

Defend North Korea's Right to Nuclear Weapons!

U.S. Hands Off North Korea!

In recent weeks, the U.S. imperialists have been escalating their threats and provocations against North Korea. The “multilateral” talks recently held in Beijing are nothing but a diplomatic front for disarming North Korea. North Korean vessels have already been interdicted and sequestered on the high seas over the past year by Japan, Spain, Australia and Taiwan. Later this month, the U.S. will lead joint naval exercises in the Coral Sea as the first coordinated action of a “Proliferation Security Initiative” that threatens a full-scale naval blockade of North Korea, which would be an *act of war*.

The Spartacist League/U.S., section of the International Communist League, stands for the **unconditional military defense of North Korea** against imperialism, including its right to develop and possess nuclear weapons—the more the better.

Just over 50 years ago, in July of 1953, the U.S. signed the truce with North Korea that froze the division of the peninsula into two societies that differed in fundamental ways. After a particularly vicious, 40-year-long Japanese colonial occupation fronted by Korean collaborators, gigantic social upheavals swept the Korean peninsula following World War II. In the North, where the uprisings were abetted by the presence of the armed forces of the USSR, industry was expropriated and the land-owning *rentiers* who dominated the peasantry were smashed as a class. In the absence of the working class contending for power under the leadership of a revolutionary Trotskyist party, the insurgent masses came to be led by the peasant-guerrilla forces of Kim Il Sung, who had fought against the Japanese during the war and contributed tens of thousands of fighters to aid Mao Zedong's People's Liberation Army (PLA) in the Chinese Revolution that triumphed in 1949.

In 1950, the U.S., which already had troops in the south of the peninsula, launched a war under the aegis of the United Nations against Kim Il Sung's Northern army after it had entered the South in conjunction with the social uprisings there, intending to reunify the country. During the 1950-53 Korean War, the American imperialists slaughtered some three and a half million Koreans, charring the country with oceans of napalm and reducing the peninsula to rubble.

After the armistice—a peace treaty has

never been signed—the South was ruled by the former capitalist collaborators with the Japanese occupation under a series of outright dictatorships that extended into the 1980s. These regimes were propped up by tens of thousands of U.S. troops, a presence that remains in place to this day. These troops have been repeatedly used to back up the suppression of working-class militancy and social uprisings in the South and are a signal of U.S. imperialism's intent to reverse its defeat in the North. **All U.S. troops and bases out of South Korea!**

From 1950 until now, North Korea has faced unremitting hostile intentions and actions by U.S. imperialism, in part because its very existence is a reminder of Washington's military failure in its drive to “roll back communism,” i.e., to achieve the historic “mission” of overthrowing the gains of the October Revolution in Russia. Those gains, although deformed by bureaucratic caste rule, had spread throughout Soviet-occupied areas of East Europe after World War II; and in Yugoslavia, China, Vietnam and Cuba, peasant-based social revolutions led to the creation of deformed workers states. The Korean peninsula has always been seen by the U.S. as a highway on which to launch a military attack to overthrow the 1949 Chinese Revolution, as witnessed by General Douglas MacArthur's oft-expressed wish during the Korean War to attack Chinese Manchuria.

Our unconditional military defense of the North Korean deformed workers state, ruled through primogeniture by Kim Il Sung's son, Kim Jong Il, at the head of the Stalinist bureaucracy, is, at base, a defense of the overturn and expropriation of capitalism. As part of the defense of these historic gains, we fight for workers political revolution to overthrow the nationalist Stalinist bureaucracies whose opposition to international socialist revolution and futile attempts to appease imperialism undermine the gains



Reuters

U.S. soldier patrols “demilitarized zone,” marking imperialist Cold War partition of Korea. U.S. occupation force in South Korea poses mortal threat to North Korean and Chinese deformed workers states.

of these revolutions. To abandon defense of the workers states is to abandon the historic purpose of proletarian revolution. That purpose and, thus, the unconditional military defense of the remaining deformed workers states in China, Cuba, Vietnam and North Korea form the cornerstone of the program of the ICL, as they must for any who stand for world socialist revolution.

It is to be noted that several pseudo-socialist organizations, in this country most prominently the International Socialist Organization, base their origins on a refusal to defend North Korea and China against U.S. imperialism during the Korean War—i.e., these groups are, in their origins, based on a betrayal of proletarian revolution. In contrast, our forebears of the then-Trotskyist U.S. Socialist Workers Party forthrightly called for the defense of North Korea and China against their “own” ruling class during the Korean War.

Bush and Democrats on Warpath

To justify its threats against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the U.S. has invoked Pyongyang's stated intent to develop, produce and, most recently, test nuclear weapons. This justification is a smoke screen. From the git-

go, North Korea was included by Bush as a main component of the “axis of evil” supposedly threatening the planet, while North Korea, China and Cuba are among the seven countries targeted for a potential nuclear first strike as outlined in the Pentagon's “Nuclear Posture Review.”

The Bush administration's drive against North Korea is a continuation of the Cold War policies instituted by Democratic president Harry Truman, whose administration considered nuking the North during the Korean War. That consideration was set aside in recognition of the capacity of the Soviet Union to respond in kind. With the destruction of the USSR, Bush is quite capable of revisiting that decision. It is notable that almost every current aspiring Democratic presidential candidate has accused Bush of neglecting the “North Korea threat.” In February, liberal California Congresswoman Barbara Lee, a darling of reformist antiwar leftists like Workers World Party, demanded of Secretary of State Colin Powell: “What will it take for the Administration to focus as much attention on North Korea, which has demonstrated its nuclear and missile capabilities, as it is focusing on Iraq?”

In fact, Bush has been no slacker. As frankly stated by John R. Bolton, U.S. undersecretary of state for arms

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

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Showdown in L.A. Transit

SEPTEMBER 7—Los Angeles transit workers have been working without a new contract after refusing to cave in to demands from a hardlining Metropolitan Transportation Agency (MTA) bent on major takeaways. The contract for Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU) Local 1277, which represents the mechanics and maintenance workers, expired last September. The contracts for the United Transportation Union (UTU), which represents bus and train drivers, and the Transportation Communication International Union (TCIU), which represents clerks, expired at the end of June.

While details of negotiations are largely being kept from union members, the MTA is reportedly demanding that union members cough up substantially more to pay for health care while getting a nominal 1 percent pay raise. The MTA also seeks takeaways from drivers and mechanics in rules governing discipline, work and overtime. Over the last year, the ATU health care fund has been dwindling as the MTA has limited its contributions, while health care costs have skyrocketed.

At their last mass meeting in January, the ATU mechanics voted overwhelmingly to authorize a strike, as did the UTU bus drivers in June. Now, with a 60-day “cooling off” period imposed during the summer coming to an end for the UTU on September 18 and for the ATU on October 12, the question of a strike is posed point blank. While the union tops do everything possible to demobilize the membership, many workers understand that a strike will be necessary given the intransigence of the

For a Solid Strike!

MTA. As one worker told a *WV* salesman, “We know it will take a strike, so let’s do it!” Damned right! Transit workers should be demanding a mass meeting of all three unions to hammer out a joint strategy and organize joint strike action.

L.A. transit workers have struck seven times in the last 31 years. The current showdown takes place three years after the 32-day strike of UTU bus drivers in 2000 which beat back a union-busting assault by the MTA through the flexing of union power on the picket lines. That strike came amid a wave of labor struggles in L.A. and was widely popular among the black and Latino poor who rely on public transport. Alarmed by the display of union militancy, County Federation of Labor chief Miguel Contreras and other labor misleaders rushed in Democrat Jesse Jackson to put out the fire and negotiate a “compromise” deal involving significant union concessions, including increasing the number of part-time drivers and the number of “tiers” which divide the workforce.

We wrote at the time, “Here is an object lesson in how the labor bureaucracy’s allegiance to the Democratic Party chains the unions to the capitalist class enemy and is *counterposed* to militant class struggle” (“Jesse Jackson, L.A. Democrats Defuse Militant Strike: L.A. Transit Workers Face Down Union-Busters,” *WV* No. 744, 20 October 2000). First, the union tops postponed the strike for months, on orders of Democratic gov-

ernor Gray Davis, to avoid disrupting the Democratic National Convention held that year in L.A. With the presidential election looming, the AFL-CIO tops who had been mobilizing to get out the vote for Al Gore feared an upsurge of labor struggle in this key state for the Democrats. Finally, Jackson was brought in to preach “reconciliation” with management and urge an end to the strike.

Through their longstanding marriage to the Democratic Party, the labor bureaucracy demonstrates that it shares the outlook of the capitalist rulers and is committed to the defense of their profit system. The union tops see in the capitalist state an ally or neutral arbiter where in fact it is nothing other—with its cops and courts—than the organized machine of the employers to suppress the working class.

Today, as another strike looms, the union tops are pushing the same legalistic, class-collaborationist policies in an effort to renounce victory before the battle is even engaged. For years, union contracts at the MTA expired at the same time, but in 2000 the ATU leadership broke ranks and negotiated a shorter contract, allowing the bosses to divide and weaken the workers. Now, faced with an intransigent MTA management looking to play hardball, the pro-capitalist UTU and ATU leaderships pleaded with Davis to obtain a court order imposing a 60-day “cooling off” period, justifying this to the membership as a way of preventing the MTA from using idle school buses in the summer to break a strike. The union bureaucrats were so desperate to give up the strike weapon to the strike-breaking capitalist government that they in effect asked Davis to prevent their membership from walking out. For the unions to be instruments of struggle in defense of the working class, they must

be independent of the bourgeois state.

Not satisfied with getting the capitalist state to say when the union can strike, ATU president Neil Silver obsequiously requested the bosses’ courts to rule on whether mechanics can honor the drivers’ picket lines if the UTU goes on strike after September 18 while the ATU is still “cooling off”! This is despite the fact that the previous contract contains a provision protecting ATU members who refuse to cross a picket line. On September 3, the judge refused to rule on this matter, wanting to wait until the unions try to act in their own defense. Honoring picket lines is a principle that must be *asserted* by labor through action and not made conditional on approval by the capitalist masters against whom it is directed. Strikes and picket lines are the way labor defends its interests. Labor rights were not willingly granted to the working class by the bosses and their capitalist state, but were *wrested* from the labor-hating U.S. ruling class through hard-fought, often bloody, class struggle. But the bureaucrats want to play by the bosses’ rules, which is a recipe for defeat.

In 2000, when Davis signed a law demanded by the union tops that any new “regional transit zones” be covered by existing contract provisions for four years, Silver immediately bowed to Davis and ordered mechanics to start crossing the bus drivers’ picket lines! Flouting a 30-year history of transit unions honoring each other’s strike lines, Silver declared, “If there is a picket line, it shall be crossed.” Silver reversed his order less than 24 hours later as almost to a man his membership defied him and refused to cross the pickets! The heroic stand by the mechanics and the determination of the other unions forced the MTA to pull back from its harshest demands.

This time around, in addition to putting the ATU membership’s fate in the

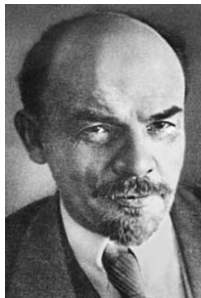
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TROTSKY

For the Political Independence of the Working Class!

The bloody suppression of the revolutionary Chilean working class 30 years ago by Pinochet’s military coup underscores that class collaboration is the primary obstacle to workers power, politically subordinating the interests of the proletariat to those of the bourgeoisie. Writing in 1936, at the time of the Spanish Civil War, Leon Trotsky warned that the People’s Front government would strangle the Spanish workers revolution, as it did, leading to the victory of Franco’s reactionary forces in 1939.



LENIN

Incapable of solving a single one of the tasks posed by the revolution, since all these tasks boil down to one, namely, the crushing of the bourgeoisie, the Popular Front renders the existence of the bourgeois regime impossible and thereby provokes the fascist coup d’etat. By lulling the workers and peasants with parliamentary illusions, by paralyzing their will to struggle, the Popular Front creates the favorable conditions for the victory of fascism. The policy of coalition with the bourgeoisie must be paid for by the proletariat with years of new torments and sacrifice, if not by decades of fascist terror....

The conquest of power by the proletariat is possible only on the road of armed insurrection against the state apparatus of the bourgeoisie. The smashing of this apparatus and its replacement by workers’, soldiers’, and peasants’ councils is the necessary condition for the fulfillment of the socialist program.

—Leon Trotsky, “The Popular Front in Civil War” (July 1936), printed in *The Spanish Revolution (1931-39)* (Pathfinder Press, 1982)

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Trotskyist League/Ligue Trotskyste

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Box 7198, Station A
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(416) 593-4138

Vancouver

Box 2717, Main P.O.
Vancouver, BC V6B 3X2
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Thirtieth Anniversary of Pinochet Coup in Chile Popular Front Means Workers' Blood

Thirty years later, the 11 September 1973 military coup that overthrew the Chilean Unidad Popular (UP—Popular Unity) coalition government of Salvador Allende remains a lesson in betrayal, written in the blood of the 30,000 workers, peasants and leftists killed in its aftermath by the murderous junta of General Augusto Pinochet. Untold thousands more were thrown into concentration camps, where many were horribly tortured. Up to 100,000 were forced into exile, where they continued to be hounded and assassinated by Pinochet's DINA secret police in league with the forces of the Argentine junta and others under the aegis of the CIA's Operation Condor terror campaign.

The Allende regime and the Pinochet coup were defining political events for a generation of leftists around the world. The UP was a classic “popular front”—a coalition subordinating the Chilean workers to their deadly class enemies through a bloc with a mythical “progressive” section of the capitalist rulers. Historically, the purpose of the popular front has always been to head off the threat of workers revolution, as in the Spanish Civil War, disarming the working class and buying the capitalists time to behead the proletariat. Contrary to the many articles, books and films that idolize Allende as simply a martyred victim of the CIA and the Chilean generals, Allende and his fellow reformists led the Chilean working class directly into this historic, crushing defeat.

This is not hindsight. The Spartacist League, drawing on the experience of the Russian Revolution and of Bolshevik leader Leon Trotsky's analysis of the Spanish and French Popular Front governments of the 1930s, declared in 1970: “It is the most elementary duty for revolutionary Marxists to irreconcilably oppose the Popular Front in the election and to place absolutely no confidence in it in power. Any ‘critical support’ to the Allende coalition is class treason, paving the way for a bloody defeat for the Chilean working people when domestic reaction, abetted by international imperialism, is ready.”

—“Chilean Popular Front,”
Spartacist No. 19, November-December 1970

Virtually every other political tendency on the left called in one way or another for political support to the UP.

In the late 1960s, there was an immense upsurge in class struggle in Chile: landless peasants were increasingly occupying the vast landed estates

while the number of workers strikes—particularly by the powerful copper miners, steel workers and railway employees—skyrocketed. The historic parties of the Chilean working class, the Communist Party and Allende's Socialist Party, united with the bourgeois Radicals and

olucionaria—Movement of the Revolutionary Left) and fascist groups like Patria y Libertad mushroomed. The country was in a prerevolutionary situation: in the industrial centers embryonic expressions of dual power—i.e., potential organs of workers rule—sprung up, like

December 1972). As the putschists actively plotted to overthrow him, Allende appointed General Pinochet, one of the foremost “constitutionalist” officers, as head of the army and brought him into the government. Only weeks later, Pinochet led the reactionary coup, annihilating the organized workers movement.

We fought urgently to break the Chilean workers from this death trap. In an SL/U.S. leaflet issued on 4 September 1973, a week before the coup, we declared:

“The government of the Unidad Popular is not a workers government. It is a coalition of workers and capitalist parties. The presence of the ‘radical’ bourgeoisie and the ‘democratic’ generals is a guarantee that the Allende government will not step beyond the bounds of capitalism.... Rather than pressuring Allende...we must instead call on the workers to break sharply with the bourgeois popular front and the government parties, to fight for a workers and peasants government based on a revolutionary program of expropriation of the agrarian and industrial bourgeoisie.”

In a special *Workers Vanguard* supplement (13 September 1973) published two days after the coup, we declared: “It is the duty of all U.S. working-class organizations, both trade unions and parties, to launch an immediate, united-front protest against the counterrevolutionary coup. Smash the reactionary junta—For workers revolution in Chile!” The SL initiated protests and fought for and participated in international labor solidarity actions in defense of the Chilean proletariat.

The centrist organizations of the “far left”—including the pro-Castro, guerrillaist MIR and many (like Ernest Mandel's United Secretariat) who claimed the heritage of Leon Trotsky's Fourth International—gave the UP treachery a left cover with their “critical” political support to it. They share responsibility for delivering the workers to Pinochet's butchers. Castro himself, representing the Stalinist bureaucracy of the Cuban deformed workers state, embraced Allende's UP government and even invited “constitutionalist” army officers, including Pinochet, to visit Cuba—betraying not only the Chilean workers but the Cuban Revolution, which was desperately in need of international extension to break out of its isolation.

In Chile, the “peaceful road to socialism” was put to a decisive test. The catastrophe brutally demonstrated—in the

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some minor capitalist parties to form the UP, which won a plurality in the 1970 elections with its program of a nationalist and parliamentary “Chilean road to socialism.” This alarmed the Chilean capitalists and their U.S. imperialist patrons, who demanded and received from Allende a “Statute of Constitutional Guarantees” vowing not to touch the military officer corps and to outlaw workers militias. In his “First Message to Congress,” Allende proclaimed:

“The Chilean Armed Forces and the Carabineros, faithful to their duty and to their tradition of non-intervention in the political process, will support a social organization which corresponds to the will of the people.”

Under the UP government, society increasingly polarized between the working class and the capitalists. Both the “far left” MIR (Movimiento de Izquierda Rev-

the *cordones industriales* (workers committees). Vainly trying to appease the capitalists, the UP government suppressed peasant land seizures, sent riot cops against strikes and prevented the workers from arming themselves. But the UP's inability to resolve the deepening social crisis only further infuriated the bourgeoisie. The CIA launched a massive “destabilization” campaign as then U.S. president Richard Nixon vowed to “make the [Chilean] economy scream.”

Raising the alarm with increasing urgency, we declared in 1972: “As the forces of repression gear themselves for the confrontation and the petty-bourgeoisie slides into the camp of reaction, the working class stands naked, without the organs of dual power, without arms, without a vanguard” (“Pop Front Imperils Chilean Workers,” WV No. 14,

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NEW YORK CITY

Twelve Years After Counterrevolution in the USSR

Why We Fought to Defend the Soviet Union

We print below an edited and expanded version of a presentation by comrade Victor Gibbons at a public Spartacist educational in New York City on April 27. In particular we have added a more extensive account of the intervention of the International Communist League in the USSR in the early 1990s, which was taken

PART ONE

from a later presentation by comrade Gibbons in London on July 12. As a member of the ICL's Moscow Station at the time, the speaker was centrally involved in the struggle to carry out the Trotskyist program in the Soviet Union at that crucial moment in world history.

Millions around the world burn with rage at the sight of Iraq reduced to rubble and humiliated by old-style colonial pillage. The images of U.S. troops trampling with their jackboots over a country which American imperialism first starved, then bombed and bled white in a display of global dominance by the "world's only superpower" are truly obscene. This just outrage must be raised to a political understanding that the enslavement of Iraq is yet another price that the international working class and the oppressed peoples of the Third World are paying for the destruction of the Soviet Union through capitalist counterrevolution in 1991-92. Today's imperialist global rampage was impossible when the USSR still existed.

It is especially important to understand this because among the main organizers of the current antiwar protests are reformist "socialists" who today proclaim themselves antiwar and "anti-imperialist" but who yesterday joined with the American and West European imperialists in cheering the demise of the USSR. We Trotskyists of the International Communist League fought to the end in defense of the Soviet workers state and the collectivized economy ushered in by the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917. This defense was despise and against the Stalinist misrule that had undermined the foundations of the workers state for six decades and had opened the door to counterrevolution. Uniquely, the ICL intervened in the Soviet Union beginning in the late 1980s seeking to mobilize the working class against the powerful forces, backed by world (centrally American) imperialism, driving toward capitalist restoration. This was part of our struggle for new October Revolutions around the world.



Spartacist

Above: International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist) banner raised in Moscow at 1991 demonstration on anniversary of October Revolution. Right: Historic ICL leaflet was mass-distributed in USSR following August 1991 Yeltsin coup, calling to defend gains of October.

Just as we Trotskyists had always warned would happen, the demise of the USSR decisively altered the political landscape on this planet in many ways. Despite the Stalinist bureaucratic degeneration, the Soviet Union represented the industrial and military powerhouse protecting every other country that had overthrown capitalist rule, from China to Vietnam to Cuba. It was only fear of possible Soviet retaliation that held American imperialism back from using nuclear weapons against North Korea and China in the Korean War of the early 1950s and against North Vietnam in the 1960s.

While the U.S. rulers are now grabbing more of the oil wealth of the Near East, their main and ultimate target is the People's Republic of China, by far the largest and strongest of those remaining states where capitalism has been overthrown. China is confronting mounting American military pressure, from the expansion of U.S. bases in the Philippines to new U.S. bases across Central Asia. China (and North Korea) are among those

states explicitly indicated as potential targets for a U.S. nuclear first strike as laid out in the Pentagon's 2002 "Nuclear Posture Review." This makes all the more clear our duty to fight for the unconditional military defense of China and North Korea, bureaucratically deformed workers states, against the imperialist powers. And that means defending the right of North Korea to develop nuclear weapons. As we did in the former USSR and the East European deformed workers states, we also call for proletarian political revolutions to get rid of the ruling nationalist bureaucracies—whose policies undermine and weaken those states—and install governments based on workers democracy and revolutionary internationalism.

Another result of the Soviet Union's demise is that the nominally independent countries of the Third World can no longer maneuver between the "two superpowers." They thus face the unrestrained economic exactions and brute military force of the imperialists. Look at the countries of sub-Saharan Africa, where the overturn of the October Revolution has led to the intensification of imperialist bloodsucking, and with it, the increased starvation and bloodshed—ethnic group against ethnic group, country against country, everybody out for some advantage in a battle for survival. This has occurred because the International Monetary Fund and World Bank have demanded repayment of the money they had given previously as a sop to these African countries during the Cold War against the Soviet Union.

Finally, the destruction of the USSR has inflamed the rivalries between the imperialist states of North America, West Europe and Japan whose conflicts of interest are no longer restrained by their capitalist rulers' shared commitment to

the former anti-Soviet alliance. These rivalries spur the rulers' efforts to achieve greater economic competitiveness in the world market by intensifying the rate of exploitation of labor in their own countries. Thus the bourgeoisie has been trashing what is left of the "welfare state" in West Europe and the far more meager social programs in the United States.

The Trotskyist movement had long predicted that a counterrevolution in Soviet Russia would enormously strengthen the forces of capitalist reaction on a global scale. For example, in 1929, a founding document of the International Left Opposition in the U.S. forewarned:

"The collapse of the Russian revolution as the dictatorship of the proletariat would signify the retardation for decades of the revolutionary movement in Europe and America and the uprisings of the colonial peoples, whose main point of support today is the victory of the Russian October. A collapse would be followed by an unequalled reign of reaction throughout the world and would entail a restoration of world imperialist rule without precedent in the last two or three decades."

—"Platform of the Communist Opposition" (February 1929); reprinted in *James P. Cannon Writings and Speeches, 1928-31: The Left Opposition in the U.S. 1928-31* (Monad Press [1981])

Social Catastrophe of Post-Soviet Russia

The greatest devastation brought about by the fall of the USSR has taken place on its own former territory. The face of the "new Russia" can be seen not only in the economic catastrophe that has befallen the population but in the degradation of women and national minorities and in the slaughter and destruction inflicted by Russian occupation forces in Chechnya. A central goal of the counterrevolutionary regime of Boris Yeltsin was to destroy the collectivized economy inherited from the former Soviet Union. Against all complaints over incompetence or corruption, Yeltsin's stock answer was to point out he had achieved the main thing he'd promised: no more communism in Russia.

And in place of what it destroyed, what has capitalism built in these 12 years? Just as Soviet progress could be measured in the figures of concrete, steel and education, so now can capitalism's return be measured in figures of ruin, disease and barbarism. In these 12 years capitalism's profit system reveals itself as a deadly enemy of humanity—a machine not for the advancement of the international productive forces and culture but for their destruction.

Capitalism has passed a death sentence on the Russian population: in absolute numbers deaths exceeded births during the first six years after the capitalist counterrevolution by 3.5 million; by 2001 this figure had become 6.75 million; and by now even conservative estimates of the population contraction are closer to 8 million! In 1989, average male life expectancy was 64.2 years. In Yeltsin's Russia of 1994, it dropped to 57.6 years. This historically unprecedented sudden drop in life expectancy equals, for the nine-year period from 1987 to 1996, the ghosts of 11 million stolen lifetimes. A 16-year-old boy has less of a chance to survive to 60 in Putin's Russia than in the benighted filth of 19th-century tsarism! The population of the Russian Federation, now smaller

Spartacist pamphlet

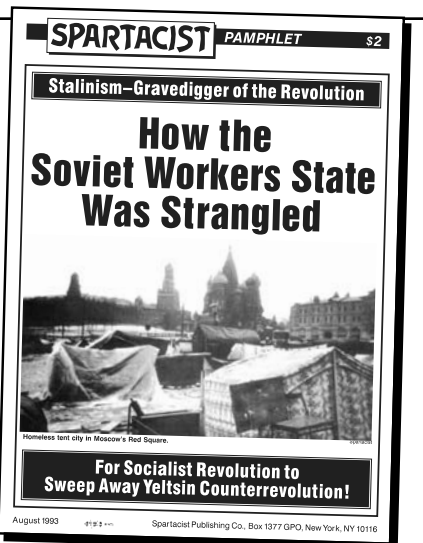
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than Pakistan’s, has seen its greatest reversal in a 1,000-year expansion from the country’s origins in medieval Kievan Rus.

The death rate is not centered on the very young or old, as is typical of impoverished societies, but rather on men in their prime. In 2002, the State Statistical Committee predicted as its “most probable forecast” that the population of the Russian Federation would fall from 144 million to 101 million by 2050. In a worst-case scenario, the population would fall to 77 million, a reduction of almost 50 percent! This holocaust is looming not over a marginal hinterland, but the nuclear-armed colossus of Eurasia.

What is behind this catastrophe? The economic collapse of post-Soviet Russia was unprecedented for a modern society: gross domestic product fell by over 80 percent from 1991 to 1997; according to official (understated) statistics, capital investment dropped over 90 percent. By the middle of the decade, 40 percent of the population of the Russian Federation was living below the official poverty line and a further 36 percent only a little above it. Millions were literally starving.

This massive economic and social immiseration has combined with the destruction of the public health system. Tuberculosis (TB), which had been effectively eradicated in the Soviet Union, has returned as a scourge of Russia’s poor. Recent estimates put the number of Russians with TB at 88 per 100,000, compared to a rate of 4 to 10 per 100,000 in West Europe and America. The number of those infected with HIV/AIDS is increasing faster in Russia and Ukraine than anywhere else in the world.

Capitalism has wiped out a century of social progress, and what a century! What is being destroyed in Russia today is everything that Soviet workers and rural toilers had built, everything that their parents and grandparents before them had constructed with such sacrifice and heroism in the face of the Civil War and imperialist interventions of 1918-21, the murderous excesses of agricultural collectivization and forced-march industrialization, the invasion by Nazi Germany in the Second World War, the horrors of Stalin’s terror which reached into every family. All of this had been endured in the bitter resolve that it would someday, somehow lead to a better, socialist society. Now the proletariat’s very will to live is being torn away, as everything they had built over the generations is smashed to pieces and looted as the officially sanctioned and celebrated private property of vulgar capitalist gangsters—who in many cases are the very same Communist Party leaders and apparatchiks who had so long been falsely identified with “socialism.”

Red October 1917

To understand the social catastrophe that has befallen post-Soviet Russia and to save the banner of socialism, it is necessary to understand the origins of the

Soviet Union in the October 1917 Revolution, led by the Bolshevik Party under Lenin and Trotsky, and its subsequent bureaucratic degeneration under J.V. Stalin and his heirs.

The October Revolution arose out of the imperialist slaughter of the First World War. It was the signal act of the 20th century, which Lenin described as the epoch of imperialist decay and socialist revolution. It took the question of socialist revolution out of the realm of theory and made it real in the former Russian tsarist empire.

The October Revolution created a workers state based on workers councils (soviets) and roused the toilers to forge a Red Army that triumphed in a civil war against the counterrevolutionary White forces and the expeditionary forces of every major imperialist power. The Soviet government of Lenin and Trotsky expropriated both the Russian capitalist and Western imperialist holdings and repudiated outright Russia’s massive debt to foreign bankers. It proclaimed the right of working people to jobs, health, housing and education, and took the first steps to building a socialist society.

The revolutionary government gave land to the peasants and self-determination to the many oppressed nations (themselves largely made up of peasants) of the former tsarist empire. It tore down the whole edifice of Russian patriarchal medievalism upon which the tsarist autocracy had rested. The early Soviet government not only separated church and state, it poured funds into secular education and science, promoting a thoroughly materialist worldview. It eliminated all laws discriminating against national and ethnic minorities and women. Soviet Russia eliminated all discriminatory laws, including against homosexuals. Soviet Russia was the first country of significance to give the vote to women, causing the Western capitalist “democracies” (e.g., the United States and Britain) to scramble to catch up.

The Bolshevik Revolution was seen from the beginning as only the start of what was to be a European-wide workers revolution. On the eve of the October uprising in Petrograd, the workers of the giant Putilov munitions factory and the pro-Bolshevik soldiers of the Pavlovsky Regiment exchanged banners of solidarity. The Putilov banner read: “Long Live the Russian Revolution as the Prologue to the Social Revolution in Europe!”

Internationally, the Bolshevik victory inspired revolutionary uprisings throughout Europe, most notably in Germany, Italy, Finland and Hungary. Its thunderous message of national and social emancipation also inspired the workers and rural toilers of the colonial world. The Bolsheviks launched the Communist International (Comintern), which by 1921 had attracted six million workers to its banner. And during its first four congresses, the Comintern educated and trained workers around the world in the program and strategy of revolutionary struggle. This was a massive



28 August 1940 memorial meeting for Leon Trotsky in New York reaffirms the Fourth International’s mission to lead cause of October Revolution to world victory.

factor in the world political arena.

To give just one example: in the relatively politically backward USA, it was the leaders of the Russian Revolution who made the important connection between the cause of black liberation and workers revolution. Black poet Claude McKay tells the story of his 1922 visit to Soviet Russia, where he was feted by factory workers and Red Army soldiers:

“At every meeting I was received with boisterous acclaim, mobbed with friendly demonstration. The women workers of the great bank in Moscow insisted on hearing about the working conditions of the colored women of America.... When I got through, the Russian women passed a resolution sending greetings to the colored women workers of America, exhorting them to organize their forces and send a woman representative to Russia.”

McKay saw that this revolutionary spirit was not just a popular mood but also expressed the principles of the early Soviet government and Comintern:

“When the Russian workers overturned their infamous government in 1917, one of the first acts of the new Premier, Lenin, was a proclamation greeting all the oppressed peoples throughout the world, exhorting them to organize and unite against the common international oppressor—Private Capitalism. Later on in Moscow, Lenin himself grappled with the question of the American Negroes and spoke on the subject before the Second Congress of the Third International. He consulted with John Reed, the American journalist, and dwelt on the urgent necessity of propaganda and organizational work among the Negroes of the South. The subject was not allowed to drop.”

In short, a workers state, stretching across Eurasia, had emerged victorious from war and civil war and had launched a movement of the world’s exploited and

oppressed to expropriate the entire bourgeoisie and smash their imperialist order.

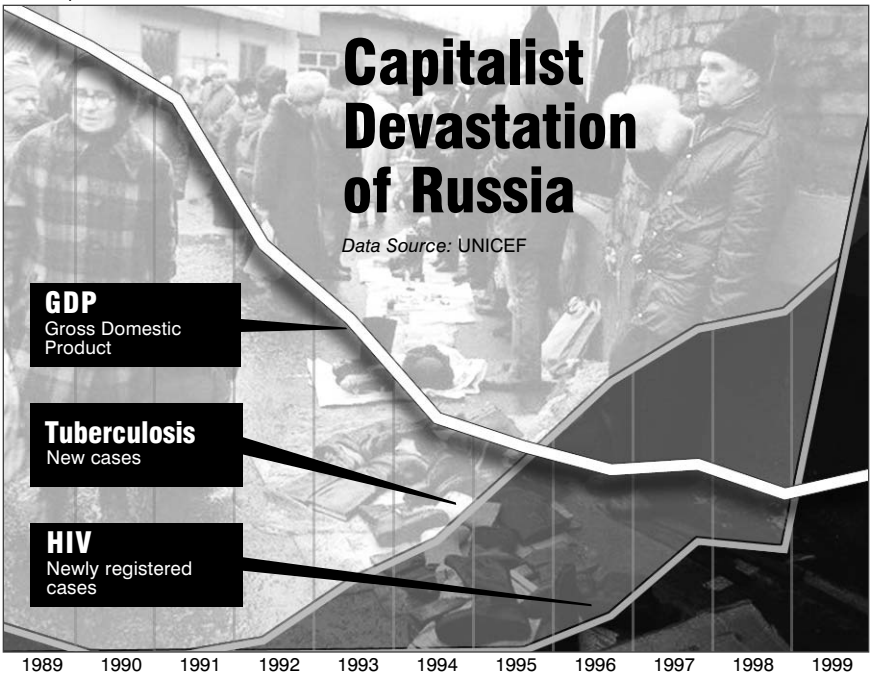
The Stalinist Political Counterrevolution and the Trotskyist Left Opposition

The bourgeoisie and its lackeys have done everything in their power to poison, or wipe out entirely, any memory of what the Bolshevik Revolution and the Soviet workers state were really about. They cynically push the lie of the “death of communism,” but their real oath against the October Revolution is “Never again!” The biggest lie, the most effective slander, the one that weighs most heavily on the minds of workers and youth looking for an effective way to fight capitalism, is shared by open imperialist ideologues, social democrats, Stalinists and anarchists alike. They all claim that “Leninism led to Stalinism.” The best answer to this is a Marxist materialist analysis of the qualitative changes in the USSR that made it possible for the Stalinist bureaucracy to usurp political control from the revolutionary core of the party and begin a process of anti-Leninist degeneration. This analysis also shows that against the Stalinist reaction, the banner of Leninism was carried forward by Trotsky’s International Left Opposition, continuing with the Fourth International founded in 1938 and, today, our own International Communist League.

As powerful as the Bolshevik Revolution’s international impact was, especially in Europe, the insurgent workers failed to take power elsewhere due to a lack of sufficiently capable revolutionary parties

continued on page 8

WV Graphic; Photo: Corbis



Capitalist death agony hits Russian proletariat with pauperism and plagues. Right: Chechen capital of Grozny shelled to rubble in 1995 as Russian Army reimposes capitalist prison house of peoples.



Anthony Suau

Young Spartacus

Black L.A. Anarchist Imprisoned for Thought Crimes *Free Sherman Austin Now!*

We reprint below a 28 August leaflet by the Los Angeles Spartacist League and Spartacus Youth Club. Sherman Austin was incarcerated on September 3.

In recent years in Southern California, cops have savagely attacked anarchists at May Day, antiwar and other demonstrations, framing up the most outspoken youth on concocted criminal charges. The state crackdown on these young, especially black and Latino, anarchists as a “political fringe” to be harshly dealt with is meant to chill dissent by all left-wing activists. It intersects the “war on terror” pursued by the Bush government, with the Democrats in tow, to escalate attacks on working people and minorities as well as to carry out imperialist wars abroad. We Marxists of the SL/SYC say: **Down with government persecution of leftist youth!**

In the latest such attack, Sherman Austin, a black anarchist youth and webmaster of Raisethefist.com, was outrageously railroaded by the capitalist courts. On August 4, he was sentenced to 12 months in federal prison and three years of probation and fined \$2,000 by District Court Judge Stephen V. Wilson on the trumped-up felony charge of “distributing explosives information with the intent that it be used in furtherance of a violent federal crime,” based on a law originally sponsored by California Democratic Senator Dianne Feinstein. Under his probationary “supervised release,” his computer activity, telephone conversations and interactions with political activists will be under the thumb of federal probation officials. Even if he obtains official permission, use of a computer is grounds for the state to storm his residence unannounced and seize the equipment.

After enduring over two years of systematic state harassment, Austin was strong-armed into pleading guilty to a crime he did not commit under threat of additional “terrorist enhancement” charges, which could bring **up to 20 years in prison**, if he went to trial. The evidence provided was a link on his anarchist Web site to another site offering a “reclaim guide” with instructions on how to make simple, small incendiary devices. More

detailed bomb-making information can be found on any number of Web sites, from Amazon.com to neo-Nazi sites, in any bookstore or in a public library.

Sherman said in an interview on Pacifica Radio (6 August) after the sentencing, “What they have to prove is that you have intent. It’s almost like thought crime because of the way they prove it...you have ‘intent’ if you disagree with the current political system in this country right now.” There is simply no way to prove that Austin “intended” for the information to be used by anyone for any purpose. Even the fictional cops of the sci-fi movie *Minority Report* would have a hard time trying to pull this one off!

The **political** intent of the court was to make an example of Austin. Judge Wilson criticized the prosecutor as being too **lenient** for agreeing to a plea bargain of four months in jail and four months in a halfway house, insisting that the prosecutor review the case with FBI director Robert S. Mueller and higher-ups in the Justice Department! At one point, the judge exclaimed: “This should be looked at with more of a deterrence outcome to future revolutionaries wanting to act in a similar manner.” J. Edgar Hoover, notorious former director of the FBI—the COINTELPRO state spying agency—thundered in the 1960s that “the Negro youth and moderate[s] must be made to understand that if they succumb to revolutionary teachings, they will be dead revolutionaries.” The FBI’s COINTELPRO vendetta meant dozens of black militants like the Black Panthers were gunned down. Austin must report for incarceration in the first week of September. **Drop the charges against him now!**

In the Pacifica interview after the sentencing, Austin’s mother, Jennifer Martin, stated that her son was railroaded, commenting bitterly that “in our justice system...there is only justice for the rich.” Austin was set up on bogus charges because he is a left-wing activist who has dared to stand up to the capitalists and their government and because his defiant ideas were read by thousands through his Web site. Now only 20 years old, Sherman Austin has been an active sup-

porter of the struggles of workers and the oppressed since a teenager, joining Labor Day celebrations, protests against the imperialist slaughter in Iraq and rallies in support of the longshoremen’s union (ILWU) during last year’s contract battle and union-busting lockout.

The government’s targeting of Austin began on May Day 2001 when he and 95 other youthful demonstrators were arrested at gunpoint during a cop riot against an anarchist “Carnival Against Capitalism” march in Long Beach, California. This marked the beginning of a well-organized effort by local police and county sheriffs, with the likely involvement of the Feds, to increase repression of L.A. area left-wing activists through systematic harassment, spying, intimidation, arrests and frame-up prosecutions. Austin was singled out for arrest by the Feds after attending a protest against the World Economic Forum in New York City in February 2002. After being subjected to more than two weeks of detention and interrogation in New York and Oklahoma prisons, he was released and all charges dropped due to lack of evidence. Though they had planned to fight the charges, after 9/11 most of the Long Beach May Day protesters accepted plea bargains, fearing that they could not get a fair trial in the capitalist courts amid the government’s “anti-terrorist” hysteria.

Among these was Robert Middaugh (a/k/a Ruckus), who spent two years in prison after pleading guilty to felony assault on a police officer at the May Day demonstration, earning him his second strike—a third conviction under California’s “three strikes” law could land him 25 years to life imprisonment. The first strike stemmed from his arrest at the 2000 Democratic National Convention protests.

Only a week after his release from prison earlier this month, federal marshals pounced on Middaugh with sham federal charges stemming from his arrest at a counter-protest on 4 July 2000 against a vile group of anti-immigrant demonstrators using the lawn of the Westwood Federal Building to spout racist filth. When a confrontation broke out, the cops predictably attacked the anti-racist demonstrators. A soda can thrown by an unknown person exploded on the ground, splashing a nearby cop who used this pretext to arrest Middaugh for felony assault on a federal officer. As Middaugh was being restrained by the chuckling cop, he



Indymedia

was assaulted by one of the racist demonstrators as the rest watched with apparent glee.

Later, Middaugh, dressed as a Zapatista, was charged with wearing a mask to conceal his identity and possession of a concealed weapon. The “concealed weapon” was a sheathed knife that was clearly visible over his clothes during the entire protest and therefore legal to carry. It became “concealed” only after the officer that searched him untucked his shirt. **Drop all the charges against Robert Middaugh!**

The government has been busy slashing civil liberties, augmenting its police powers and passing draconian legislation like the USA-Patriot Act in order to intimidate the population while the American capitalists run roughshod over neo-colonial peoples and stick it to workers and the poor at home. To fight state repression, youth must rally behind the social power of the working class. It is in the basic class interest of the workers to fight back against the bourgeoisie’s assaults on democratic rights and its attempt to criminalize leftist political dissent. Ultimately only the overthrow of the capitalist system of exploitation through socialist revolution can put an end to racist oppression and war once and for all. As part of this struggle, it is imperative to defend leftist youth such as Sherman Austin and Robert Middaugh, whatever their particular political views, whom the government seeks to railroad to prison. ■

Spartacus Youth Club Classes & Events

NEW YORK CITY

Alternate Tuesdays, 7 p.m.

September 16: **Socialism or Barbarism: Marxism, War and the Fight for Workers Revolution**

Columbia University, Location TBA
Information and readings: (212) 267-1025
or e-mail: nysl@compuserve.com

LOS ANGELES

Meet the Marxists

Tuesday, September 16, 12 noon
Student Lounge, CC Building
Pasadena City College

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

ICL Web Site:
www.icl-fi.org

TORONTO

Alternate Saturdays, 3 p.m.

September 20: **Down With Colonial Occupation of Iraq! Canadian Troops Out of Afghanistan!**

Ontario Institute for Studies
in Education, Room 8200
252 Bloor St. West (above St. George Station)
Information and readings: (416) 593-4138
or e-mail: spartacan@on.aibn.com

BOSTON

Alternate Tuesdays, 6 p.m.

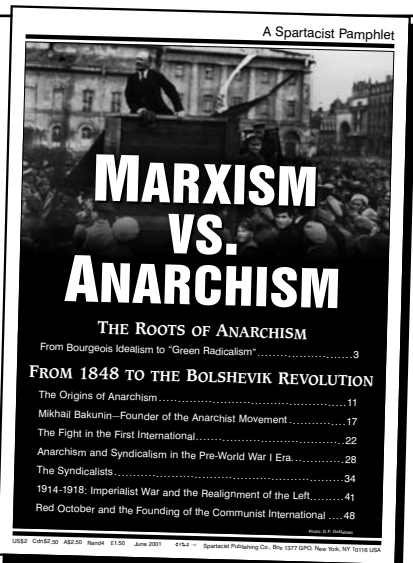
September 23: **Marxism: A Guide To Action**

BU College of Arts and Sciences,
Room B25A
725 Commonwealth Avenue
(BU East/Central on Green Line B)
Information and readings: (617) 666-9453
or e-mail: bostonsyc@yahoo.com

This pamphlet presents a comprehensive historical analysis of the origins of anarchism and the views of its leading figures through the 1871 Paris Commune and the split in the First International and discusses the impact of the 1917 October Revolution. The first article addresses radical youth today who, in an ideological climate conditioned by the so-called “death of communism,” are drawn to all variants of anarchism, Green radicalism and left liberalism. The pamphlet is dedicated to the fight to win a new generation to revolutionary Marxism.

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UMass Cops, National Guard Attack Antiwar Professor

Drop the Charges Against Tony Van Der Meer!

BOSTON—Africana Studies professor Tony Van Der Meer was race-baited by National Guard military recruiters, then tackled, thrown to the ground and arrested by cops at UMass-Boston on April 3, as he came to the defense of a student being harassed by the Guardsmen for handing out flyers for a commemoration honoring Martin Luther King Jr. Outrageously, Van Der Meer, a well-known local activist, now faces up to five years in prison on totally bogus charges of resisting arrest and assault on a police officer. This attack by the Guardsmen and cops on a black professor and a student on their own campus happened at the height of the U.S. invasion of Iraq. The assault starkly illuminates the deadly connection between American capitalism's imperialist slaughter abroad and racist terror at home.

UMass student Tony Naro, wearing his "Military Recruitment Off My Campus" t-shirt, was handing out the flyers near a National Guard table in the McCormick Hall lobby when a military recruiter charged up to him with the racist rant (in a reference to King's assassination): "You should be shot in the head too." When Professor Van Der Meer, passing by, came over to defend Naro, the Guardsman poked him, saying he should also get shot in the head. Then the UMass cops jumped in, throwing Van Der Meer to the ground so hard his jacket was ripped and a lens popped out of his glasses. Van Der Meer was chained to a wall at the campus

police headquarters, photographed, fingerprinted, then taken to the Dorchester courthouse, where he was put in leg shackles and locked up until his arraignment. "The way I was treated, I felt like a runaway slave," Van Der Meer said. "As a teacher of black history, how could I not?"

The brutality unleashed against Tony Van Der Meer for standing up to the government's military thugs and cops on campus is just one small example of the massive violence used by the capitalist class to ram through its imperialist agenda. The plan: to send poor and working-class youth, blacks and Latinos to die in wars of imperialist aggression, while tightening the screws on the working class and chilling dissent at home. Professor Van Der Meer received many harassing telephone messages after his arrest, including one proclaiming support for "Bush and the Boys," and an audio clip from the movie *Full Metal Jacket* with a scene of a soldier saying his gun had no regard for "N-----s, S---s and Jews." That this government's "war on terror" is a war on blacks is reaffirmed daily, from the police occupation of the black neighborhood of Benton Harbor, Michigan, to the recent wave of cop killings of black people, many in their own homes. The power of the integrated working class must be mobilized in the fight against racist police terror.

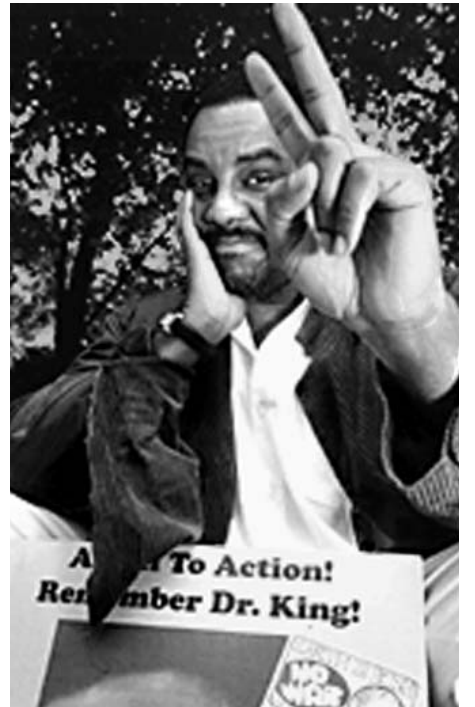
As part of its drive for world dominance, the U.S. capitalist state is making a renewed push to get its military tentacles

firmly gripped around college campuses. Of course, the nation's elite universities, including many in Boston, have always been bases for research and development in the service of American imperialism's military machine. The Spartacist League and its youth affiliates, the Spartacus Youth Clubs, call for military recruiters off campus as part of our fight against U.S. capitalism. Military recruiters, the National Guard and ROTC are integral parts of the armed fist of the capitalist state, stretched out on campus to suck youth into the maw of the imperialist war machine.

The Boston Spartacus Youth Club joined protests against this outrageous assault, pointing out in a letter to the UMass-Boston chancellor that was printed in the campus paper, *The Mass Media* (24 April):

"As the U.S. imperialists rain thousands of cruise missiles on Iraq and deploy over 200,000 troops for colonial occupation, the forces of the state are deployed in Boston to harass antiwar students and professors seeking to exercise their democratic rights. The attack on Professor Van Der Meer is part of the campaign to criminalize dissent as the government wages war abroad and ravages the working class, blacks and immigrants at home. Increasingly, the only 'right' the government sees fit to grant students and working class youth is the right to enlist in a branch of the military as fodder for U.S. imperialism's wars. We demand: Military recruiters off campus now! Drop the charges against Tony Van Der Meer!"

At a united-front demonstration called



Steven Sunshine

by the SYC at Boston University on April 14, under the slogans "All U.S. troops out of the Near East now! Down with attacks on antiwar protesters!", SYC speakers raised the need to defend Tony Van Der Meer. The SYC and Spartacist League also participated in a solidarity demonstration of over 60 people outside the Dorchester courthouse on July 16. The next hearing on his case is set for November 6 at the same location.

We urge our readers to join in defense of Tony Van Der Meer. You can mail contributions toward his defense to: Professor Van Der Meer's Support Committee, P.O. Box 1014, Boston, MA 02117. Or check info@bostonmajjustice.org for more information. ■

Yale Strike...

(continued from page 12)

increases for workers who after 20 years of employment receive \$621 a month as a pension! In contrast, Yale president Richard Levin is guaranteed a pension of as much as \$42,000 a month when he retires, while currently he rakes in over half a million dollars a year.

In addition to starvation wages and pensions for union members, Yale continues to insist on its right to subcontract union jobs to non-union contractors. As one Local 34 member noted: "It's more of like a plantation mentality that they have. It's like we're just here to do the work, and we should be thankful for the crumbs that fall from the table" (*New Haven Register*, 27 August). Indeed, the Yale bosses stand not too far removed from the plantation mentality of the slaveholders who helped found the university and after whom most of its residential colleges are named.

Members of the New York Spartacus Youth Club have gone to New Haven to join the picket lines in support of the strike. Reflecting the animosity of most New Haven residents toward the Yale bosses is a high level of community support for the strike—SYCers report that a chorus of supportive car horns would greet workers carrying "On Strike" placards everywhere they went. Union members told us many stories about how black people are the last hired and the first fired by Yale, and are consigned to the worst shifts. They also told us of the

many union-busting strategies employed by Yale, including paying non-union new hires at the hospital more than union employees with greater seniority. Union-busting threats and harassment culminated last fall in the arrest by hospital police of eight union members for leafletting outside a building shared by the Yale-New Haven Hospital and Yale School of Medicine (the charges were later dropped). Working hand in glove with the company town bosses they are hired to serve, the New Haven cops have arrested more than 100 protesting strike supporters since the current strike began. We demand: **Drop the charges against all Yale strikers and strike supporters!**

The Spartacus Youth Club calls on all those students who are repulsed by Yale's arrogant and racist contempt for the working people they routinely exploit to mobilize in support of the unions. That hundreds of classes have been moved off campus by sympathetic professors and TAs is a well-intentioned gesture. However, it still continues the business of the university with a minimum of disruption. What is needed is united action by students, teachers and staff to build mass pickets that *nobody* crosses. **The whole university should be shut down!** Students can concretely forge an alliance with the workers through a full-scale boycott of classes and joining the pickets. The slogan raised by SYCers, "Picket lines mean don't cross!", has been met with wide approval from the strikers. **Victory to the strike!**

The SYC seeks to link the struggles of students with the power of the labor

movement as a whole. That includes the struggle against the inherent race and class bias of higher education under capitalism of which Yale is a prime example. A look at the list of some of Yale's more prominent graduates (including the last three U.S. imperial presidents) demonstrates that this is a training ground for the children of the ruling class and the tacticians and technocrats whose jobs are to perpetuate the racist status quo. The SYCs fight for free, quality education for all, for open admissions and no tuition with a living stipend so that all have access to a decent education. Private institutions such as Yale should be nationalized—that means that Yale's iron gates should be thrown open, including to those who work there and their children!

As Marxists, we recognize that the interests of workers and the oppressed are counterposed to those of the capitalists—the entire capitalist system is premised on the exploitation of workers by the ruling class. However, the leaders of the striking unions have paraded capitalist Democratic Party politicians at their rallies, including two presidential hopefuls, Joseph Lieberman and Howard Dean, and Jesse Jackson, who was arrested at a strike rally.

This is part of the AFL-CIO tops' efforts to revive the Democrats for next year's presidential elections. Proving that they are no less a party of racism and war than the Republicans, the Democrats backed the U.S. war of colonial conquest against Iraq, and in fact have been the most vociferous advocates of U.S. imperialist intervention in Liberia. The Demo-

crats have also stood foursquare behind the panoply of anti-immigrant, anti-labor "war on terror" laws at home. By pushing the Democratic "friends of labor," the union misleaders are pushing the lie that there is a unity of interests between the working class and the racist imperialist rulers. As in any labor struggle, what is posed is the need to break the unions' ties to the Democrats, the "soft cops" of American capitalism.

Workers need to forge a party that fights for their interests—a party committed to sweeping away the capitalist system that is predicated on unemployment, poverty, racial oppression and war. The SYC seeks to win youth to the perspective of building such a party, which will turn defensive struggles into an offensive for socialist revolution and workers power. It is as part of that struggle that we call on pro-working-class student youth to join us in supporting the Yale strikers. **Build picket lines—don't cross them! Boycott classes! Shut down Yale! Victory to the Yale strikers!** ■

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Soviet Union...

(continued from page 5)

similar to the Bolshevik Party in Russia. This meant that by the end of 1923 Soviet Russia for the first time had come face to face with an indefinite but prolonged period of isolation. Although the Bolshevik Red Army had successfully repulsed all of the imperialist invasions and won the Civil War, Soviet Russia emerged from this exhausted and bled white.

Industry was in ruins and the vibrant proletariat that had accomplished the 1917 Revolution had practically ceased to exist as a class. Soviet Russia had counted on the material resources of a European workers revolution to help it quickly rebuild its infrastructure and industries, which had been devastated by seven years of interimperialist war and then civil war. And this was all the more urgent as Russia was shackled with a technically and socially backward agricultural base. And now the postwar famine in the countryside had reached the point of cannibalism.

Not only had the revolution's social base and the world context changed, so had its leadership. The most conscious and experienced layers of revolutionary workers, and many of the Bolshevik cadre of 1917, had died on the front lines of the Civil War. By the time of Lenin's death in 1924, only about 2 percent of the Communist Party had pre-revolutionary experience, extensive Marxist schooling or a familiarity with what the European workers movement was really like. Many of the veteran Bolshevik militants who survived the Civil War were co-opted into the state and ruling Communist Party apparatus (and necessarily so). But this did tend to tear them away from what remained of the working class.

Under these conditions, a new conservative and bureaucratized layer in the party and state apparatus came to the fore, intent on preserving its relatively privileged status amid extreme poverty, scarcity and imperialist hostility. The defeat of the emerging Left Opposition by these forces at the rigged 13th Party Conference in January 1924 marked the qualitative point at which the bureaucratic caste seized political power—from then on, the people who ruled the USSR, the way the USSR was ruled and the purposes for which it was ruled all changed. This was a *political* counterrevolution rather than a social one, because the nascent bureaucracy hijacked the governmental apparatus but did not overturn the socialized property forms created by October. But the struggle did not end there. It took a series of bloody purges through the 1930s for the Stalin clique to consolidate its rule. Throughout, Trotsky's Left Opposition continued the fight for authentic Bolshevism and in defense of October.

In place of the October Revolution's banner of world socialist revolution, Stalin in the autumn of 1924 put forward the false dogma of impossible economic autarky and isolationism known as "socialism in one country." As the Kremlin bureaucracy gradually became more conscious of its position, this "theory"

On eve of 1917 October Revolution: Putilov factory workers' banner (right) reads, "Long Live the Russian Revolution as the Prologue to Social Revolution in Europe!" Workers rally in Petrograd train station to form Red Guards.

Novosti



VAAP

became the ideological justification for transforming the foreign Communist parties into bargaining chips in an illusory search for "peaceful coexistence" with imperialism. Over the coming decades, it meant the strangulation of one after another opportunity for socialist revolution in the capitalist countries.

From the mid 1920s until he was assassinated by a Stalinist agent in 1940, Leon Trotsky—co-leader with Lenin of the October Revolution—sought to rally communist militants throughout the world on the basis of the authentic principles and program of Bolshevism (i.e., revolutionary Marxism). In 1933, when the Stalinists' failure to prevent Hitler's rise to power in Germany did not even precipitate any fundamental struggle within the Comintern to change course, Trotsky called for new parties and a new, Fourth International. The 1938 Transitional Program of the Trotskyist Fourth International defined the Soviet Union under Stalin as a bureaucratically degenerated workers state and laid out the two basic historical alternatives confronting it:

"The USSR thus embodies terrific contradictions. But it still remains a *degenerated workers' state*. Such is the social diagnosis. The political prognosis has an alternative character: either the bureaucracy, becoming ever more the organ of the world bourgeoisie in the workers' state, will overthrow the new forms of property and plunge the country back to capitalism; or the working class will crush the bureaucracy and open the way to socialism."

Trotsky posed a program to *resolve this contradiction in the positive* through the program and methods of Bolshevik internationalism. As he put it in the last great political struggle of his life, the 1939-40 fight against an anti-Soviet opposition led by Max Shachtman and James Burnham in the American Socialist Workers Party:

"We must formulate our slogans in such a way that the workers see clearly just what we are defending in the USSR (state property and planned economy), and against whom we are conducting a ruthless struggle (the parasitic bureaucracy and its Comintern). We must not lose sight for a single moment of the fact that the question of overthrowing the Soviet bureaucracy is for us subordinate to the question of preserving state property in the means of production in the USSR; that the question of preserving state property in the means of production in the USSR is subordinate for us to the question of the world proletarian revolution."

—"The USSR in War" (September 1939), *In Defense of Marxism* (Pathfinder, 1973)

Contradictions of Soviet Economic Growth

Even though strapped by imperialist encirclement and bureaucratic parasitism and mismanagement, the USSR proved the superior capacities of a collectivized planned economy to unleash productive forces. In *The Revolution Betrayed*, written in 1936 when the capitalist world was mired in an economic depression,

Trotsky pointed out that over the previous six years the Soviet Union had increased its industrial production by three and a half times. Over the previous ten years (1925 to 1935), heavy industry in the USSR had increased its production more than tenfold:

"Socialism has demonstrated its right to victory, not on the pages of *Das Kapital*, but in an industrial arena comprising a sixth part of the earth's surface—not in the language of dialectics, but in the language of steel, cement and electricity. Even if the Soviet Union, as a result of internal difficulties, external blows and the mistakes of its leadership, were to collapse—which we firmly hope will not happen—there would remain as an earnest of the future this indestructible fact, that thanks solely to a proletarian revolution a backward country has achieved in less than ten years successes unexampled in history."

But in contrast to the Stalinist lie that socialism—a classless, egalitarian society based on material abundance—could be built in a single country, Trotsky warned that:

"The dynamic coefficients of Soviet industry are unexampled. But they are still far from decisive. The Soviet Union is lifting itself from a terribly low level, while the capitalist countries are slipping down from a very high one. The correlation of forces at the present moment is determined not by the rate of growth, but by contrasting the entire power of the two camps as expressed in material accumulations, technique, culture and, above all, the productivity of human labor. When we approach the matter from this statistical point of view, the situation changes at once, and to the extreme disadvantage of the Soviet Union."

"The question formulated by Lenin—*Who shall prevail?*—is a question of the correlation of forces between the Soviet Union and the world revolutionary proletariat on the one hand, and on the other international capital and the hostile forces within the Union. The economic successes of the Soviet Union make it possible for her to fortify herself, advance, arm herself, and, when necessary, retreat and wait—in a word, hold out. But in its essence the question, Who shall prevail—not only as a military, but still more as an economic question—confronts the Soviet Union on a world scale."

The same Bolshevik internationalism that guided the October Revolution determined the Left Opposition's economic perspectives for the USSR: the international productive forces had to be torn out of the hands of the imperialists; the profit system and the bourgeois nation-state had to be scrapped by an international socialist revolution.

Trotsky also explained that the Stalinist bureaucracy was capable of extensive but not intensive economic growth. What does that mean? It means that the Kremlin oligarchy could and did expand the Soviet economy by crudely transplanting advanced capitalist methods and even entire factories from abroad, but it was incapable of constantly raising the overall level of technology and labor productivity. As Trotsky put it in *The Revolution Betrayed*: "Under a nationalized economy, *quality* demands a democracy of producers and consumers, freedom of criticism and initiative—conditions incompatible with a totalitarian regime of fear, lies and flattery."

I can tell you a firsthand story about how the Stalinist bureaucracy blocked high-tech advancement. In 1991, I went to the editorial offices of *Pravda*, the main CPSU newspaper, in Moscow as part of my job and got a tour of the printing plant. To my amazement, I saw typesetting was still done in "hot type," that is, a technology superseded decades ago in the West. The bureaucrats preferred this lumbering, laborious method because it was so much easier to politically monitor and control than computerized printing processes. After the tour, I was taken upstairs to *Pravda's* "emergency room" housing two parallel state of the art Macintosh-Linotronic systems allowing a special crew to supplant the entire operation below in the event of strikes and other disruptions. That was the heart of it: only a specially vetted and monitored crew could be trusted with powerful information technology.

Nonetheless, the USSR was able to sustain a bounding, extensive economic

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growth well into the 1960s. As long as additional layers of workers were drawn from Russia's vast countryside into the cities, it also meant that overall labor productivity in the Soviet Union continued to rise as well. However, the limits and contradictions of Soviet economic growth came to the fore in the last part of the lengthy regime of Leonid Brezhnev, who occupied the Kremlin from the mid 1960s until the early 1980s.

During the first half of this period, American imperialism was bogged down in the long, losing war in Vietnam. One consequence was that the USSR was able to achieve approximate nuclear military parity with the U.S. The Soviet economy also got a big boost in the early 1970s from the multiple increases in the world-market price of oil. However, in the late 1970s the new Democratic administration of U.S. president Jimmy Carter launched a renewed Cold War offensive against the Soviet bloc in the name of "human rights," combining increased military, economic and political pressure.

The Brezhnev regime responded by continuing to invest heavily in defense,

spending by offering "partnership" to imperialism. Hostile from the outset to workers democracy and the fight for international extension of the revolution as the road to socialist development, Stalin's heirs now repudiated the ideology of "socialism in one country" in the negative, in favor of increasingly open expressions of belief in the economic superiority of Western-type capitalism. Underlying this ideological attitude was the appetite of these privileged social strata, especially the younger layer of intellectuals and bureaucratic functionaries, to further enrich themselves at the expense of the working class.

The accelerating rightward slide of the Soviet bureaucracy and affiliated intelligentsia was represented by the new regime of the younger CPSU leader Mikhail Gorbachev, who took over the Kremlin in 1985. Restraints were eased on intellectual and, later, political life under the banner of *glasnost* (openness). Centralized economic planning and management were scrapped and replaced by market-directed mechanisms under the rubric of *perestroika* (restructuring). A

Bolsheviks began October Revolution mission of liberating oppressed women of the East with literacy campaigns.



1930 meeting of CP-initiated International Labor Defense, Washington, D.C. James P. Cannon: "Everything new and progressive on the Negro question came from Moscow, after the revolution of 1917, and as a result of the revolution."

seeking to maintain nuclear parity with the U.S. It also continued to buy domestic stability by maintaining and even improving the living standards of the Soviet working class and collective farmers. But these economic policies came at the *expense of investment in the technological renewal of Soviet industry*. By the late 1970s, the steady annual economic growth rate of 5 percent of the past two decades had fallen to about half that. And by the beginning of the 1980s, the economy was clearly stagnating, in the face of the imperialist anti-Soviet offensive.

The Final Undoing of the October Revolution

As the USSR began to fall behind Western capitalism dramatically, growing sections of the bureaucracy became convinced that the Soviet economy could never catch up on its own, and chose to cut back the massive burden of military

global policy of appeasing and capitulating to Western (centrally American) imperialism was carried out in the name of "new thinking."

The war in Afghanistan during the 1980s was a crucial turning point in the fate of the USSR and therefore of world history. In December 1979, Brezhnev's Kremlin intervened militarily in Afghanistan to shore up a strategically important client state along the southern border of Soviet Central Asia. The modernizing bourgeois-nationalist regime in Kabul had repeatedly requested Soviet aid against a reactionary Islamic insurgency—backed and armed by the U.S.—which had been provoked by the regime's modest social reforms, especially those which improved the horribly oppressed condition of Afghan women.

It came as a surprise to Moscow when the Americans escalated this insurgency into a massive proxy war against the

Soviet Union, launching the biggest CIA covert operation in history. Jimmy Carter's chief foreign policy adviser, Zbigniew Brzezinski, later bragged about how they had long planned to bleed the Soviets. Texas Democratic Congressman Charles Wilson spelled it out at the time: "There were 58,000 [American] dead in Vietnam, and we owe the Russians one."

This should have been an easy war for any leftist to take a principled stand on. It was doubly progressive, posing both the fate of women and elemental social progress in Afghanistan together with the defense of the USSR's southern flank. But under the onslaught of the war hysteria cranked out by the U.S. ruling class—beginning with Jimmy Carter's "human rights" demagoguery and escalating to Ronald Reagan's crusade against the Soviet "evil empire"—a defining moment took place for the "left" internationally. Here in the U.S., Vietnam War-era prodigal sons of the Democratic Party rushed to redeem themselves before their imperialist rulers by showing how fervently they now opposed the "Soviet Vietnam."

Against the liberals and their "left" hangers-on, we raised the slogans: "Hail Red Army in Afghanistan!" and "Extend gains of the October Revolution to Afghan peoples!" Against all the demagoguery about "Afghan national rights," we explained that Afghanistan was not even a nation but an extremely backward country inhabited by diverse and mutually hostile ethnic groups. The only possible basis for social progress in Afghanistan at that time was the extension of Soviet military and political power. The Red Army intervention cut against the grain of the nationalist dogma of "socialism in one country." Our internationalist line, while aimed primarily against the CIA-backed *mujahedin*, **at the same time promoted political revolution against the Kremlin Stalinists.**

Contrary to the imperialist Big Lie campaign, the Soviet armed forces were *winning* against the CIA's *mujahedin*. It was not out of military necessity but for the sake of Gorbachev's hoped-for strategic "partnership" with American imperialism that the Soviets pulled the last troops out of Afghanistan in 1989. Gorbachev's policy in Afghanistan gave a green light to dumping Soviet-era "socialist and national liberation" pretensions. What we heard in the USSR at this point was outright racist Russian chau-

vinism like, "Afghan 'blacks' are not worth the blood of our Russian boys." These types were fed up with the massive Soviet subsidies to Cuba, Vietnam, East Europe and Moscow's Third World capitalist client regimes.

Soviet foreign minister Eduard Shevardnadze later conceded that surrendering Afghanistan was the key to what followed globally: "The decision to leave Afghanistan was the first and most difficult step. Everything else flowed from that" (*Washington Post*, 16 November 1992). Indeed, after Afghanistan Gorbachev threw East Europe to the imperialist wolves as well. Finally, he oversaw the destruction of the USSR.

As we declared in 1990 in the first issue of our Russian-language *Byulleten' Spartakovtsev* (Spartacist Bulletin): "Far better to have fought imperialism through an honorable fight in Afghanistan than to have to now fight it within the borders of the Soviet Union" (see *Spartacist* [English-language edition] No. 45-46, Winter 1990-91). Days before Gorbachev pulled out the last Soviet units, the Partisan Defense Committee, the class-struggle legal and social defense organization associated with the SL/U.S., sent a 7 February 1989 letter to the Afghan government offering "to organize an international brigade to fight to the death" to defend "the right of women to read, freedom from the veil, freedom from the tyranny of the mullahs and the landlords, the introduction of medical care and the right of all to an education." Though this offer was declined, the PDC and fraternal defense organizations allied with other sections of the ICL raised over \$44,000 to aid civilian victims of an all-out *mujahedin* offensive later that year against Jalalabad, the Afghan city closest to the CIA's guerrilla bases in Pakistan. Those emergency funds were gathered from working people throughout the world, including of Muslim origin. They rejoiced when the attack on Jalalabad was defeated!

But our campaign had an even greater significance. It signaled that the banner of communism trampled in the mud of Afghanistan by the defeatist Stalinists had its true champions in the Trotskyists! It was at that moment in 1989 that the international Spartacist tendency became the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist).

[TO BE CONTINUED]



Afghan women took up arms against Islamic reactionaries to defend gains made possible by Soviet Army intervention. Trotskyists hailed Red Army in Afghanistan, organized support for besieged women and leftists following Kremlin's treacherous 1989 withdrawal.

North Korea...

(continued from page 1)

control and international security, in testimony before Congress this summer, the goal of the Bush administration’s naval “interdiction” and “seizure” provocations is to develop “new means to disrupt the proliferation trade at sea, in the air, and on land” (*New York Times*, 18 August). More concisely, the destruction of the North Korean deformed workers state is the goal of these efforts.

Bolton is a super hawk, provided by the American Enterprise Institute (AEI), a neoconservative think tank, to justify America *über alles* policies. Currently this ghoul is on a short leash as the Bush administration’s most recent pretense is to be open to negotiations with Pyongyang, e.g., at the Beijing talks. The world-conquering aspirations of U.S. imperialism are in part currently mitigated by the fact that its ground forces are bogged down in the bloody occupation of Iraq.

The *New York Times* (3 September) reported an interview with Bolton last year in which he was asked to account for seeming U.S. policy inconsistencies in dealing with North Korea. Bolton “strode over to a bookshelf, pulled off a volume and slapped it on the table. It was called ‘The End of North Korea,’ by an American Enterprise Institute colleague. ‘That,’ he said, ‘is our policy.’” The bible of U.S. imperialism as translated by the AEI intellectual lackeys has several books—The End of the USSR, The End of China, The End of Cuba, etc.

In pursuit of their own imperialist aims, Korea’s former Japanese overlords have also been on an offensive to bring North Korea to its knees and to pursue their regional military ambitions. Seizing on North Korean missile and nuclear capacity as a pretext, Tokyo has allocated \$1.2 billion to begin building a “missile defense system” that would threaten both the North Korean and Chinese deformed workers states, while a number of leading government figures openly talk of acquiring a nuclear arsenal. The Japanese coast guard is joining the U.S. and Australia in the upcoming “Pacific Protector” exercises in the Coral Sea. Days before the Beijing talks, Japanese authorities at the port of Niigata-Nishi seized the North Korean ferry *Mangyongbong-92*, which ethnic Koreans heavily rely on. In Japan, the anti-North Korea offensive has taken the form of a chauvinist frenzy against ethnic Koreans and their schools and organizations, including over 300 bombing and other attacks and threats. This chauvinist hysteria was particularly whipped up following recent revelations of bizarre and indefensible abductions of Japanese nationals by the Pyongyang regime in the 1970s and ’80s. As our comrades of the Spartacist Group Japan have repeatedly stressed, defense of North Korea and of the Korean minority in Japan go hand in hand.

Beijing Stalinists’ Treachery

North Korea’s current plight—malnutrition, the absence of access to critical resources and the decay of its industry—is the direct product of the 1991-92 capitalist counterrevolution, led by Boris Yeltsin and Bush Sr., in the USSR, which had been the North’s main economic partner. For a quarter century after the Korean War, the North prospered in contrast to the imperialist-dominated South. In fact, as the London *Guardian* (11 March) reports, “During the 1970s North Korea was the 20th-richest country in the world.”

The North Korean bureaucracy’s current policy—to use the threat of nuclear armaments to demand U.S. assistance and a peace treaty “guaranteeing” that the American imperialists foreswear any hostile intervention—is simply militant-sounding begging. If codified, such a deal would be substantially less valuable than a deed to the Brooklyn Bridge. Such a deal would entail the return of international “nuclear inspectors” to North

Korea, whose only purpose would be to ensure that the country is incapable of defending itself against an American attack—just as the UN inspectors did in Iraq.

As we wrote in “Defend North Korea!” (WV No. 784, 12 July 2002), “The international working class must defend the right of the deformed workers states to have nuclear weapons to defend themselves against the imperialist war criminals. Had the Soviet Union not possessed a nuclear arsenal capable of deterring U.S. imperialism, there would have been no Cuban Revolution, no Vietnamese Revolution, and China and Korea would be irradiated rubble.” A big reason that the U.S. felt it could just roll over Iraq was that that small capitalist country did not have any nuclear weapons, which are about the only real measure of sovereignty in today’s world.

The only guarantee for the survival and



WV Photo



Spartacist Japan

San Francisco, February 16: Spartacist placard at protest against Iraq war. Right: Spartacist Group Japan placard reads: “For the Revolutionary Reunification of Korea! For a Socialist Federation of Asia!”

extension of the gains of social revolution lies in the victory of proletarian revolution in the advanced industrial societies and ultimately on a worldwide scale. It is this perspective that is opposed by the respective nationalist Stalinist bureaucracies that rule the workers states, as this perspective threatens their parasitic caste rule. Thus, these castes seek deals with the imperialists to assure their continued existence; that is, they seek “socialist paradises” within an imperialist heaven.

Witness the People’s Republic of China. Until recently, the ruling caste in Beijing has usually recognized that U.S. imperialism’s bellicosity toward North Korea was a threat to its own continued existence. Nearly a million People’s Liberation Army soldiers played a decisive role in the defeat of the U.S. in the Korean War, which China entered when it correctly perceived that it was itself threatened. But for Mao’s regime—as for all Stalinist bureaucracies—international solidarity was always subordinate to its own narrow nationalist interests. The ruling Stalinist bureaucracies justify such nationalist policies by falsely claiming that they are building “socialism” in their own respective countries.

By the late 1960s, for example, the differences between the Moscow and Beijing bureaucracies had escalated to the point of military clashes along the border. The relative weakness of China had earlier led the Beijing bureaucracy to strike a more militant posture vis-à-vis U.S. imperialism than Moscow. However, by the early 1970s Beijing had struck an alliance with U.S. imperialism in opposition to what it was then casting as its main enemy, the purportedly “social imperialist” USSR.

Over the past 25 years, the Beijing bureaucracy’s conciliation of imperialism has gone hand in hand with the policy of capitalist “market reforms” within China itself. This has led to increasing penetration of China by the overseas Chinese bourgeoisie and foreign imperialists. This development has simultaneously undermined the statified sectors of the economy and increasingly drawn layers of the bureaucracy, in hand with outright capi-

talist elements on the mainland, into the nexus of imperialist economic obligations.

No small factor in Beijing’s treacherous offer to broker the disarmament of North Korea is the growing trade between mainland China and the South Korean capital. In March, China, which provides North Korea with upwards of half its imported grain and enough fuel oil to provide one-third of its energy needs, cut off fuel oil supplies for three days in response to a North Korean missile test. Beijing’s willingness to betray its North Korean counterparts is a danger to the Chinese deformed workers state itself, which remains the main strategic target of U.S. imperialist ambitions. The Chinese government has itself felt obliged to condemn Washington’s bellicosity toward North Korea.

As Leon Trotsky pointed out in his brilliant analysis of the degeneration of the Bolshevik Revolution, *The Revolu-*

tion Betrayed (1937), the Stalinist caste is the main internal obstacle to defending the gains of social revolution, necessitating the overthrow of the bureaucracy by proletarian political revolution. In China, workers in the hundreds of thousands, as well as masses of impoverished peasants thrown off the land by the dismantling of collectivized agriculture, have protested the erosion of the gains of the 1949 Revolution. The regime’s policies are simultaneously creating an epicenter for capitalist restoration and preparing the ground for an enormous explosion of proletarian outrage. The urgent task facing the Chinese working class is to forge a Leninist-Trotskyist party to lead such social explosions toward a proletarian political revolution.

L.A. Transit...

(continued from page 2)

hands of the courts, the ATU leadership is again trying to erode workers’ consciousness of the most basic principles of labor solidarity. On August 28, they called a rally, which drew some 200 maintenance workers, outside MTA headquarters—where many ATU and TCIU members work—as a way of letting off steam by union members angry at the bosses’ hardline stance. Calling this an “informational picket line” which workers were expected to cross unless they worked another shift or got company-approved time off undercuts the real meaning of a strike picket and the consciousness that *picket lines mean don’t cross*, and paves the way for the kind of scabherding Silver attempted three years ago.

The situation cries out for *one industrial union of all transit workers*, instead of dividing transit workers into different bargaining units by craft (drivers, mechanics, clerks). Even more, if MTA workers go on strike, then all transit unions in the L.A. region should strike in solidarity, including Metrolink and other regional bus lines. It is also necessary to reach out to the ghetto and barrio masses

Successful political revolution in China—establishing the rule of workers and peasants soviets committed to defending and extending the collectivized economy—would offer the North Korean workers a way out of imperialist encirclement and isolation. Conversely, a counterrevolutionary overturn in North Korea would not only mean even greater poverty and immiseration in that country but would be a dagger aimed at the gains of the Chinese Revolution, putting the forces of capitalist restoration on the border of China’s heartland of nationalized industry.

The prospect for socialism on the Korean peninsula lies with linking the North Korean proletariat with the working class of the South. These workers are currently involved in widespread class battles against the economic depredations stemming from the 1997-98 financial crisis, which are all the more intensified since, with the destruction of the USSR, South Korea has lost its favored status as a U.S. asset on the front lines of the Cold War. When South Korea’s rulers pleaded for assistance from Washington and Tokyo in 1997, they had the door slammed in their faces. Indeed, the door to the imperialists’ elite club was slammed shut by the 1890s and not since reopened.

The Pyongyang bureaucracy has long promoted “peaceful” reunification with the capitalist South, seeking to unite with nationalist forces in South Korea unhappy with American overlordship. For their part, sections of the *chaebol* conglomerates that dominate South Korean capitalism are looking to reunify Korea on the basis of capitalist wage slavery, as exemplified by Seoul’s “Sunshine Policy” toward the North. Korean nationalism, promoted by both the North Korean bureaucracy and the South Korean left, serves to tie the powerful South Korean proletariat to its own ruling class. We fight for the *revolutionary* reunification of Korea, through socialist revolution in the South and workers political revolution in the North.

The defense of social revolutions in China, North Korea, Vietnam and Cuba requires the forging of an international Trotskyist party that recognizes and intransigently fights to defend and extend the existing gains against imperialist or domestically-inspired capitalist counterrevolution. This defense is inseparable from the fight for socialist revolutions in the advanced industrial societies, importantly for Asia in the industrial powerhouse of Japan, and in the U.S. belly of the imperialist beast. The ICL directs all its resources and efforts to forging the international proletarian vanguard party needed to carry out this task. ■

for support and solidarity on the picket lines. Championing the interests of the oppressed, including through the demand for free mass transit, is the way to build real “public” support.

The pro-capitalist UTU and ATU transit union leaders who looked to Gray Davis in 2000 and again this year portray the capitalist Democratic Party as “friends of labor” despite the fact that the union-busting MTA board is led by liberal Democrats like Antonio Villaraigosa, Yvonne Brathwaite-Burke and Gloria Molina. In 2000, transit union leaders promised that in 2003 they would face a more “union-friendly” MTA board. But however much help the Democrats get from unions in getting elected, the Democratic Party is the other party of the capitalist class enemy.

In the course of the class battles to come, a new leadership of the labor movement must come forward based on the understanding that successful working-class struggle requires the independence of the proletariat from the capitalists and their political parties. Out of such struggles will be forged the multiracial revolutionary workers party that is the necessary instrument in leading a proletarian revolution to root out the capitalist profit system and replace it with a socialist egalitarian society. ■

March on Washington...

(continued from page 12)

was the Coalition to Defend Affirmative Action & Integration, And Fight for Equality By Any Means Necessary (BAMN), which organized a contingent of students who marched over from Howard University. Initiated by the tiny, fake-Trotskyist Revolutionary Workers League, the liberal BAMN fits right in with the preachers and black Democrats, as it campaigns for “a new civil rights movement.”

Karl Marx remarked that if everything in world history occurred twice, the first was tragedy, the second time farce. If the first March on Washington was a “farce,” as radical black nationalist Malcolm X put it, what does that make the latest warmed-over, scaled-down medicine show for the Democratic Party enemies of black freedom? *Break with the Democrats! For a revolutionary workers party that fights for all the oppressed!*

The Farce on Washington

At its base and in its early years, the mass of black and white activists who were the foot soldiers of the civil rights movement wrote a heroic chapter in the fight for black equality in racist America. Protesting black masses faced vicious police repression and a bloody campaign of KKK terror. Rejecting the pacifism of King & Co., courageous militants like the Deacons for Defense and Justice and Robert F. Williams organized armed self-defense against the Klan and racist cop terror. But from its inception, the civil rights movement was dominated by a black middle-class leadership allied to Democratic Party liberalism, exemplified by King. Their aim was to pressure the Democratic Party administrations of Kennedy and Johnson to grant formal, legal equality to blacks in the South and to keep the struggles within the bounds of the capitalist system.

Even the most conservative civil rights leaders initially saw the March as a means to put the heat on the Kennedy administration, which was dragging its feet on a civil rights bill and other anti-discrimination legislation. But when Kennedy called the “respectable leaders” into the Oval Office for a conference, they quickly dropped even the posture of pressure. The march destination was diverted from the White House to the Lincoln Memorial. They issued a handbook for the march, omitting a planned “statement to the president” and a call to confront Congress. Participation was denied to “subversive” groups and speeches were censored. Although John Lewis (today a Democratic Congressman from Georgia) of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC)—which was then breaking to the left of the mainstream civil rights leadership—was invited to speak, he was pressured into deleting from his prepared text the sentence “We

cannot depend on any political party for both Democrats and Republicans have betrayed the basic principles of the Declaration of Independence.” Disgusted SNCC staffers took to wearing “I Have a Nightmare” buttons.

As Malcolm X described, the original impetus for the march came from the black masses, in the wake of black self-



Martin Luther King (second from left) with John F. Kennedy (second from right) in 1963. Liberals sought to divert struggle for black rights into reliance on capitalist government and Democratic Party.

defense efforts against KKK and cop terror in Birmingham, Alabama:

“It was the grass roots out there in the street. It scared the white man to death, scared the white power structure in Washington, D.C. to death: I was there. When they found out that this black steamroller was going to come down on the capital, they called in [NAACP leader] Wilkins, they called in [head of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters] Randolph, they called in these national Negro leaders that you respect and told them, ‘Call it off.’ Kennedy said, ‘Look, you all are letting this thing go too far.’ And Old Tom said, ‘Boss, I can’t stop it, because I didn’t start it.’... ‘I’m not even in it, much less at the head of it.’... And that old shrewd fox, he said, ‘If you all aren’t in it, I’ll put you in it. I’ll put you at the head of it. I’ll endorse it. I’ll welcome it. I’ll help it. I’ll join it.’”

Malcolm added:

“They controlled it so tight, they told those Negroes what time to hit town, how to come, where to stop, what signs to carry, what song to sing, what speech they could make; and what speech they couldn’t make; and then told them to get out of town by sundown.”

—Malcolm X Speaks
(Grove Press, 1966)

The bourgeoisie eventually acquiesced to the demand for legal equality in the South, both because Jim Crow segregation had grown anachronistic and because it was an embarrassment overseas as American imperialism sought to posture as the champion of “democracy” in the Cold War, particularly in competition with the Soviet Union in the Third World.

While the civil rights movement challenged white racist America and gave rise to a generation of young radicals, it did not and could not open up a new period of black equality and advancement. For a

decaying capitalism cannot meet the promise of black freedom. The civil rights movement came up against this fact harshly when it swept out of the South into the North in the mid 1960s. The hellish conditions of ghetto life—the mass chronic unemployment, racist cop terror, crumbling schools, poverty and hunger—are rooted in American capitalism and

has plunged, schools are more segregated nationwide than before civil rights programs were implemented, and the unemployment rate among black youth is twice that among white youth. The racist “war on drugs,” which was heavily promoted by black Democrats like Jackson and Sharpton, has meant an American prison population of over 2 million, 44 percent of whom are black. An astounding *28 percent of all black men* are destined to spend time behind bars.

Cops prowl the ghettos, routinely invading black families’ homes and gunning down black youth on the street with impunity. Poverty, chronic joblessness and jail, schools that are no more than holding pens, AIDS, crime and cop terror—these are the standard aspects of life for the black population under decaying American capitalism. It is a measure of the horrendous conditions faced by black people that the Democratic Party and other organizers of the August 23 rally could not mobilize more than a few thousand to “celebrate” the March on Washington.

Even the most minimal remaining gains of the civil rights movement are today on the chopping block. In late June, the Supreme Court upheld the notion of “diversity” in the case of the University of Michigan law school while ruling unconstitutional an affirmative action point system for minority applicants to the undergraduate school. That BAMN and others pointed to this as a major victory for the rights of minorities speaks to the bankruptcy of the reformist and liberal proponents of affirmative action.

It took a social revolution to free blacks from the chains of slavery. And it will take a workers revolution to at last free black Americans and all working people from the shackles of capitalism. This is the task to which the Spartacist League is dedicated. Finish the Civil War! Black liberation through socialist revolution! ■

Chile...

(continued from page 3)

negative—the basic Marxist understanding that the capitalist state at its core is a repressive apparatus composed of the cops, the courts, the military and the prison system which serves to defend private property and the class rule of the bourgeoisie. The working class cannot simply seize control of this repressive capitalist state and wield it for its own very different purposes—the bourgeois state must be smashed through workers revolution and replaced by organs of workers rule.

Despite the transition to “parliamentary democracy” in 1990, Pinochet only retired as head of the military in 1998, and workers strikes and protests continue to be met with brutal repression. In August, a one-day general strike by some 640,000 workers against “30 years of

economic dictatorship” was met by riot police shooting water cannons, and over 200 demonstrators were arrested, some of whom have been charged under new “anti-terror” laws. Women are still subjected to particularly savage oppression: abortion is outlawed in all circumstances, even to save a woman’s life, and divorce is illegal.

In “Workers, Leftists Face Massacre in Chile,” (WV No. 29, 28 September 1973), we wrote: “Either the lessons of this tragic defeat will be learned by the labor movement or we shall pay the price of our blindness in blood.” The same program of class collaboration that produced this defeat is still promoted today by pseudo-socialists around the world. An authentically Bolshevik—i.e., Trotskyist—vanguard party of the proletariat must be forged that fights for the complete political independence of the proletariat from the capitalists, the necessary condition for victorious revolutionary struggle. ■

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WORKERS VANGUARD

40 Years After March on Washington



1963



2003

AP photos

Birmingham, 1963: Struggles for equality galvanized black America. Forty years later, racist cop terror and segregation are daily reality in capitalist America.

USA Still Racist Hell for Black People

Forty years ago one of America's great truth tellers, Malcolm X, denounced the 1963 March on Washington as the "farce on Washington." Hailed as the high-water mark of the mass civil rights movement, the march was in fact its nadir, marking its subordination to the Democratic Party of the Kennedys and Lyndon Johnson who, like the racist capitalist class they served, had nothing but contempt for black people's struggles for equality.

Four decades after Martin Luther King Jr. proclaimed, "I have a dream," America remains a racist hellhole for the mass of black people. And thanks to the treacherous role of King and his political heirs, the racist trade-union misleaders, and sundry "left" organizations who tail after them, blacks remain overwhelmingly chained to the very same Democrats who have repeatedly stomped on their aspirations—from Jimmy Carter who spat on school busing to desegregate pub-

Break with the Democrats!
For Black Liberation Through
Socialist Revolution!

lic schools by adopting the segregationist call for "ethnic purity" to Bill Clinton who eliminated "welfare as we know it," condemning countless black mothers and their families to starvation and homelessness, while vastly expanding use of the racist death penalty.

Last month some 5,000 people turned out to commemorate the 1963 march. Called by the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, the commemoration was an electoral rally for the Democrats, pure and simple. Organizers talked of a "rolling mobilization" of activities lead-

ing up to the 2004 presidential elections. Martin Luther King III declared, "We are here to create a revolution at the ballot box" (*Amsterdam News*, 28 August). Former D.C. delegate Rev. Walter Fauntroy described the rally as the kickoff of a 15-month voter registration drive and declared, "We want to give Martin Luther King a birthday present next year at the polls" (*Washington Post*, 24 August).

This Democratic Party revival meeting was supported by a variety of organizations who purport to be socialists. The Workers World Party lauded the march for its "strong anti-war mood," while uncritically noting that "among the speakers were three presidential candidates—the Rev. Al Sharpton, Carol Mosely Braun and Howard Dean" as well as Democratic Party spokesman Jesse Jackson (*Workers World*, 4 September).

Heavily involved in building the event
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Victory to Yale Strikers!

On August 27, Yale University unions representing over 4,000 campus and hospital workers went out on strike against the vicious Ivy League bosses of this bastion of racist class privilege. Hotel

Young Spartacus

Employees and Restaurant Employees International Union (HERE) Local 34, representing clerical and technical workers, and Local 35, representing service and maintenance workers, had been working without a contract for over 18 months when they struck on the eve of the fall session. They are joined in their strike by some 160 dietary workers organized by Service Employees International Union District 1199 at Yale-New Haven Hospital, who have been without a contract for three years and have been the vanguard of a bitter fight to unionize another 1,800 workers at the hospital.

Among the strike's most committed student supporters are activists of the



Young Spartacus

September 4: Hundreds-strong picket and rally of striking campus workers and student supporters at Yale, New Haven, Connecticut.

Graduate Employees and Students Organization (GESO), who have been battling the union-busting Yale administration for almost 15 years to win the right for teaching and research assistants to form a

union. GESO and 1199's struggles underscore that this strike battle poses not only the fight for decent wages, pensions and job security for Local 34, 35 and 1199 members, but the fight to organize all

campus and hospital workers into unions. And it is widely recognized that if Yale succeeds in its attempts to crush the strike and bust the unions, then other universities across the country will follow suit.

Yale exemplifies the capitalist rulers' contempt for working people and the oppressed. With an \$11 billion endowment managed by a rogues' gallery of powerful capitalists, this elite private university lords it over the predominantly black and minority residents of impoverished New Haven. Yale accounts for almost one in four jobs in a city with a per capita income of less than \$17,000. While Yale boasts on its Web site of the massive returns on the investments it has made in the last few years, it is offering the paltriest wage increases on average incomes of \$33,000 a year for clerical workers and \$30,000 for other campus workers. The average tuition, room and board at Yale for a year is higher than what these workers get paid! With a pension fund surplus of \$200 million, Yale is still balking at
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