toward everything and everybody including ourselves, as anyone who regularly reads *Workers Vanguard* knows. We don’t trifle with the dearly paid lessons of proven dead-end strategies of the class struggles of the past. And if we look at the proven dead-end strategies that have derailed class struggles, for instance from the Spanish Revolution to Chile in the ’70s, such popular-frontist programs which unite the workers with the so-called progressive elements of the bourgeoisie—this has a particular name in this country: it’s called the Democratic Party and fomenting, creating illusions in that



Can you spot which side represents social progress? The LRP can’t. Left: Women’s militia fighters in Kabul during Soviet intervention against CIA-backed Islamic fundamentalists in Afghanistan. Right: Women in burkas following withdrawal of Red Army.



the Red Army, the anti-Semitic, woman-hating, clerical-nationalist CIA-backed Solidarność [in Poland] to their support to Yeltsin-Bush capitalist counterrevolution.

Yeah, we hailed the Red Army in Afghanistan, which opened up the possibility of the extension of the gains of the October Revolution to the Afghan peoples, especially to the hideously oppressed women. The Soviet intervention posed in the first instance the defense of the USSR against a CIA-backed insurgency on its southern flank. The Kremlin Stalinist bureaucracy intervened at the request of a left-nationalist government which implemented modest reforms on behalf of women in terms of reducing the bride price, curbing the power of the woman-hating reactionary caste of mullahs and teaching girls, schoolgirls, to read and write. This was an integral part of our program of unconditional military

tional Program, wherein Trotsky envisioned the possibility of revolutionaries making “a ‘united front’ with the Thermidorian section of the bureaucracy against open attack by capitalist counterrevolution.” In so doing, the revolutionaries “would nevertheless defend not the Bonapartist clique but the social base of the USSR, the property wrenched away from the capitalists and transformed into state property.” We also indicted the Polish Stalinists for having driven the historically socialist Polish proletariat into the arms of nationalism and clerical reaction, and called for the forging of a genuine Trotskyist party.

As I pointed out, we unconditionally defend the remaining bureaucratically deformed workers states of China, Cuba, Vietnam—the collectivized property and the planned economy—against imperialism. What about the LRP? They claim to defend North Korea and its right to nuclear weapons. But what is the concrete content of this “defense”? Well, they write, they advocate “an all-Korean constituent assembly to forge reunification” [*Proletarian Revolution*, Spring 1997]. This is a call for capitalist reunification, at least implicitly. We as Trotskyists are for the *revolutionary* reunification of Korea—through proletarian political revolution in the North and socialist revolution in the South. This is directly linked to the fight for proletarian power in Japan.

You know, these questions are what your program is; and how you try to evade it, that’s the historic role of centrism—as the embodiment of “crystallized confusion”—to blur the class line, to confuse, deceive and demoralize workers, to paralyze potential revolutionary action against the exploiters. The North Korean deformed workers state, which is led by a nepotistic Stalinist bureaucracy which is pretty bizarre, is regarded by U.S. imperialism as part of the “axis of evil” which sooner or later will include China. They don’t defend the *workers states* which were the product of social revolutions against capitalism.

How about China, which they barely write about. The gains of the Chinese Revolution hang in the balance. They claim that the 1949 Revolution was a bourgeois-democratic revolution “of sorts” and a defeat for imperialism. Except, hey, which side would they have been on in 1949, you know, in this “bourgeois-democratic revolution”? Which side would they have been on in Korea? We know what the Shachtmanite history is on these questions. On the ground, with regard to China, they’re with the spirit of Seattle in 1999. They’ve written a heap of praise about that despite the fact that those protests were stamped by anti-Communist, anti-Chinese racist protectionism by the AFL-CIO bureaucracy; they dumped Chinese steel.

Trotskyism isn’t some kind of “united front” against Stalinism, or “anti-Stalinism.” Cannon pointed out that there is a profound misconception on this score that will lead you straight into the arms of the bourgeoisie. Stalinophobia isn’t simply hatred for the labor camps, the purges and the like. “What is Stalinophobia?...Is it the opinion that Stalinism is not the leader of the international revolution but its mortal enemy? No, that is not Stalinophobia.... This sentiment goes wrong only when it leads to reconciliation with

American imperialism, and to the assignment of the fight against Stalinism to that same imperialism.” Cannon was speaking similarly to Trotsky, who pointed out in “Once Again: The USSR and Its Defense” [1937]: “The proletariat has sufficient reasons to overthrow and to chase out the Stalinist bureaucracy, corrupt to the bone. But precisely because of that it cannot directly or indirectly leave this task to Hitler or to the Mikado. Stalin overthrown by the workers—that’s a great step forward toward socialism. Stalin crushed by the imperialists—that’s the counter-revolution triumphant.”

The Myth of “Statified Capitalism”

You get a glimpse of the Stalinophobes when you read the LRP’s recent article, “Theories of Stalinism’s Collapse” [*Proletarian Revolution*, Fall 2002], which is a miserable manifesto of self-congratulatory hoopla in defense of capitalist counterrevolution and is rich in centrist charlatanry. Nowhere does it even mention, much less take up, Trotsky’s *Revolution Betrayed*, the decisive Marxist analysis of Stalinism and the degenerated workers state. To justify their support to Yeltsin in this piece, they claim that Trotsky supported the bourgeois Spanish republic against the fascists. This was no slip of the pen—it represents their consistent embellishment of bourgeois democracy and unrelenting hostility to red revolution everywhere. It is a slander against the Trotskyists, who while fighting for *military* support to the Republican forces did not support the capitalist government.

So why have they invented this slander and lie? Well, they don’t want to talk about the tradition that they stand in. Their social-democratic anti-communism is nothing new. Theirs is the tradition of Karl Kautsky, as I pointed out earlier. Both Kautsky and the anarchists were hostile to the Bolsheviks and maintained that Soviet Russia under Lenin and Trotsky was economically a “state capitalist” system in which the Communist bureaucrats exploited the workers. The LRP, as I said, call it “statified capitalism.” According to them, state capitalism in the Soviet Union was a “necessary prop” for the world imperialist system, which implicitly denies the reality of the Cold War and the historical possibility of the restoration of private ownership of the means of production. It also ignores the key role of Western, and centrally American, imperialism in the capitalist counterrevolution, for example, in the former USSR.

There is a methodological similarity between Stalinist ideology and the theoretical framework of the Stalinophobic splits from the Trotskyist movement. The Shachtmanites, the Cliffites, the LRP—and all their progeny for that matter—they date the transformation of the USSR from a workers state to a new form of class exploitation with the consolidation of the Stalin regime between the late 1920s and the mid-to-late ’30s. In a converse but parallel way, the Maoists date the restoration of “capitalism” in the USSR with the replacement of the Stalin regime by the “revisionist” Khrushchev in the mid-to-late ’50s.

The methodological similarity between the Stalinists and the Maoists and Shachtman is made clear in our pamphlet, *Why*

continued on page 10



During Harlem cop riot in 1964, Spartacists initiated rally in NYC garment district to mobilize labor in defense of ghetto masses.

party. In fighting against the assortment of centrists in the ’30s, Trotsky noted that you can spot them a mile away by their sins of commission and omission.

We in the Spartacist League and the ICL, we are welded together by a common internationalist program and during these demonstrations against the U.S. war in Iraq, our comrades worldwide fought for a revolutionary internationalist program. Check out the ICL’s declaration on the war against Iraq [“Defend Iraq Against U.S. and Allied Imperialist Attack!” WV No. 790, 1 November 2002]. We took head-on the prevailing illusions in each country of “national unity,” from South Africa to Japan to Germany, France and England.

“Third Camp”= Camp of Imperialism

The LRP’s professed stand for the defeat of imperialism is a manifest fraud. You can’t wage a revolutionary struggle against U.S. and world imperialism and support capitalist counterrevolution. Like all of the advocates of the so-called “new class” theories, which is nothing but a rationale for capitulating to imperialism, they supported bourgeois reaction and capitalist counterrevolution all down the line. They were on the other side of the barricades time and again, from supporting the so-called “Iranian Revolution” of Khomeini in 1979, the imperialist-backed Islamic reaction in Afghanistan against

defense of the USSR and for workers political revolution against the sellout bureaucracy.

We opposed the CIA-, Vatican- and White House-backed Solidarność counterrevolutionary bid for power and the Yeltsin-Bush capitalist counterrevolution, which they embrace. Boris Yeltsin, you know, the Russian-chauvinist demagogue who as Moscow party chief in the mid 1980s legalized the fascist Pamyat organization. That’s the scum they supported. We actively fought against capitalist counterrevolution, which included distributing over 100,000 leaflets in Moscow in order to defeat it [“Soviet Workers: Defeat Yeltsin-Bush Counterrevolution!” WV No. 533, 30 August 1991]. The LRP on the other hand, would have “tactically lined up in a military bloc with Yeltsin”—and with Yeltsin’s sponsors and advisers in the White House and CIA.

The LRP sang the praises of the bankers’ union, Polish Solidarność, which was so beloved by Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher and the Vatican and Western imperialism. We were for spiking Solidarność’ counterrevolutionary bid for power, and right here in New York City the *Wall Street Journal* warned against the Spartacists demonstrating in the streets against Solidarność. We supported Jaruzelski’s military coup against counterrevolutionary Solidarność. This was a straightforward application of Trotsky’s position as laid out in the Transi-

Spartacist...

(continued from page 9)

the *USSR Is Not Capitalist*: “Stalin and Shachtman shared a common identification of the *political* character of the ruling party or group with the *dominant social class* represented by the state.”

So we should look at what this has to do with the imperialist war. Well, you can’t claim to have a consistent revolutionary program for the overthrow of capitalism if you capitulate to your own ruling class all down the line, as I’ve pointed out. The LRP provided a left cover for the reformists in the antiwar movement and also they’ve been marching in lockstep with certain black Democrats like Charles Rangel, the black Democratic Party Congressman who called for the reinstitution of the draft. Rangel said we need a draft because we need equality of sacrifice for the rich and the poor. This is a gross attempt to whip up black support for a racist colonial war against Iraq. And it’s been met by contempt by a lot of the black victims of racist American imperialism, who are calling it a white man’s war. One expects that from the likes of Rangel or some other capitalist politician, who tries to enlist blacks and minorities as cannon fodder for the imperialist military.

Genuine communists historically have opposed conscription, and we say today in the spirit of revolutionaries like German communist Karl Liebknecht did during World War I, “Not a man, not a penny for the imperialist military.” Not so the LRP which has discovered the virtue of a con-



Roberto Schmidt

Demonstration of Arab villagers in northern Iraq who were displaced by Kurds who were earlier displaced by Arabs. Which is the “reactionary” people and which the “progressive” by LRP’s lights?

only for a standing army, but even for a bourgeois militia, even in countries like the United States, or Switzerland, Norway, etc.” And also the LRP picked up one of Trotsky’s weakest positions—the Proletarian Military Policy, which called for “workers control of conscription”—and turned it into a reformist caricature. We say hands off Lenin and Trotsky, you centrist swindlers! You trample underfoot their most fundamental Marxist teachings on the class nature of the state, the need to smash the rule of the bourgeoisie and fight for working-class revolution.

Revolutionary Integrationism: The Fight for Black Liberation

Let me just make a couple of other points. The LRP supports the integration of blacks into the imperialist armed forces. However, they oppose the struggle for integration. And you heard that, I don’t have to repeat that. Because really

nation-state. However, Western capitalism’s decisive transformation from its progressive epoch into its imperialist epoch has turned everything around for Leninists. To apply the assimilationist outlook today is a direct capitulation to imperialism; it is dangerous advice to oppressed peoples who in this epoch will not be allowed to assimilate.”

No, no, no, no! What is dangerous nonsense is for a so-called Marxist organization to rail against the fight for integration, the fight against forced segregation in racist capitalist America. Moreover, what you referred to about the age of imperialism—precisely at the end of the 19th century, the rise of American imperialism saw the resurgence of racist reaction in this country. You had a certain person, a conservative black capitalist spokesman named Booker T. Washington, who was pushing segregation, and he was warmly embraced by the racist capitalist exploiters.

So the LRP also claims that white workers are a “labor aristocracy,” which means that they’re bought off, and they lump them with the white racist rulers. This is how they put it: “Black workers no longer have to wait upon whether or not white workers will lead a struggle or not. Black—and Latino—workers are now strategically placed in major industries and in the dominant cities. Their militancy and their actions can be a decisive pole in what the white workers do.” This is a pseudo-leftist rejection of the centrality of the working class in the fight to abolish the racist capitalist system. If white and black workers don’t have common interests, which means a common fight against the racist exploiters, then you drive the white workers into the arms of the white ruling class and, at worst, the fascists!

How can any serious struggle for proletarian power be undertaken by an organization that has just consigned a significant section of the American working class to the scrap heap! In the late 1960s, when the radical-nationalist League of Revolutionary Black Workers refused to hand out their leaflets at Detroit auto factories to white workers, this was a big blow against working-class unity, and a missed opportunity to win them to a program of revolutionary struggle. So this is what the LRP passes off as revolutionary strategy in the imperialist epoch. What a gift to the violent, bloody U.S. imperialist ruling class. The American government must be saying: Hey, give us some more socialists like that!

For Trotskyists, the fight for black liberation is strategic to the American revolution, and black oppression is the bedrock of American capitalism. There will be no proletarian revolution unless the most conscious workers are won to the banner of black liberation through proletarian revolution. This is ABC for communists—a revolutionary workers party that champions the interests of all the oppressed and exploited. In many ways today, the conditions of the black masses are even worse than at the time of the civil rights movement. So our program of revolutionary integrationism—for the assimilation of blacks in an egalitarian socialist order—means fighting for power. And it speaks to the felt needs of millions of people.

Concluding on this point, I just want to point out our long history of struggle fighting for black freedom: for over 20 years our history of successful labor-black

mobilizations against the Klan, which in most instances involved a struggle against black Democratic Party politicians; our fight for black people to even be served at Denny’s restaurants; to our long history rallying for Geronimo ji Jaga (Pratt) and Mumia Abu-Jamal, ex-Panthers, our fight for all class-war prisoners—MOVE members and Jerry Dale Lowe, the white miner in jail.

When we fought for labor-black defense to defend busing against white racist mobs, we were standing in the Leninist tradition, with Lenin’s Bolsheviks. In Lenin’s pamphlet [“The Nationality of Pupils in Russian Schools,” 1913], he pointed out that: “We must strive to secure the *mixing* of the children of *all* nationalities in *uniform* schools in each locality.” So this is the tradition we stand in, and I can develop this a little more.

The LRP rejects the liberating ideals of communism which animated the Bolshevik Party under the leadership of Lenin and Trotsky. Internationalist unity of the proletariat is ABC for communists, for real, revolutionary Marxists—that is, Trotskyists. They have reaffirmed their advocacy, in fact, of national war as against internationalist class struggle in their reply to us with regard to the Near East. They continue to call on the Arab bourgeoisie to arm the Palestinians—the same capitalist rulers who have slaughtered thousands of Palestinians and oppress women, religious and national minorities. They uphold their support of the Arab rulers in the Arab-Israeli wars of 1948 and 1967. They claim to defend the Palestinians, but they tie them to their worst enemies and lyingly denounce us as Zionists for upholding class unity against all of the exploiters in the Near East. This is their standard mode of operation.

We defend the Palestinians; we call for the Israeli troops and settlers out of the Occupied Territories, and we have consistently pointed out that where you have two peoples competing for the same territory, under capitalism there cannot be a democratic resolution of competing national claims. This is what we refer to as interpenetrated peoples. So we fight for a socialist federation of the Near East, which means fighting for the building of internationalist Trotskyist parties to overthrow the sheiks and the colonels and the nationalist strongmen and Zionist rulers. The struggle for the overthrow of the bloody Zionist rulers from within means winning the Hebrew-speaking working class from Zionism and it means championing social and national liberation for the dispossessed and horrifically oppressed Palestinian masses. While this is going to be a very difficult struggle, obviously that’s the only program that’s in the objective interests of the working class and oppressed in the Near East.

For the LRP, there is no Hebrew-speaking nation—“All Israel is Occupied Territory!” Ultimately this is a program of genocidal irredentism. It is also a repudiation of the Leninist program of self-determination and equality of all nations, peoples and languages. How can anybody deny that Israel is a class-divided society except for crazed Zionists, petty-bourgeois Arab nationalists and those like the LRP. Why, if there is no Hebrew-speaking nation, do you have 700,000 Israeli workers—Hebrew and Arab workers organized in the Histadrut—on strike against their own government? The LRP expresses the petty-bourgeois despair about breaking Hebrew-speaking workers from their rulers—which is not going to happen overnight and as we pointed out is going to require massive class struggles in that region. But if you don’t have national rights—what are they saying? That the Hebrew-speaking people don’t have a right to live, the right to be.

We’ve written many articles on the fight for the liberation of women in Iraq, against the persecution of Egyptian gays, the oppression of the Berbers, Kurds, etc., because we are really fighting to forge a world party of socialist revolution—a reformed Fourth International and an organization that Trotsky would recognize as his own. ■



Lori Mizrahi/Faubaun

May 15 demonstration of Israel Aircraft workers during massive public employees strike in Israel. LRP rejects fight for class unity of Hebrew and Arab workers in favor of appeals to Arab bourgeoisies.

scripted army. They actually go so far as to oppose the demand “No to the draft” and try to give that a socialist veneer, about how you have to learn how to use arms. They even have the nerve to quote Lenin—he’s rolling in his grave onto the sidewalk by now. In fact, Lenin never called for a conscripted army. In his pamphlet, “The Military Programme of the Proletarian Revolution” [1916] on this question he says, “We are not in favour of a bourgeois militia; we are in favour only of a proletarian militia. Therefore, ‘not a penny, not a man,’ not

what they’re doing with their program of so-called proletarian interracialism is to chase behind the black separatist, pseudo-nationalists and they cite Karl Marx and they cite C.L.R. James, the former SWPer and centrist, in support of their wretched accommodation to the racist status quo. Here’s what they say about Marx in justification of their position in their pamphlet on interracialism [Sy Landy, *Marxism, Interracialism and the Black Struggle*], “Marx and Engels strongly advocated assimilation as a means to effectively build and consolidate the capitalist

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LRP...

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outraged poor people to that of conscious and organized working people.”

An SL floor speaker ripped apart the LRP’s empty cheering over the ghetto upheavals:

“Yes, there are spontaneous outbursts of rage and yes, they are understandable. And from ‘64 on, we defended them. 1964: we stand with the ghetto masses in defense but recognize that this is not a program. 1964 we organized a defense rally when Harlem was under siege by the cops—a thousand in the garment center. We sought labor defense of the ghetto masses, linking the ghetto to the factory floor where minority workers have real social power....

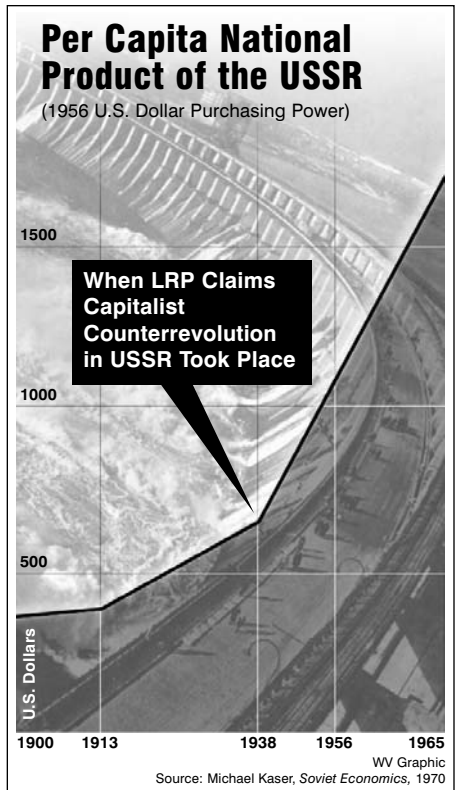
“Look at the neighborhoods where those ghetto rebellions happened. What was the outcome? Whole swathes of neighborhoods destroyed and never rebuilt. We care about the people that were killed and we care about those destroyed neighborhoods. Not you!

“What was the real gain of those rebellions? Black mayors, Democratic Party mayors in cities across the country for the purpose of keeping a lid on struggle. One of those mayors, Wilson Goode, ordered the bombing of the MOVE family in 1985. We held a defense rally in their support. You came and spit on it!”

Richardson’s summary remarks exposed just how despairing the LRP’s nonexistent program for black liberation is: Spartacist spokesmen from the floor nailed the LRP for promoting as a “united front” an October 1999 “tolerance for the Klan” demonstration in New York City built by Democratic politician Al Sharpton, the International Socialist Organization and ...the cops of the Latino Officers Association (LOA), who even invited the raceterrorists to share their sound system. This was organized in explicit opposition to the “Stop the Klan” labor/black mobilization initiated by the Partisan Defense Committee. Richardson devoted a fair chunk of his summary to trying to justify the LRP’s support for a “united front” with the LOA cops in order to “expose” them! In the aftermath of the NYPD killing of black unionist Alberta Spruill, the LRP issued a leaflet lamenting that Sharpton, as “the city’s most prominent opponent of police brutality,” had failed to lead the struggle against Mayor Bloomberg.

To cover their tracks, the LRP routinely tries to portray the SL as racist, Zionist, “first-world chauvinist,” etc. One of their speakers at the debate claimed that we have a line “like Pat Buchanan’s” on immigration. A Spartacist spokesman refuted this garbage:

“Every country where we have a section, we are known for our fight for full citizenship rights for all immigrants. The LRP’s call for unlimited immigration and before that for open borders is basically a call on the imperialist nation-state to dissolve itself—not unusual for a group that calls on the bourgeois state to provide full employment and even to ex-



“Statified capitalism” idiocy. Enormous Soviet economic growth was result of planned economy.

6 JUNE 2003

What Lurks Behind the Three Dots?

In their attempt to claim Lenin’s authority for their vicarious support to Arab nationalism and their denial of the national rights of the Hebrew-speaking people, the LRP stoops to grossly censoring Lenin’s words. We reprint below a passage from Lenin’s “The Revolutionary Proletariat and the Right of Nations to Self-Determination” (1915). In its handout “Spartacism vs. Bolshevism: A Selection of Quotations” the LRP published only the shaded passages, replacing with three dots the unshaded excerpts calling for consistent democracy and equal rights for all nations.

“The focal point in the Social-Democratic programme must be that division of nations into oppressor and oppressed which forms the *essence* of imperialism, and is *deceitfully* evaded by the social-chauvinists and Kautsky. This division is not significant from the angle of bourgeois pacifism or the philistine Utopia of peaceful competition among independent nations under capitalism, but it is most significant from the angle of the revolutionary struggle against imperialism. It is from this division that *our* definition of the “right of nations to self-determination” must follow, a definition that is consistently democratic, revolutionary, and *in accord* with the general task of the immediate struggle for socialism. It is for that right, and in a struggle to achieve sincere recognition for it, that the Social-Democrats of the oppressor nations must demand that the oppressed nations should have the right of secession, for otherwise recognition of equal rights for nations and of international working-class solidarity would in fact be merely empty phrase-mongering, sheer hypocrisy. On the other hand, the Social-Democrats of the oppressed nations must attach prime significance to the unity and the merging of the workers of the oppressed nations with those of the oppressor nations; otherwise these Social-Democrats will involuntarily become the allies of their own national *bourgeoisie*, which *always* betrays the interests of the people and of democracy, and is *always* ready, in its turn, to annex territory and oppress other nations.”

propriate itself. This is counterposed to Leninism. And Lenin specifically polemicized against ‘Open the frontiers.’ Behind the LRP’s line is the premise that the imperialist order can be made more democratic and egalitarian.”

For us Marxists, debates are an opportunity for a clash of political opinions aimed at clarifying differences within the workers movement and raising the consciousness of workers and radicalized youth. With its lies and slanders, the LRP degrades polemical debate with the aim of obfuscation and confusion. They have whined that none of their “five questions” were answered at the debate. The LRP’s “questions”—like “Are you for Israeli minority apartheid rule or Israeli ethnic cleansing?”—were politically analogous to “when did you stop beating your wife?” In fact, a young activist around the Black Radical Congress told us afterward that he left the debate early because he could no longer stomach the LRP’s fabrications.

Lies and slanders are but the opening step to encouraging and justifying violence against political opponents in the workers movement. The Stalinophobic LRP apes the methodology of the Stalinists—though with its tiny handful of followers, the LRP could hardly emulate Stalin. It was impossible for Stalin to defend his anti-revolutionary doctrine of “socialism in one country” from any Marxist vantage point. When lying was no longer sufficient, Stalin brought down the fist of violence.

As a footnote to the above: while smearing the SL as anti-immigrant chauvinists, the LRP embraced an “independent” speaker who *is* an anti-immigrant chauvinist—one Greg Butler of Gangbox: Construction Workers News Service. In his tirade, Butler ridiculed the notion of “some unity between black and white workers” in integrating the construction trades, instead lauding the use of “baseball bats and chains” and “busting heads.” The next LRP speaker began his comments by saying, “Thank you, Greg, for your contribution.” Another LRP speaker said, “I want to really solidarize with what Greg said.”

Perhaps the LRP also solidarizes with what Greg says on his Gangbox Web site? In a 29 December 1999 posting, Butler acknowledges that his “baseball bats” were an auxiliary to the use of anti-union lawsuits under the auspices of “an unlikely ally, one Richard M. Nixon” and his administration’s union-busting “preferential hiring” Philadelphia Plan. And in response to an Internet letter dated 3 October 2002 insisting that “if the ‘workers of the world’ are to unite,

we need to rise above the borderline mentality,” Butler replied the next day that “mass immigration benefits BOSSES on both sides of the border, and hurts WORKERS on both sides of the border.” On 5 October 2002, he stressed the need to “disable the flow of cheap labor that depresses wages and working conditions.” In the same posting, Butler ranted: “Ever wonder why the jails in every state (even heavily White states like Oregon) are packed with Black men? It’s in large part due to immigration”!

“First World” chauvinism, indeed!

BT & IG: Bringing Up the LRP’s Rear

While disgusting charges of “chauvinism” and worse were flung with abandon by the LRP and speakers sympathetic to them, the LRP had backup from other quarters, namely the Bolshevik Tendency (BT) and the Internationalist Group (IG). The BT chimed in, attacking “the Spartacist League’s adaptation to social-patriotism.” Not to be left out, an IG spokesman attacked us for “capitulation to U.S. imperialism,” ad nauseam.

While the BT and IG formally disagree with the Shachtmanites of the LRP on the Russian question, they have much in common. The BT cut and ran from our hard Soviet-defensist line at the start of Cold War II in the 1980s. And the IG was sent spiraling into cyberspace and a global search for alien class forces in the aftermath of the destruction of the Soviet Union, having despaired at the prospect of winning the working class to revolutionary consciousness. This debate between the anti-Soviet LRP and the Trotskyist SL clearly put the IG in a bind. IG *supremo*

Jan Norden had to devote the bulk of his intervention to denouncing Shachtmanism only so that one of his comrades could get up and sound indistinguishable from the LRP in chauvinist-baiting the SL. Such is the price of admission into the anti-Spartacist opportunist swamp.

Explaining why we call the Shachtmanite LRP “State Department socialists,” a Spartacist floor speaker also demolished the “anti-imperialist” posturing of the IG and BT:

“We’ve gotten a lot of guff today about how the SL isn’t for the defeat of imperialism. This is really rich, coming from the LRP. You couldn’t even be for the defeat of the Nazi imperialists by the Soviet Red Army! You weren’t for the defeat of American imperialism by China and North Korea, either. You were so afraid that the El Salvador rebels [in the 1980s] were tainted by Stalinist germs that you weren’t for their military victory. You gave them ‘military support.’ What does that mean—shoot the other side in the feet, not the head?

“You don’t like the ‘State Department’? Sorry, but the State Department, Ronald Reagan and the LRP all said the same thing about Afghanistan: Red Army out! That ain’t defeat of imperialism, baby, and as far as the BT and the Internationalist Group are concerned, you’re not so hot on Afghanistan, either. The BT retrospectively dumped our slogan of ‘Hail Red Army in Afghanistan!’ in order to be at one with the anti-Communist left in this country. Ditto the IG, when they initiated an action at Hunter College during the [2001] war in Afghanistan and had not one word to say about ‘Hail Red Army in Afghanistan!’ So nuts to you people and your ‘defeat imperialism.’”

The LRP’s bag of tricks on the Russian question included such outlandish allegations as: the Soviet Red Army took the side of the CIA-backed Islamic fundamentalists in Afghanistan in the 1980s; the *Wall Street Journal* was for the crushing of counterrevolutionary Polish Solidarność; the Spartacist League called for the USSR to stage a nuclear attack on China. Manifestly, no lie is too big for this little league.

Responding to one of these absurd charges, our floor speaker continued:

“Here’s a picture of a young woman in the 1980s fighting in the militia when the Soviet Union was in the country. She’s got a Kalashnikov. Do you know the difference between that and a woman in a head-to-toe veil? That was the difference in the two sides in the war in Afghanistan.”

As for Polish Solidarność and the *Wall Street Journal*, to paraphrase Trotsky, even slander should make some sense! Could this be the same *Wall Street Journal* which in a 29 September 1981 editorial entitled “Communists and the AFL-CIO” directly threatened us for protesting the opening of a Solidarność office in New York at the headquarters of “democratic socialist” Al Shanker’s teachers union a few days earlier? The editorial noted our demonstration and warned: “Anyone seeking to delegitimize” the AFL-CIO tops’ support for Solidarność “should be aware of just how serious an attack he is launching.”

Regarding our supposed call for a Soviet nuclear attack on China, the LRP cited as “evidence” the following from WV No. 226 (2 March 1979), written at the time of China’s invasion of Vietnam:

continued on page 12



Python (Monty) Pictures Ltd.

Armless knight in *Monty Python and the Holy Grail* also proclaimed victory.

Cuba...

(continued from page 1)

raised an uproar over the arrests in Cuba, they have carried out their own campaign against defenders of Cuba in the U.S. A case in point is the Miami Five, who have been sentenced to between 15 years to life for the “crime” of monitoring the terrorist activities of *gusanos*. We demand: **Free the Miami Five now!**

The Spartacist League calls for the unconditional military defense of the Cuban deformed workers state—as well as the remaining workers states of China, North Korea and Vietnam—against imperialism and capitalist counterrevolution. While not condoning the executions of three of the boat hijackers last month, we support those measures that are taken in defense of the gains of the Cuban Revolution, including the imprisonment of those “dissidents” who are actively collaborating with U.S. imperialism.

We call for an end to U.S. imperialism’s embargo against Cuba, a blatant act of war, and demand the immediate withdrawal of American forces from Guantánamo Bay, a major U.S. military base now also being used as a concentration camp for hundreds of prisoners abducted during the U.S. war in Afghanistan. Genuine defense of the Cuban Revolution against imperialism requires a program for workers revolution throughout the Americas—and above all, here in the U.S. **Down with U.S. imperialism! Defend the gains of the Cuban Revolution!**

Drummer Boys for Imperialist “Democracy”

The petty-bourgeois Castro government’s expropriation of the holdings of the U.S. imperialists and their domestic bourgeois lackeys in 1960-61—in the face of an escalating imperialist offensive—led to enormous gains for the Cuban working masses, particularly women and blacks. With critical Soviet military and economic aid, the resources of Cuban society were invested in a centralized, planned economy, which guaranteed everyone a job, decent housing, food and education. The free health care system, despite the crippling effect of the U.S. blockade, is still far and away the



Havana, May 2002: Fidel Castro greets Jimmy Carter, advocate of “democratic” counterrevolution.

best among “Third World” countries. Abortion is a free health service, and the infant mortality rate is lower than in parts of the “First World.” The rate of AIDS infection in the U.S. is 14 times that of Cuba. The island has more doctors and teachers per capita than just about any country in the world.

Despite its heroic achievements, the Cuban workers state has been bureaucratically deformed from its inception with the working class excluded from political power. Cuba is ruled by a Stalinist caste that upholds the nationalist dogma of building “socialism in one country” and opposes the perspective of international proletarian revolution, thus undermining the defense of the Cuban Revolution. Cuba’s situation has become particularly acute since the collapse of the Soviet Union. To avert economic disaster, the Cuban government has increasingly opened the country to imperialist investment and instituted a series of “market reforms.” In the mid 1990s, the regime also legalized the holding and exchange of U.S. currency, a “dollarization” which has led to sharp and growing income differentials hitting women and black Cubans the hardest. As part of our defense of the Cuban Revolution, we fight for a workers political revolution to oust the Stalinist bureaucracy in Havana and establish a regime of workers democracy, based on the power of workers councils, and revolutionary internationalism.

At the time of Carter’s visit, we warned: “While the counterrevolutionary dissidents may be few in number today, the growing imperialist penetration and social inequality serve to continually reinforce pro-capitalist tendencies within Cuba and to undermine support for the revolution among the population” (WV No. 782, 31 May 2002). And, in fact, Castro’s embrace of Carter only served to embolden internal counterrevolutionary forces, as the many thousands of signatures garnered by the Varela project show. In welcoming Carter, Castro hailed this “human rights” imperialist’s “tenure as president” for easing relations with Cuba. In fact, Carter ushered in a renewed imperialist anti-Soviet war drive during his presidency in the late 1970s, wielding the same “human rights” rhetoric he used in Cuba. This included promoting a host of Soviet “dissidents” like the Varela types today.

Taking their cue from “democratic” imperialists like Carter, a wide array of “left” liberals and trade-union bureaucrats in the U.S. and internationally have joined in the denunciations of the arrests in Cuba. After the trials in April, United Federation of Teachers official and Democratic Socialists of America member Leo Casey circulated a petition denouncing Castro’s crackdown as “brute repression” while not saying a word about the U.S. government’s occupation of Iraq or its “war on terror” against immigrants

and labor in the U.S. This was signed by a herd of anti-communist, social-democratic professors such as Stanley Aronowitz and Bogdan Denitch and *Nation* types like Katha Pollitt and Todd Gitlin.

For those “leftist” intellectuals who were squeamish about signing such an outright statement of support to the Bush regime, another petition was circulated by the social-democratic Campaign for Peace and Democracy, which was signed by such notables as Howard Zinn, Cornel West and that all-purpose anti-communist Noam Chomsky. While mouthing some criticisms of U.S. policy toward Cuba (and Iraq), the statement asserts, “We support civil liberties and democratic rights everywhere, regardless of the country’s economic, political or social system.... We support democracy in Cuba. The imprisonment of people for attempting to exercise their rights of free expression is outrageous and unacceptable.”

Exposing what this bleating for “democracy” in Cuba is all about, leftist intellectual James Petras wrote in *Socialist Viewpoint* (May 2003):

“The principal author and promoter of the anti-Cuban declaration in the United States (signed by Chomsky, Zinn and Wallerstein) was Joanne Landy, a self-declared ‘democratic socialist,’ and life-long advocate of the violent overthrow of the Cuban government—for the past 40 years. She is now a member of the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR), one of the major institutions advising the U.S. government on imperial policies for over a half century....

“It is no surprise that the statement authored by this chameleon right-wing extremist contained no mention of Cuba’s social accomplishments and opposition to imperialism. For the record, it should be noted, that Landy was a visceral opponent of the Chinese, Vietnamese and other social revolutions in her climb to positions of influence in the CFR.”

For the record, it should also be noted that Joanne Landy is a former member of the Shachtmanite International Socialists, which spawned the International Socialist Organization and Sy Landy’s League for the Revolutionary Party, which are also hostile to the Cuban Revolution. For these outfits, the abstract notion of (*bourgeois*) “democracy” and not the proletarian class character of the Cuban state is the be-all and end-all.

LRP...

(continued from page 11)

“As for Moscow’s ultimate option, there is much that it could do to bring China around if Brezhnev & Co. were really committed to the international solidarity they cynically profess. Peking has an extremely narrow nuclear establishment, all of it targeted by the USSR. Likewise the Chinese oil industry is extremely vulnerable even to a surgical attack by conventional forces in Sinkiang and Manchuria. And the Russian bureaucracy could find its hand forced so that it must take action, not out of devotion to defending the gains of the Vietnamese Revolution but rather in order to ensure its own survival.”

The invasion was tacitly supported by Washington and we were serious about the Soviet Union honoring its treaty with Vietnam. In a press release announcing a demonstration outside the Chinese Mission to the UN, we said, “China is acting as the spearhead of a renewed drive by U.S. imperialism against the Soviet Union and the working people of Indochina,” and raised the call: “China: Get Out of Vietnam Now! Don’t Be a Cat’s Paw for U.S. Imperialism!” We denounced the reactionary nationalism of the Stalinist bureaucracies in both Beijing and Moscow, and called for communist unity against imperialism. The WV article quoted above also noted: “In calling on the USSR to honor its treaty with Vietnam we are addressing the Soviet masses, calling on them to break with Brezhnev’s capitulationist policy of détente with the imperialists and to remove the bureaucracy through workers political revolution.”

The LRP’s hostility to the degenerated

and deformed workers states is a reflection of its hostility to Leninism and to the fight for a Leninist vanguard party to lead the proletariat to power. As a Spartacist floor speaker put it:

“The core premise of revolutionary Marxism is that the role of the revolutionary party is to bring revolutionary consciousness into the working class without which you can have splendid, inspiring, self-sacrificing struggle, but you will not have an overturn of property relations and the construction of a socialist egalitarian society without revolutionary consciousness....

“Your view is that consciousness develops spontaneously from the class struggle and you have explicitly renounced Lenin’s *What Is To Be Done?* and denounced the Spartacist League as condescending ‘middle-class saviors’ for taking up Lenin’s fight. Then I have a suggestion for you: If revolutionary consciousness is spontaneously generated, why don’t you disband?”

When we first debated Sy Landy in 1973, his Revolutionary Socialist League—the LRP’s predecessor—had just emerged from the social-democratic International Socialists, proclaiming themselves “born again” Trotskyists. We noted: “For the past fifteen years, Landy has been fighting as a Shachtmanite against Trotskyism. Now he comes here and claims he was born two months ago” (WV No. 27, 31 August 1973). Thirty years of Cold War and counterrevolutionary defeats later, the LRP is a hardened anti-Communist outfit that espouses in place of Marxism all manner of petty-bourgeois nationalism and trade-union opportunism. At bottom, the difference between the Spartacist League and the LRP comes down to this: We fight for new October Revolutions and they don’t. ■

Oakland...

(continued from page 16)

Likewise, ILWU officials have been busy attempting to divert outrage over April 7 into impotent appeals for reform of the Oakland police. This was the dominant purpose of a May 12 rally on the docks organized in advance by Direct Action to Stop War, union officials, liberal Democrats, port employers and the OPD as a stage-managed procession to “reclaim” the right to protest—as long as it was pre-arranged to have no possibility of harming capitalist profits. The cops exist to defend the property and privileges of the rulers against the working class and poor. “Police reform” is impossible so long as the whole capitalist system of racist repression exists. Police oversight schemes like civilian review boards only serve to make that system *appear* more credible.

Our PDC statement in response to April 7 pointed out: “Now the protesters at the docks are given the kind of treatment regularly meted out to the black population of the Bay Area by the cops.” This truth was driven home again on Memorial Day, when the OPD opened fire with sting grenades on thousands of blacks attending a Caribbean/Brazilian festival at Oakland’s Mosswood Park. These grenades, which fire several .32 caliber rubber balls, were the same as some of the projectiles police fired on April 7, so-called “non-lethal” weapons that even the Center for Army Lessons Learned says only *minimize* permanent injuries and fatalities. Capturing the impotence of looking to the capitalist state to rein in its own racist armed thugs,

Bay Area Police Watch director Ismael Tarikh declared: “Despite everything we went through after the port [protest], at the first chance they revert back to what is clearly an excessive use of force” (*San Francisco Chronicle*, 28 May).

Many supporters of Direct Action buy into the same illusion that the police can be somehow made to “serve the people”—an outlook that leaves them incapable of understanding, or fighting, the malignant state repression bearing down on them. To effectively fight, they need precisely a Marxist understanding of the forces arrayed against them, and a program for workers revolution. It was this Marxist understanding which enabled us to initiate and organize a labor-centered, united-front rally in Oakland on February 9, 2002 which mobilized dockers and other unionists in *political independence* from all capitalist parties and agencies, in defense of labor, immigrants, blacks and all democratic rights.

In the late 1930s, U.S. Trotskyists pointed out “Concrete democratic rights can be defended only by independent class struggle; and such a struggle finds itself in ever greater conflict with the bourgeois democratic state which itself is the agency that undermines democratic rights” (*The Peoples’ Front: The New Betrayal* by James Burnham). For the bourgeoisie, workers organizing to withhold their labor *is never* acceptable. In this case, their functionaries slipped up and said it out loud. What’s needed is a fight to build the revolutionary party to lead the proletariat to fulfill its historic task of ridding humanity of the scourge of capitalist exploitation and tyranny for good. ■

Kurds...

(continued from page 5)

deported. The repression was so intense that it would be 30 years before any significant political struggle reasserted itself in Turkish Kurdistan. Since rebellion was renewed in the 1980s, more than three million Kurds have been driven from their homes. This is a nation that has dearly earned the right to form an independent state. Only self-satisfied great-power chauvinists like the IBT could make the obscene statement that the Kurdish people are “indifferent” to the question of national liberation.

The Iraqi Revolution of 1958

Now, I indicated earlier that there was rich historical experience of joint class struggle between Arab and Kurdish workers. I want to talk a bit about the high point of that tradition, the Iraqi revolution of 1958. That revolution was triggered on Bastille Day—July 14—1958 when the overthrow of the hated British-installed monarchy by Iraqi Free Officers touched off the most powerful demonstration of revolutionary capacity in the Near East. Armed and highly organized, the Iraqi working class, led by the Iraqi Communist Party (ICP), stood on the brink of seizing power. And a vanguard role in the revolution was played by Kurdish workers in the oil fields and industries of Kirkuk and Mosul. According to Uriel Dann: “The thousands of workers at the oil installations, the majority of whom were Kurds, had nurtured a local communist branch with a fighting record unrivalled in Iraq” (*Iraq Under Qassem*).

Within weeks, a peasant insurrection was sweeping across the agricultural plains of Iraq as peasants burned landlords’ estates, destroyed the account ledgers and seized the land. The ICP controlled the labor unions, peasant organizations, the union of students. Mammoth rallies, some drawing over a million participants, were staged in Baghdad under ICP leadership. President Eisenhower responded to the revolutionary explosion by sending Marines to Lebanon and preparing for a possible invasion of Iraq. The *Wall Street Journal* (16 July 1958) candidly declared: “We are fighting for the oil fields of the Middle East.”

The 1958 revolution had an enormous impact throughout the Near East, not only on workers but on the Kurdish people. One measure of the revolutionary turmoil in Iraq is that the new constitution cited the Kurds as equal partners with Arabs in society (without of course recognizing the Kurds’ right to independence). David McDowall, in his *A Modern History of the Kurds*, declared that the Iraqi revolution of 1958 provided “easily the most critical impetus to Kurdish feeling” in Turkey.

The Iraqi Communist Party was not only the most proletarian of the Communist parties in the Near East; from its inception it had a large number of members from national and ethnic minorities, including Jews. In the period from 1949 to 1955, every general secretary of the

ICP was Kurdish, as was nearly one-third of its central committee. From its inception, the ICP had called for the Kurdish right to independence. However, in 1955, as the Stalinists were capitulating to Nasser and Arab nationalism, the ICP criticized its previous position and now declared that “the fraternal Kurdish people has no interests which are incompatible with the interest of any of the Arab countries” (quoted in Batatu, *The Old Social Classes and the Revolutionary Movements of Iraq*).

From the outset of the 1958 upsurge, the ICP threw its support behind the government headed by Brigadier Abd al-Karim Qassim, whom the Stalinists hailed as “sole leader.” This was the fruit of the Stalinists’ dogma of “two-stage revolution.” That meant putting off the aim of socialist revolution to the distant future while today casting about for “progressive” capitalist and imperialist “allies” to help them achieve a bourgeois-democratic revolution. This idea of unity with the so-called “progressive” bourgeoisie has repeatedly served to disorient and demobilize the working class and set it up for bloody defeat, from China in 1927 to Spain in the 1930s to Allende’s Chile in the early 1970s.

The high point of the revolution came in early 1959 when the ICP mobilized a quarter of a million people in Mosul,



H. Cristoph

Aluminum factory in the Ruhr. Turkish and Kurdish workers are strategic component of industrial proletariat in Germany.

many of them armed, to suppress a coup by Nasserites and counterrevolutionary officers. This triggered several days of street fighting in which Communist-led workers and soldiers mopped up the conspirators and their bourgeois backers, arresting many and hanging others from lampposts. Armed militants of the People’s Resistance Force (PRF), a popular militia that had been set up by Qassim in July 1958 and quickly taken over by the Communists, essentially took power in the city.

At this point, the ICP had more support among military officers than the Free Officers movement had had when it took power on 14 July 1958. According



DPA

1997: Kurdish guerrillas slaughtered by Turkish troops amid ongoing war of terror against Kurdish population.

to Batatu, whose book is the standard work on the history of the ICP, pro-ICP officers controlled the strategic First Division in Basra and Nasiriya, the Second Division in Kirkuk, a brigade of the Second Division in Mosul, and a number of other army units. The commander of the air force was an ICP supporter, as were almost one-quarter of the pilots. A number of these military commanders

lectuals away from their Stalinist misleaders. The ICP made such spectacular gains that in January 1959, it was forced to declare a recruitment freeze because the flood of new members was overwhelming its ability to integrate them. The SWP remarked perceptively (*Militant*, 20 April 1959) that because the ICP had mushroomed so quickly since July ’58 “it may not be under the firm control of a bureaucratic machine.”

I have some indirect evidence of the kind of tensions that were tearing at the ICP—and probably at CPs throughout the Near East at the time. It is from an article written in early 1959—when the Iraqi revolution was at its height—by Maxime Rodinson, a French Marxist intellectual specializing in the Near East. At the time, Rodinson was a member of the French CP or was just in the process of breaking from it and was in contact with many CP members in the Near East. He wrote:

“We find ourselves faced with the same sort of dilemma that was the subject of very bitter controversy among the Russian social-democrats before 1917. As Trotsky realized at the time, and Lenin also as can be seen from the April Theses, the question is: Should the socialist revolution follow immediately after the anti-feudal revolution (and anti-imperialist, here)? Or should allowance be made for a long period of construction of the economic independence in between the two stages, in the context of relations of capitalist production?”

“The social forces needed for the socialist revolution do exist.”

—Maxime Rodinson, *Marxism and the Muslim World* (1981)

Rodinson continues here to accept the Stalinist dogma of revolution by stages, but he is certainly chafing within the limits set by it. I can’t prove it, but I’m quite sure that this quote reflects, in an indirect way, the gigantic contradictions within the Stalinist parties of the Near East at the time.

In July, attention was centered on Kirkuk, where an ICP-led demonstration degenerated into a communalist massacre of Turkmens, who were prominent in the city’s commercial elite. There was no evidence then or now that the ICP leadership had fomented or supported the communal slaughter. But Qassim used the Kirkuk events as a pretext to repress the ICP. He ordered the CP-led militia, the Popular Resistance Force, disbanded, arrested hundreds of Communist supporters and sealed the offices of the General Federation of Trade Unions. A plenum of the ICP Central Committee responded with an obsequious self-criticism declaring that its demand for participation in the government had been “a mistake” because it “led to the impairment of the party’s relations with the national government”—in other words, it displeased Qassim. The plenum declared a “freeze” on Communist work in the army, and informed the ranks that it was carrying out an “orderly retreat.”

Coincidentally, the very same day the plenum report was published, it was announced that Khrushchev was going to visit the U.S. the following month for a summit meeting with Eisenhower. Batatu underlines how Khrushchev sold out the

were pleading with the ICP leadership to take power, which gives you an idea of what the climate must have been among the ranks.

Above all, the People’s Resistance Force, which had just demonstrated its power in Mosul, numbered, by a conservative estimate, 25,000 in May 1959.

Here is how the *Militant* (20 April 1959) of the Socialist Workers Party, at the time the Trotskyist party in the U.S., described the situation:

“Far from obliging the Kassim regime by disappearing back into their wretched hovels, the common people of Baghdad—the ‘mob,’ as the American newspaper correspondents call them—remain in control of the capital.

“Their organized units of young men and young women—for the revolution is liberating the Arab women from their centuries of bondage—patrol the streets and maintain public order. Moreover, the Kassim government is reluctantly giving in to mass demands that the People’s Resistance Forces should retain their weapons. Heretofore, weapons had to be turned back to army depots after each day’s drills....

“In Iraq, the workers and peasants now have an extremely favorable opportunity to carry through a socialist revolution which would put them on the road to ending the backwardness and poverty of their country and would make Iraq the inspiration and attractive power for the masses of all Mideast countries.”

The Iraqi Communist Party

Amid the revolutionary turbulence, the possibilities were enormous for even a relatively small Trotskyist organization to intervene and split the ICP, winning revolutionary-minded workers and intel-

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Iraqi proletariat to make his Camp David meeting with the U.S. president more congenial:

“Perhaps the factor that had the greatest weight in the decision to beat a retreat was the pressure that the Communist Party of the Soviet Union appears to have brought to bear upon the Iraqi Communist leadership. According to Adnan Jilmiran, the then member of the Mosul Local Committee, the Russians sent at this point to Baghdad George Tallu, a member of the Iraqi Politbureau, who had been undergoing medical treatment in Moscow, with an urgent request to the Iraqi party to avoid provoking Qasim, and withdraw its bid to participate in the government. The Russians apparently had no wish to cut all their bridges with Nasir, or jeopardize their new policy of ‘peaceful coexistence,’ or wreck the chances of a visit to Washington which Khrushchev contemplated and which he would eventually make in September.”

In February 1963, the Ba’ath Party was able to broker a military coup that brought down Qassim and unleashed the counterrevolutionary furies. Using lists of Communists supplied by the CIA, the Ba’ath Party militia, the National Guard, launched a house-to-house search, rounding up and shooting suspected CPers. An estimated 5,000 were killed and thousands more jailed, many of them hideously tortured by Saddam Hussein and others.

The CIA’s role in the 1963 Ba’ath coup has been widely documented. King Hussein of Jordan told the Egyptian daily *Al-Ahram* shortly after the coup that he knew “for a certainty” that U.S. intelligence services provided names and addresses of Communists to be killed. Edith and E.F. Penrose, in their *Iraq: International Relations and National Development* (1978) report that a number of Iraqi officials, including Ba’athists, told them of the CIA’s role. And Marion Farouk-Sluglett and Peter Sluglett state in *Iraq Since 1958* (1987):

“A high-ranking former official of the State Department has confirmed to us that Saddam Husain and other Ba’thists had made contact with the American authorities in the late 1950s and early 1960s; at this stage, the Ba’th were thought to be the ‘political force of the future,’ and deserving of American support against ‘Qasim and the Communists.’”

Meanwhile, the ICP’s record of betrayal went on: when Kurds rebelled against the Qassim regime in 1961, the ICP had denounced the revolt as “serving imperialist designs.” In 1972, when Saddam Hussein allied for a while with the Soviet Union, two ICP leaders who had not had their eyes gouged out in his prisons joined his government. Last month, what’s left of the ICP greeted the U.S. colonial invasion with a banner in Baghdad that read: “A Free Country for Joyful People.”

For a Socialist Federation of the Near East!

Even in defeat, the Iraqi revolution of 1958-59 shows the potential for the working class to take power and lay the basis for the liberation of all the oppressed. The positive example of this is, of course, the Russian Revolution of 1917. The world’s first workers state served as a beacon of liberation to the oppressed masses in the former tsarist empire and the world over. Because the Bolsheviks were determined to solve the many national questions by fighting resolutely for national and democratic rights, the Soviet proletariat was able to win to its side the myriad oppressed nationalities and peoples in the former Russian empire. This was a powerful factor in the workers’ victory over the White counterrevolution in the Civil War. Lenin insisted that the Soviet Union be a free union of peoples. In the early years of Bolshevik power, many Soviet republics, autonomous *oblasts*, and other regional entities were established—the living realization of the Bolshevik program of national self-determination.

Inside the Soviet Union, the small population of some 200,000 Kurds was granted full equality with other nationalities. In 1923, the young Soviet state created an Autonomous Republic of Kurdistan roughly situated between Armenia

and Azerbaijan—the so-called “Red Kurdistan”—which, according to Gerard Chaliand’s *People Without a Country* (1980), was “a beacon to the entire Kurdish people.” While some 70 to 80 percent of Kurds in Turkey or Iran remain illiterate, among Soviet Kurds illiteracy had been completely eliminated by the 1930s. The Soviet Union’s generous treatment of its own small Kurdish minority and its support of the short-lived Kurdish Republic of Mahabad in Iran after WWII gave it enormous prestige in Kurdistan. For years, even Kurdish nationalist groups like the KDP based on traditional clans claimed to be “Marxist-Leninist.” When I gave this talk in New York, comrade Bill spoke of an Iranian woman leftist he knew whose mother was pro-Soviet because the only reason she learned to read and write was the occupation of Iranian Kurdistan during World War II by the Soviet Army.

The experience of the Russian Revolution is vitally relevant to the Kurdish question for yet another reason, the liberation of women it achieved in the Muslim lands of Central Asia. As the Red Army swept through Central Asia in the early years after the 1917 Russian Revolution, the Bolsheviks undertook the enormous task of trying to liberate women in that historically Muslim region. When they spoke of “martyrs fallen on the women’s liberation front,” they were talking about the dedicated and heroic activists from the Department for Work Among Women (Zhenotdel), who put on the veil to bring to the women of the Muslim East news of the new Soviet laws and programs that would change their lives. Many of these women lost their lives at the hands of enraged husbands, fathers and brothers. I was in Soviet Central Asia in the 1980s. In Samarkand, part of a former *madrassa* (religious school) had been converted into



a museum honoring these women. The Bolsheviks had abolished the death penalty after the revolution, but they made an exception and reinstated it specifically for murders of this type. They put a stop to it.

A political counterrevolution leading to the consolidation of the Soviet Stalinist bureaucracy stood between what I saw in Uzbekistan and the liberating ideals that animated Lenin and Trotsky’s Bolsheviks and the courageous Zhenotdel women. Yet the progress that had been achieved was astounding. In all the time I was there, I never saw a woman wearing a veil—even by women who had been born in the days before the revolution was consolidated in that region. Contraception and abortion were freely available. Unlike any Muslim country in the world, I was able to speak freely and naturally with women strangers in public places, in airports, in factories. A reflection of the

NYC, July 1999: Spartacists participate in united-front demonstration demanding freedom for imprisoned PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan.



excellent educational level was that most people I met there—women as well as men—spoke English or another West European language in addition to Russian and Uzbek.

Today, after the restoration of capitalism and the destruction of the Soviet Union, I hate to think of the fate of those women—or the men I met there too for that matter. The societies of Central Asia have been thrown back light years. Islamic fundamentalism is on the rise, the mosques are full. Disease is rampant, the modern health care system I observed has been destroyed.

The question of women’s liberation cuts right across the claims of Kurdish nationalists to stand for freedom and emancipation. They all capitulate to the

women do not live a life of “liberation.” You might remember the widespread press coverage last year of a case in Sweden where a Kurdish immigrant shot and killed his daughter because she had refused an arranged marriage and had spoken publicly about women’s oppression. Such so-called “honor killings” are not uncommon in Kurdistan—or in many other parts of the world. This was dramatically portrayed in Yilmaz Güney’s 1983 film *Yol*, which centers on a husband’s murder of his wife as punishment for adultery (we published an interesting review of this film in *Women and Revolution* No. 27, Winter 1983-84). In the late ’90s, when the KDP and PUK set up de facto states in Iraqi Kurdistan under U.S. protection, they did nothing to stop this practice; the KDP refused to even pass a formal law making “honor killings” a crime.

Another thing shown in Güney’s film—this is quite common in Kurdistan—is a young couple who are forced to flee in order to get married because the parents disapprove; in the film, the bride’s family hunts them down and kills them. According to one academic study of Kurds in Turkey (where family law is formally much more advanced than elsewhere in the Near East), only one marriage in four was arranged by the couple themselves, and even in these cases agreement by the families was often a precondition. Over 60 percent of the Kurdish women interviewed indicated that their husbands had to pay a bride price for them, essentially buying them from their families as chattel.

Women’s oppression is rooted in class society, centrally through the institution of the family. Even in the most advanced bourgeois societies only the overthrow of capitalist class rule can lay the material basis for the full emancipation of women in an egalitarian, international socialist society. But in those countries where bourgeois revolutions never occurred—which happens to be the case in the Muslim countries of the Near East—the question of women’s liberation is literally one of life and death—a fight for such basic needs as literacy, education, an end to forced marriages, freedom from the veil and the enforced seclusion and subjugation it represents.

The Russian Revolution showed in practice the road to liberation not only for women but for all the oppressed. The difference between the experience in Russia in 1917 and Iraq in 1958-59 is that in Russia there existed a party—Lenin’s Bolsheviks—capable of leading the working class to power. That’s the central point of my presentation today. What’s necessary—not just for the liberation of the Kurds but of all the oppressed—is to forge revolutionary working-class parties on the model of the Bolshevik Party, in the Near East and throughout the world. That’s the task that the International Communist League is dedicated to accomplishing. ■

WORKERS VANGUARD

From the Horse's Mouth

“War on Terror” = War on Workers

OAKLAND—Recent articles in the *Oakland Tribune* have exposed the sinister role of the California Anti-Terrorism Information Center (CATIC). Labeling anti-war protest and union action “terrorist,” CATIC had a direct hand in the April 7 attack on the Oakland docks in which Oakland police under liberal mayor Jerry Brown opened fire with so-called “less lethal” weapons, injuring dozens of anti-war protesters and nine longshoremen.

According to the *Oakland Tribune* (18 May), on April 2 CATIC sent out a “warning” that the antiwar protesters might “act violently.” An Oakland Police Department (OPD) “intelligence unit” supervisor, Derwin Longmire, had already e-mailed police commanders falsely portraying the upcoming port rally as a “Black Bloc” event with masked “anarchists” supposedly bent on destroying property and attacking police. In the weeks leading up to April 7, Bay Area cops rounded up over 2,000 antiwar protesters. CATIC spokesman Mike Van Winkle declared to the *Tribune* that “if you have a protest group protesting a war where the cause that’s being fought against is international terrorism, you might have terrorism at that (protest). You can almost argue that a protest against that is a terrorist act.”

Van Winkle also told the *Tribune* that “I’ve heard terrorism described as anything that is violent or has an economic impact, and shutting down a port certainly would have some economic impact.” These words echo the federal Maritime Transportation Security Act (MSA) signed into law last November with bipartisan support, which defines a “transportation security incident” to include “economic disruption”—a direct threat to labor action at the ports. In addition, Longmire monitored and circulated “e-mails and Web postings by leaders of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) and acquaintances in the anti-war movement” for use in preparing the attack.

While the rulers wage bloody war from Afghanistan to Iraq, they want to stop dissent at home by outlawing it. Over 20 years ago, then-California attorney general George Deukmejian wrongfully included the Spartacist League as “terrorists” in his 1979 “Report on Organized Crime in California.” We launched a lawsuit against him, successfully compelling a retraction. As we pointed out at the time, “we were falsely labeled as dangerous people, to be dealt with militarily, mad dogs to be shot down” (WV No. 296, 8 January 1982). CATIC’s disinformation is similarly calculated to provoke and justify violent police attacks such as that which took place at the port.

CATIC was set up and is run not by the Bush administration, but by the governor, Gray Davis, and state attorney general, Bill Lockyer, both Democrats, who made it a centerpiece of their re-election campaigns last year. The agency has a budget of \$6.7 million a year and is staffed by people from the FBI and Defense Intelligence Agency, among others. The *Tribune* reports that the agency has gathered and analyzed information on activists since its inception shortly after September 11, and compiles dossiers on any group or activity it deems to have “criminal predicate.”

California Agency Targets Protesters, Unions



Top: Police open fire on antiwar protesters and longshoremen at Port of Oakland, April 7. Oakland cops firing sting grenades at black youth attending a Caribbean/Brazilian festival at Mosswood Park, Memorial Day.

Hafalia/SF Chronicle

G.K./Indymedia



CATIC’s equation of social protest and union action with terrorism is a throwback to the post-World War I “criminal syndicalist” laws such as that passed in California in 1919 under which strikes were broken and left-wing labor and political activists jailed. In fact, CATIC’s definition of terrorism has a potentially far broader target. Giving proof to our warning that the “war on terrorism” is aimed straight at the heart of the working class, Van Winkle’s description of terrorism as “anything that is violent or has an economic impact” would include economic strikes and work stoppages to enforce contract provisions. This head-on assault on the right to organize and protest can and must be defeated!

Bringing the War Home: A Bipartisan Effort

A statement issued by the Partisan Defense Committee the same day as the April 7 police attack pointed out, “The direct link between the war against Iraq and the war on labor in the U.S. was brought home with a vengeance in Oakland today.” During last year’s contract

battle, Bush threatened the ILWU with military strikebreaking precisely because it is a strategic union with the ability to shut down all West Coast shipping. The massively violent police response on the Oakland docks was triggered by the specter of that power being mobilized against the bloody imperialist slaughter in Iraq. The anti-union character of the attack is graphically captured in the case of Billy Kepoo. An OPD projectile shattered the right hand of this ILWU Local 10 member and highly skilled crane operator, depriving him of the ability to work for months. Kepoo is a steady man for Steve-doring Services of America—one of the companies which helped coordinate the police attack—which outrageously denied him workers compensation benefits.

Democrat Lockyer has been furiously dodging and weaving, “dissociating” himself from Van Winkle’s comments and promising a “review” of CATIC (*Oakland Tribune*, 21 May). It is an embarrassment for Democratic politicians who get millions of campaign dollars from union bureaucrats to be running an operation that defines unions as terrorist organ-

izations. More importantly, it throws a harsh spotlight on the capitalist class character of the Democratic Party, threatening to undermine its entire game of pretending to be “friends” of labor, blacks and immigrants while enforcing capitalist rule.

Riding to the rescue is Barbara Lee, who, along with three other liberal Democratic Congressmen representing the heavily black, Latino and working-class East Bay, wrote a letter to governor Davis requesting an investigation. Lee herself sent a smarmy letter to Lockyer beginning “Dear Bill,” “applauding” his efforts and declaring “I look forward to working with you to uphold the rights of non-violent protest” (*Oakland Tribune*, 24 May). Lee aims to help preserve the Davis/Lockyer edition of the “war on terror” by removing what she treats as excesses that provoke outrage. But the “war on terror” is a capitalist war on working people. The Democrats as a capitalist party are fully committed to carrying it out—from Oakland mayor Jerry Brown, who declared “the police acted appropriately” in attacking the port protesters, to Senator Dianne Feinstein, who shepherds California’s federal “anti-terror” funds. CATIC is the Democratic Party’s contribution to the “war on terror.” Indeed, the Democrats’ main gripe with Bush is that the war on Iraq has diverted resources away from pursuit of “homeland security.”

Labor: Fight Now to Defend Immigrants, Blacks, Unions!

CATIC’s role is nothing new—the function of the entire state apparatus is to bring courts, cops, prisons to bear in the defense of capitalist private property. Moves by the rulers to take away the rights of workers and the oppressed are inevitable because the entire structure of capitalist society is based on the extraction of profit from workers’ labor, engendering an ongoing class struggle.

Under capitalism the workers and oppressed have only the rights they successfully fight for. The PDC responded to the April 7 attack by campaigning to mobilize unions in defense of the antiwar protesters and the ILWU, while the Bay Area Spartacus Youth Club mobilized defense for anarchists targeted by repression. But what would have made a decisive difference was powerful labor action, beginning with shutting down the ports for the day in response to the police assault. This did not happen.

The reason for this default is political. The unions’ pro-capitalist bureaucratic misleadership, seeking accommodation with the employers and their state, shuns class struggle in favor of an alliance with the capitalist Democratic Party. The labor tops try to enlist the unions as “labor partners” in the very “war on terror” which has labor in its gun sights. Thus despite the ILWU’s paper opposition to the Iraqi war and occupation, the union’s bureaucracy guts this stance by repeatedly boasting—including in the midst of the employers’ lockout last year—that “The ILWU is committed to shipping all military cargo” (ILWU press release, 2 October 2002). And at the same time, they actually collaborated in writing the anti-union MSA.

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