

Abortion Outlawed in South Dakota

For Free Abortion on Demand!

Women's fundamental right to abortion is under renewed assault. It's been relentlessly eroded for over 30 years, ever since the 1973 U.S. Supreme Court *Roe v. Wade* decision, which overturned state anti-abortion laws. In South Dakota on March 6, Republican governor Michael Rounds signed the most sweeping anti-abortion law in the nation, banning all abortions except those necessary to save the life of the woman, and mandating five-year prison sentences for doctors who perform abortions. This sets up a head-on collision with the legal right to abortion, as the law will be challenged all the way up to the Supreme Court.

Fifteen other states already have anti-abortion "trigger laws" ready to go into effect should *Roe* be overturned. The Supreme Court plans to hear legal challenges this fall to the grossly misnamed "partial birth abortion" ban passed by Congress, which is being used as a wedge to roll back all abortion rights. And Bush has recently appointed two new Supreme Court justices, John Roberts and Samuel Alito, who are thoroughgoing racist reactionaries on all social fronts (see "Racial Oppression and the Supreme Court Hearings," WV No. 864, 17 February).

Ominous as this all is, for many women in America the ability to have an abortion has already been placed effectively out of reach. In South Dakota, there is only one abortion clinic. Increasingly women need to travel great distances, including out of state, to obtain abortions. A recent *New York Times* (12 March) op-ed article stated, "We'd do better to view South Dakota's action not as transformative...but as an effort to formalize what for many women already exists in practice." The article cited some grim statistics, including: "In Mississippi, where the number of places that offer abortion services has shrunk from six to one, 60 percent of women traveled to neighboring states to terminate their pregnancies in 2000, up from 33 percent 12 years earlier."

As revolutionary communists, we defend abortion rights and every gain that's been won for women, no matter how partial. What is urgently needed is to fight to defend and extend women's rights, including the right to abortion. We fight for free abortion and contraception on demand, without qualification, linked to a program of free, quality health care for all. These are vital necessities for women



Demonstrators in Sioux Falls protest South Dakota's abortion ban, March 9.

For Women's Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!

and for working people as a whole, along with paid maternity leave and free 24-hour childcare facilities at work and in the community. We look to the power of the working class, not its mortal enemies in the capitalist state, as the motor force for social progress. Every real gain won by working people and the oppressed is, and will be, the result of hard class and social struggle, not appeals to bourgeois politicians and the courts.

It is outrageous that the capitalist state—from state legislatures up to whatever nine people are appointed for life to the Supreme Court, an inherently reactionary institution—should have the life-and-death power to interfere in people's most intimate, private decisions. We say, government out of the bedrooms! Abolish all laws against "crimes without victims" such as laws against prostitution, homosexuality and "age of consent" laws that target teens! We oppose reactionary "parental notification" laws and all restrictions on access to contraception, including "Plan B" (the "morning after pill") and the RU 486 "abortion pill." Teenagers (like other humans) will have consensual sex, whether the anti-sex police like it or not, and accidents will happen—so it's a very good thing that

abortion is actually a simple and safe medical procedure.

Democratic Party politicians whine that abortion is a "sad, even tragic choice," as Democratic senator Hillary Clinton recently said. In fact, abortion is often more a necessity than a "choice." Despite all the restrictions, in 2002 alone, some 1.29 million abortions were carried out in the U.S., according to the Guttmacher

Institute. "At current rates," the Institute's Web site reports, "about one in three American women will have had an abortion by the time she reaches age 45." It further reports that half of all pregnancies in the U.S. are unintended and that half of those end in abortion. Given all the fundamentalist religious hysteria against abortion, it's significant too that 78 percent of women having abortions report a religious affiliation, according to Guttmacher.

Nineteenth-century utopian socialist Charles Fourier wrote that the level of any civilization could be determined by the degree of social progress for its women. The cruelty of American "civilization" can be measured by the fact that women in prison today are literally shackled to their beds as they give birth, and then their babies are ripped away from them. As for workers, as far as the ruling class is concerned, they might as well drop dead once they're no longer productive. Wall Street and Washington are united in trying to smash whatever limited health care and pension plans workers still have left today. In this racist society, blacks are hit hardest, as always—the racist contempt and lethal incompetence by all levels of government in the wake of Hurricane Katrina made that clear for all to see.

In this period of social reaction, for the capitalists and their political frontmen free health care and free abortion on demand are anathema, only a breath away from "godless communism" and who knows what wild "free love" scenarios. The Bush administration is so bizarrely reactionary that it views science with deep distrust. A truly frightening article, "Political Science," in the *New Yorker* (13 March) reports that the Bush regime opposes letting girls be inoculated with the new papillomavirus vaccine that protects against cervical cancer, noting: "The Bush Administration has been relentless

continued on page 10

Spartacists raise demand for women's rights at San Francisco antiwar protest, March 2004.



WV Photo



NYC Transit Strike: “We Showed Our Power”

New York City
March 9, 2006

To Workers Vanguard:

Your newspaper's coverage of the NYC transit strike told the truth about what was going on. My union, TWU Local 100, went on strike for the first time in 25 years in defiance of the Taylor Law's ban on public workers strikes. Most everyone knew we had to make a stand in defense of ourselves.

Since the strike ended and we voted down a proposed give-back contract by a slight margin at the end of January, the union leadership has left us in the dark, dangling in limbo. My workmates were infuriated when they heard that the MTA brass was pushing for binding arbitration and putting all their planned attacks on us back on the table. The MTA will do anything to undermine our power, from racist abuse on the work floor to calling on the cops and courts to beat us down.

The union leadership is divided between warring cliques loyal to either Local 100 president Toussaint or the TWU Inter-

national leadership. This festering situation only creates cynicism among the membership. Workmates in my shop have been asking lately, why did we even bother going on strike? But the strike was not a mistake. It was the only way to back off the MTA demands for major givebacks. Our union flexed its muscles, showed its power and was watched by workers all over the world. The attacks on our union are part of a general assault on the living standards of all workers.

On the job, we've been discussing the “good old days” of past decades when workers thought that their children would naturally do better than themselves. The only way to turn around our degradation is through struggle against management. A recent New York Times article talks about the Caterpillar company's two-tier hiring system and the fact that newer workers have vastly lower wages and benefits than older workers. Multi-tier systems mean that as the older workers retire there is no higher tier left. Labor is being pushed back as the capitalists rake in greater profits.

WV Photo

**TWU workers
on the picket
lines at
Manhattan's
Clara Hale
bus barn,
December 22.**



That is why our struggle is so important, because it could inspire millions of other workers to realize that they don't have to just take it from the bosses.

The third day of our strike, a Thursday before Christmas, just when we were putting the squeeze on the racist politicians and MTA straw bosses, Toussaint folded the strike, pouring water on a fire that was threatening to get “out of control.” For many of the picketers it was shocking and depressing. Our union shop chairman with bloodshot eyes and cracking voice told us to go home, it was over. Within an hour all that was left of our impressive picket line was a trash-strewn sidewalk and some picket signs.

There is a general feeling of powerlessness in getting the union leadership to fight and that frustration can lead to anti-union sentiment. Some workmates argue to sue the union. Five of the vice presidents who oppose Toussaint have a lawsuit pending against him. One argument you hear is that “suing the union is bad but you have to do these things sometimes because it is the only way to fight.” But I think your articles are right that such “fights” only weaken the union, because suing the union is calling on the same state that is attacking the union and enforcing the Taylor Law against us. Look at what happened to the Teamsters whose president, Ron Carey, was removed by the government after he led a strike against UPS. Carey rode into the leadership of the union through court suits and a government-run election. Then, the next time the feds intervened in the union they threw him out.

Some workers are so mad at the union leadership that they are indifferent to the bosses' attacks on the union that are pending in court. Governor Pataki is calling for the jailing of Toussaint, and the government, through Public Employment Relations Board sanctions, is seeking to cancel the union's automatic dues check-off. When the judges and their cops go after the union leadership they are attacking all of us. So in defense of ourselves, we *must* fight to defend the union against the attacks on our elected officers and finances.

Our union shouldn't support the Democrats, Republicans or any other bosses' politicians. It is NY attorney general Eliot Spitzer, the Democratic Party's leading candidate for Governor, who is in charge of the prosecution of our union for going on strike. Some of my workmates agree that the Democrats are no friends of working people but argue that the union must support the Democrats anyway because there is no alternative. This is wrong! Workers need union leaders who will stand for our interests in opposition to this whole system. We need a party of our own that will fight for a society run by the working class.

Many transit workers ask if we should continue the contract struggle and strike again if necessary. One said, “Look at what we got when we went on strike in December, a giveback contract where we'll now have to start paying for health-care. Why would we go on strike again under this leadership? They'd just screw it up again.” I told him, we showed our

power in December, and to win we needed to stand firm and get the rest of labor behind us.

All of the NYC area union leaders insisted that the strike must be called off, because they were afraid of upsetting their many connections with the bosses' politicians. The union leaders knew our strike had tremendous support throughout the ranks of labor, with many in the city wanting to come out to defend us and spread the strike. Judging from the many raised fists and honking horns from workers passing our picket lines throughout the city, that was a real possibility. But such a move would go completely against the politics of the union leadership, not only in NYC, but in this country as a whole. What the current TWU leaders are really about is supporting this rotten capitalist system.

During the three days of the strike, it was a different world. Black, white and immigrant workers together were fighting against the MTA, the politicians and the whole establishment with its anti-worker newspapers calling us selfish and unreasonable and hurling racist epithets at us. But the workers of New York were on our side and we were immensely popular with the countless nationalities that make up the colorful patchwork of our region. There were many conversations on the picket lines, from the job of cops as protectors of the bosses' property to the history of workers' struggles in the U.S. and around the world. We were fighting the bosses while the whole world was watching us. Our strike took place while there is simmering anger in this country over the bloody occupation of Iraq, the phony “war on terror” stomping on our civil rights and the racist specter of Hurricane Katrina which haunts and exposes this government.

I especially appreciated the campaign you wrote about to get unions internationally to defend TWU Local 100 and our strike. It shows that we are certainly not alone in our struggles. During the strike, transit workers in this city got a real taste of our potential and our power.

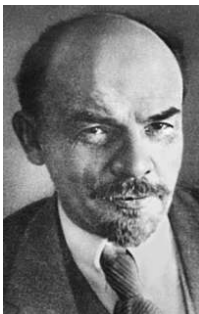
A WV reader



TROTSKY

For Women's Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!

March 8, International Women's Day, which originated in 1908 in a march by women garment workers in New York City, was first celebrated in Russia in 1913. In a special edition of Pravda marking the occasion, Alexandra Kollontai, a leader in the Bolshevik Party, polemicized against bourgeois feminism and stressed that the emancipation of women is the task of the entire proletariat, whose historic role is the overthrow of the capitalist order through socialist revolution.



LENIN

There was a time when working men thought that they alone must bear on their shoulders the brunt of the struggle against capital, that they alone must deal with the “old world” without the help of their womenfolk. However, as working-class women entered the ranks of those who sell their labour, forced onto the labour market by need, by the fact that husband or father is unemployed, working men became aware that to leave women behind in the ranks of the “non-class-conscious” was to damage their cause and hold it back. The greater the number of conscious fighters, the greater the chances of success. What level of consciousness is possessed by a woman who sits by the stove, who has no rights in society, the state or the family? She has no “ideas” of her own! Everything is done as ordered by the father or husband....

On “Women's Day” the organised women workers demonstrate against their lack of rights.

But, some will say, why this *singling out* of women workers? Why special “Women's Days,” special leaflets for working women, meetings and conferences of working-class women? Is this not, in the final analysis, a concession to the feminists and bourgeois suffragettes?

Only those who do not understand the radical difference between the movement of socialist women and bourgeois suffragettes can think this way.

What is the aim of the feminists? Their aim is to achieve the same advantages, the same power, the same rights within capitalist society as those possessed now by their husbands, fathers and brothers. What is the aim of the women workers? Their aim is to abolish all privileges deriving from birth or wealth. For the woman worker it is a matter of indifference who is the “master”—a man or a woman. Together with the whole of her class, she can ease her position as a worker....

For bourgeois women, political rights are simply a means allowing them to make their way more conveniently and more securely in a world founded on the exploitation of the working people. For women workers, political rights are a step along the rocky and difficult path that leads to the desired kingdom of labour.

—Alexandra Kollontai, “Women's Day” (February 1913)

WORKERS VANGUARD

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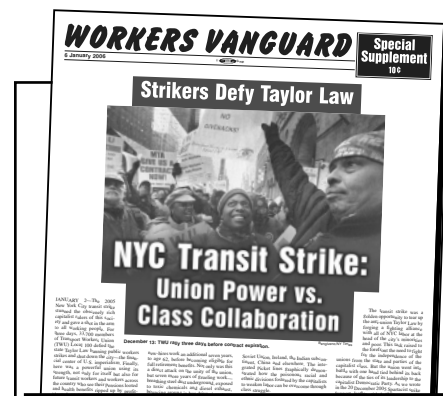
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We print below a March 11 letter by the Partisan Defense Committee—a class-struggle, non-sectarian defense organization associated with the Spartacist League—to the Assistant Secretary of Homeland Security, Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

We strongly protest the vile attempt on February 7 by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement to deport Jiang Zhenxing, a pregnant Chinese woman. As a result of the physical and verbal abuse by immigration agents, Ms. Jiang suffered a miscarriage of the twins she was carrying. We join with others who have condemned these despicable actions: Hands off Jiang Zhenxing! No deportations!

Ms. Jiang has been in the U.S. for ten years and operates a small restaurant in Philadelphia with her husband. Their four- and six-year-old sons are American citizens, having been born in the U.S. On February 7, she reported for a regularly scheduled appointment with Immigration officials in Philadelphia. Within minutes of her arrival, Ms. Jiang was grabbed, hustled off and pushed into a minivan

and driven to JFK airport in New York. Her husband and sons waited in the lobby unaware that she was being deported. En route Ms. Jiang told the agents she was pregnant and was experiencing pains. Her appeals for medical attention were not only denied but ridiculed. After they arrived at JFK airport her request for an ambulance was also refused. Hours later, she was finally taken to Jamaica Hospital, to be told by doctors the fetuses had

no heartbeat. She underwent surgery the next day.

On February 14, demonstrations were held in Philadelphia and New York to protest the mistreatment of Ms. Jiang. Reportedly, your office agreed to suspend deportation for six months, at which time you will again seek to forcibly separate her from her husband and children. We demand no deportation! Full citizenship rights for all immigrants! ■



Immigrant Solidarity Network
Jiang Zhenxing in New York hospital recovering from ordeal at hands of immigration officers.

PDC Campaign

Labor Must Defend NYC Transit Unions!

In January, the Partisan Defense Committee initiated a campaign urging labor solidarity with the New York City transit unions, which face massive legal sanctions for conducting a powerful three-day strike last December in defiance of the state's anti-strike Taylor Law (see *WV* Nos. 862, 20 January, and 863, 3 February). Trade unions nationally and internationally responded to the PDC campaign by sending protest letters demanding no reprisals to New York governor George Pataki, Attorney General Eliot Spitzer and NYC mayor Michael Bloomberg, as well as messages of support to the unions.

In response to this campaign, a spokesman at the Office of Labor Relations, writing on behalf of Mayor Bloomberg, sent the PDC the first letter printed at right, which exemplifies their vicious, anti-labor stance. The second letter is from Transport Workers Union (TWU) Local 100 president Roger Toussaint.

The memberships of TWU Local 100 and Amalgamated Transit Union locals 726 and 1056 have already been hit with fines and Local 100 is still working without a contract. Meanwhile, the leaders continue to be threatened with imprisonment and the unions with pauperization. Governor Pataki's office has reaffirmed his position that the union leaders "should face the full weight of penalties available under the Taylor Law," including jail time (*AM New York*, 3 March). Letters of protest and solidarity are still urgently needed. All of labor must take a stand with the NYC transit unions.



THE CITY OF NEW YORK
OFFICE OF LABOR RELATIONS
40 Rector Street, New York, NY 10006-1705
<http://nyc.gov/olr>

January 18, 2006

Gene Herson
Labor Coordinator, Partisan Defense Committee

This is in response to your letter, dated January 9, 2006, to Mayor Bloomberg. He has asked me to reply on his behalf.

Be assured that the Mayor expects all employers in the City of New York to comply with applicable Federal, State and Local laws governing the workers in any workplace.

Similarly, the Mayor also expects all employees to comply with applicable Federal, State and Local laws governing the workers in any workplace.

Since your letter contains patently incorrect statements, including your misrepresentation of the Taylor Law—a law designed and implemented with Union input—we will respectfully refrain from any further discussion of your letter except to state that we disagree with its contents entirely.

Sincerely,
James F. Hanley



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Tel: 212-875-6000 • Fax: 212-519-3381 • www.twulocal100.org

Roger Toussaint President
Ed Watt Secretary-Treasurer
Darlyne Lawson Recording Secretary

February 10, 2006

Mr. Paul Cooperstein
Chairman, Partisan Defense Committee

The members, staff and officers of Transport Workers Union Local 100 deeply appreciate your support during our recent contract fight and strike.

It seemed that our contract fight was conducted under the bright lights of the mass media. However, there were very important things happening outside camera range, like the solidarity you displayed. If the media ignored it, transit workers did not. Our 35,000 members were strengthened by the knowledge that they were not alone.

I would have liked to have written sooner, noting how your efforts helped produce a successful resolution of our battle. While that has not yet occurred, expressing our appreciation can't wait.

Our picket signs said "It's About Respect." Please let your members, officers and staff know that you have the respect and heartfelt thanks of the entire TWU Local 100 family.

Sincerely,
Roger Toussaint
President

Send protest letters to:

Governor George E. Pataki
State Capitol
Albany, NY 12224
fax (518) 474-1513

Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg
City Hall
New York, NY 10007
fax (212) 788-2460

NY State Attorney General
Eliot Spitzer
120 Broadway
New York, NY 10271
fax (212) 416-8139

Send solidarity messages to:

TWU Local 100
80 West End Avenue
New York, NY 10023
fax (212) 595-9875

ATU Local 726
1390 Castleton Avenue
Staten Island, NY 10302
fax (718) 698-2300

ATU Local 1056
1 Cross Island Plaza
133-33 Brookville Blvd., 2nd Floor
Rosedale, NY 11422-1491
fax (718) 949-6446

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Protestants and Catholics Strike Together

Postal Strikes in Northern Ireland

The following article was written by our comrades of the Spartacist Group Ireland, section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist).

A wildcat strike of several hundred Belfast postal workers rocked Northern Ireland in February when Protestant and Catholic members of the Communication Workers' Union (CWU) walked off the job to protest against constant harassment by Royal Mail management. The strike effectively shut down mail delivery in most of Belfast for over two weeks and crippled mail to and from Northern Ireland. It also provided a powerful illustration of how class struggle can break down the sectarian division between Catholic and Protestant workers. In a defiant show of opposition to sectarianism, striking trade unionists marched from Belfast's Protestant heartland, the Shankill Road, to the Catholic Falls Road on 7 February. Postal workers were immensely proud of this demonstration which was applauded by working-class members of both communities.

In fact the working class is the only class with the social power and objective class interests to transcend the sectarian divide, which serves the capitalist exploiters. Striking workers told *Spartacist Ireland* that Protestant workers walked off the job at Belfast's Tomb Street depot in disgust at a management lie that a union member was involved in "harassment." They were immediately joined by Catholic workers, and the strike soon spread to the main mail office for Northern Ireland at Mallusk. Mallusk, north of Belfast, is in the same area where in January 2002 20-year-old Catholic postman Daniel McColgan was murdered by pro-British Loyalists. At the time, postal workers walked off the job for five days to protest against this heinous murder and against Loyalist threats to kill other Catholics working in Protestant areas.

Postal workers who spoke to *Spartacist Ireland* supporters were conscious and very proud that they belong to an integrated union and that they understood the need for Protestant and Catholic to stand together to resist the attacks of Royal Mail. Management threatened to take legal action against individual union representatives involved in the strike, demanding that they get people back to work or face being sued for the company's losses. Company intimidation efforts included sending men to hand-deliver letters to union representatives at their homes late at night. Every worker on the picket line had stories of vicious harassment and mistreatment by management, which many workers saw as an attack on the union.

Some strikers linked management harassment to last year's Loyalist marching season, when some workers—both Catholic and Protestant—wanted to start and finish their rounds early to avoid the violence that inevitably accompanies Orange Order marches, which are simply a pretext for anti-Catholic violence and intimidation. Management refused, thus forcing all workers to go out during the height of the violence, which last September was the worst in Belfast in years.

As Marxists we seek to bring a proletarian perspective to labor struggles, which means not simply supporting workers' unity in struggle, but addressing broader social questions. The starting point for struggle must be a recognition that Northern Ireland is a sectarian statelet based on the subjugation of the Catholic minority and divide-and-rule over the working class. Orange supremacy is violently enforced through the Orange state—the backbone of which is the RUC/PSNI (Royal

Ulster Constabulary/Police Service of Northern Ireland) backed up by the British Army—both of which work in tandem with Loyalist death squads in the execution of Catholics.

Marxists stand for the defence of the oppressed Catholic community in Northern Ireland and fight against all forms of discrimination in jobs, housing and education. At the same time, we oppose Sinn Féin's nationalist perspective of a capitalist united Ireland in which Protestants would become an oppressed minority. This prospect only serves to consolidate the Protestants behind Loyalist bigots such as Ian Paisley, laying the basis for communalist terror, and is antithetical to a polarisation along *class* lines. In this situation of interpenetrated peoples and fratricidal nationalism, there can be no equitable solution short of the destruction of capitalism and the institution of workers rule. A key demand is for the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of the British Army, a precondition for any just solution. We seek a solution through a proletarian internationalist perspective for the British Isles: for the revolutionary overthrow of British imperialism, the clericalist state in the South, which is hideously oppressive of women, Travellers and workers, and the sectarian Orange state.

Supporters of *Spartacist Ireland* were welcomed on the picket lines by strikers. A report by one comrade said: "The first two guys to come over to greet us set the tone: one Catholic, one Protestant, totally proud of having marched up the Shankill and down the Falls, both delighted to talk to us and fully committed to staying out and fighting." Union official Eoin Davey is a Catholic and self-described Republican; his second-in-command is a Protestant. Davey proudly told us that when the branch leadership decided to provide each striker with a whistle for the march, the only shop that could provide enough whistles was a Loyalist memorabilia shop on the Shankill Road. Despite his fear of even venturing up the Shankill Road, a Catholic striker did so, accompanied by a

Protestant union representative. The shop provided hundreds of whistles, but to the strikers' dismay, they all had straps bearing Union Jack flags. However, the woman at the counter suggested they could cut the flags off, which they did!

But despite the courage and determination of the strikers, the CWU national leadership left the striking workers isolated through their criminal refusal to support the strike. Both the national and local leadership even repudiated the strike in an effort to avoid reprisals under the anti-union laws. As one striker told *Spartacist Ireland*, he didn't need to hear that from his union.

There was support for the strike from the union ranks in England, while postal workers in southern Ireland donated £100,000 to the strikers. What was necessary was to spread the strike, not least to Derry and East Belfast. But that would have required a fight against the CWU leadership, who had previously negotiated a sell-out deal to end the wildcat strikes that swept London and the south of England during the winter of 2003-04. Thus they have sabotaged effective resistance to Royal Mail's plans to slash the size of the workforce and ultimately to destroy the union (see "Hayes & Co. Sabotage Wildcat Victory," *Workers Hammer* No. 186, Winter 2003-2004).

Displays of class unity by Protestant and Catholic workers are rare in Northern Ireland, but as revolutionaries we know that such opportunities will inevitably arise even in such a deeply segregated society. The postal workers' march evoked the memory of the mass demonstrations of Catholic and Protestant workers in Belfast in 1932 in opposition to unemployment. Back then the demonstrators also went to the Falls and Shankill Roads where they were joined by bands from both communities who found that the only non-sectarian tune that the bands could play was "Yes, We Have No Bananas!" But in the absence of the intervention by a Communist vanguard, instances of class unity on the basis of

trade-union struggles will be fleeting, and the sectarian division will reassert itself once the struggle ends.

The most powerful instance of joint class struggle was the 1919 Belfast engineering strike (part of a wave of class struggle that swept Britain and Ireland after the Russian Revolution) in which Charles McKay, a socialist of Catholic background, led mainly Protestant workers to shut down all heavy industry and most of the city. The strike was betrayed by Labourite bureaucrats and smashed by the capitalist rulers. The aftermath of this defeat included a hideous wave of anti-Catholic pogroms the following year in which 9,000 Catholics were driven out of their jobs, as were 3,000 Protestant socialists and trade-union activists. This communalism laid the basis for the partition of Ireland in 1921 by British imperialism. The lesson of these struggles is the necessity for a revolutionary vanguard to intervene to win Catholic and Protestant workers to a proletarian revolutionary perspective that can transcend the sectarian divide, and to the understanding of the need to uproot the capitalist system that gives rise to it.

The imperialist "peace deal" is premised on Orange supremacy and the continued presence of the British Army. Catholics in working-class areas such as Belfast's Ardoyne or the Short Strand live in a constant state of siege, in constant fear of attack by the army, police and/or Loyalist mobs. Sectarian divisions have deepened to the point where Catholics and Protestants in working-class areas

are divided by 30-foot-high steel "peace walls." A London *Guardian* report (24 September 2004) noted that "Northern Ireland is more segregated than ever, with a geographical apartheid that many feel is now worse than during the 30 years of the Troubles." It adds that "in Belfast 98% of working-class housing is segregated along religious lines. Protestants and Catholics tend to use different bus stops, shops, hospitals and more than 90% of children go to separate schools." In scenes reminiscent of the situation of American blacks prior to the civil rights movement, in 2001 Catholic children attending Holy Cross school were confronted daily by howling Loyalist mobs trying to prevent them from entering the school through the front door or even walking to school on a "Protestant" road.

Although Protestant workers are only marginally better off than their Catholic counterparts, there is a commonly held view that any improvement in the condition of one community will be at the expense of the other. This points to the need for workers struggles to break out of the framework of capitalist rule.

The postal strike highlighted the need for a class-struggle leadership of the working class in Northern Ireland. A union march on 14 February ended in a rally that was addressed by a host of bourgeois politicians from Sinn Féin and the SDLP (Social Democratic and Labour Party) as well as the Progressive Unionist Party, a political front for the murderous anti-Catholic UVF (Ulster Volunteer Force). The union leadership deferred to these individuals, all of whom represent parties whose role is to maintain the sectarian division and to uphold the capitalist system that foment it.

The Socialist Party (affiliated to Peter Taaffe's Committee for a Workers' International and to Socialist Alternative in the U.S.) makes occasional claims to stand for working-class politics. But far from class independence, they pander to Loyalist prejudices. One can get a whiff of

continued on page 9



Belfast: Communication Workers' Union strikers march on City Hall, February 14.

Spartacist Ireland

My Name Is Rachel Corrie and Zionist Censorship

“If any of us had our lives and welfare completely strangled, lived with children in a shrinking place where we knew, because of previous experience, that soldiers and tanks and bulldozers could come for us at any moment and destroy all the greenhouses that we had been cultivating for however long, and did this while some of us were beaten and held captive with 149 other people for several hours—do you think we might try to use somewhat violent means to protect whatever fragments remained?... I really think, in a similar situation, most people would defend themselves as best they could.”

—Rachel Corrie to her mother,
27 February 2003
(rachelswords.org)

On 16 March 2003, Rachel Corrie, a 23-year-old American defender of the Palestinians and a supporter of the International Solidarity Movement (ISM), was deliberately crushed by an Israeli bulldozer as she tried to stop the demolition of a Palestinian home. Now, three years later, the Zionists want to silence her powerful and moving voice again.

In 2005, the words of Rachel Corrie, taken from her journals and e-mails home, were brought to the London stage to sold-out crowds in a prize-winning play, *My Name Is Rachel Corrie*. The play was supposed to come to New

York, but the New York Theater Workshop “indefinitely” postponed it. James C. Nicola, the theater’s artistic director, announced that “after Ariel Sharon’s illness and the election of Hamas, we had a very edgy situation.... We found that our

plan to present a work of art would be seen as us taking a stand in a political conflict, that we didn’t want to take” (London *Guardian*, 28 February).

The refusal to produce *My Name Is Rachel Corrie* is a craven capitulation to



March 2003: Rachel Corrie courageously attempting to stop Israeli army bulldozer from razing Palestinian home, shortly before its driver deliberately ran her over.

International Solidarity Movement photos



Zionist censorship; its effect is to silence opponents of the “collective punishment” of the Palestinian people by Israel’s rulers. Katharine Viner, co-editor of the play along with Alan Rickman, wrote (*Guardian*, 1 March): “After all, she had made her journey to the Middle East in order to [quoting Rachel Corrie] ‘meet the people who are on the receiving end of our tax dollars,’ and she was killed by a US-made bulldozer...if a voice like this cannot be heard on a New York stage, what hope is there for anyone else? The non-American, the non-white, the non-dead, the oppressed?”

In January 2004 Tom Hurndall, British supporter of the ISM, died after being shot by Israeli forces in Gaza. His and Rachel Corrie’s deaths must be added to the huge toll of Palestinians who have perished at the hands of the arrogant Zionist state, which is stepping up its stranglehold on the Palestinian masses. With support from the U.S. ruling class, it is continuing to starve the Palestinian population, staging murderous missile attacks on civilians, rounding up and imprisoning men and boys, and carving up and walling in the Palestinians on their own land. Defend the Palestinians! Israeli troops, settlers out of all the Occupied Territories!

We honor the memory of Rachel Corrie, the kind of person we would seek to win to revolutionary Marxism. She “was a manifestly courageous, intelligent and decent young woman who died for the just cause of defending the besieged Palestinian people,” as we wrote after her death (WV No. 800, 28 March 2003). Let Rachel Corrie’s voice be heard! ■

FBI Raids NYC Central Labor Council Feds: Hands Off Labor!

In a sinister dawn raid, more than 20 FBI agents invaded New York City’s Central Labor Council (CLC) offices in Manhattan on March 2. The Feds sealed off the CLC offices for hours as they rummaged through records. Then they hauled



Estrin/NY Times

New York CLC head Brian McLaughlin (left) with Mayor Michael Bloomberg, 2002.

away computers, books and records belonging to the labor federation, which includes 400 local unions representing over one million workers. The flimsy pretext for this outrageous raid was to find out whether CLC president Brian McLaughlin “had been given use of an American Express card by electrical contractors,” according to “law enforcement officials” (*New York Times*, 3 March). In another government attack on the union movement, on March 3 two labor officials in Los Angeles were indicted on charges of illegally using union personnel and funds in an election campaign. These government attacks are a threat to the entire labor movement.

In a statement following the raid, the CLC said that there were “currently no charges or allegations against the Central Labor Council or any of its officers, directors or employees.” The FBI raid on the CLC was part of an investigation of

alleged bid-rigging launched in the late 1990s under Democratic president Bill Clinton. CLC president Brian McLaughlin is being targeted—as director of the street lamps division of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 3, NYC’s main union of electrical workers—for supposedly agreeing to deals to reduce labor costs for two electrical companies, enabling them to win city contracts.

We don’t think McLaughlin and his cohorts on the Central Labor Council are class-struggle heroes. None of them did a damn thing to support the New York City transit workers strike last December. McLaughlin, a Democratic Party state assemblyman, embodies the trade-union bureaucracy’s collaboration with the capitalists and their politicians—he even campaigned for Republican mayor Michael Bloomberg’s re-election last year. Instrumental in nailing down no-strike labor agreements for the 2004 Republican National Convention, he was cited by Kathryn Wyld of the New York City Partnership and Chamber of Commerce as a labor leader who “has always been reasonable.” But we understand that when the government intervenes into the unions, they are representing the exploiting capitalist class that is the deadly enemy of the working class.

In Los Angeles, the poisonous logic of dragging the unions into the courts of the class enemy is now playing out. Citing the Feds’ investigation, Martin Ludlow resigned as executive secretary-treasurer of the Los Angeles County Federation of Labor two weeks before his indictment. He is up on charges of illegally using union personnel and funds in his 2003 City Council campaign. Janett Humphries, former president of Service Employees International Union Local 99, was also indicted. In reaching a plea agreement, Ludlow promised to cooperate with the state as it seeks to hang other union officials. In turn, Humphries has initiated her

own lawsuit, seeking to implicate higher union officers.

It is a lie that the courts, cops and officials of the capitalist state—whose purpose is to defend the profits, property and rule of the capitalist class—intervene into the unions to protect the members’ interests. Who really believes that this strike-breaking, blood-soaked imperialist state, with its Halliburton/Bechtel/Pentagon sweetheart deals, wants to root out “corruption”? The raid on the New York City CLC and the L.A. prosecutions are just the latest cases in the government’s decades-long effort to strangle the unions in the guise of “fighting corruption,” especially if the unions flex some muscle. Over the past 15 years, the Feds have

seized sweeping powers in the Teamsters, Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees and the Laborers’ International unions. They have restructured a number of major local district councils under threat of outright government takeover—often the result of lawsuits initiated by labor “oppositionists” who seek to ride the Feds’ coat-tails into union office.

We fight for the complete independence of the unions from the capitalist state. The labor movement has plenty of problems, including sometimes corruption, but it’s up to the workers themselves to clean them up. NYC’s powerful transport workers union crippled the finance center of U.S. imperialism last winter, while Los Angeles has had a series of militant strikes over the past few years, largely fueled by immigrants from Latin America who bring with them a history of hard class struggle. These are the forces to which we look to defend our class. All NYC and L.A. labor must demand: Feds/cops hands off the unions! ■

Spartacist League/SYC Forum

Mumia Is an Innocent Man!

The Fight to Free Mumia Abu-Jamal

Abolish the Racist Death Penalty!

Speaker: Rachel Wolkenstein, Partisan Defense Committee, former counsel for Mumia Abu-Jamal

Thursday, March 23, 7 p.m.

First Parish Church

3 Church St., Harvard Sq., Cambridge
(This forum is not sponsored by the First Parish Church.)

For more information: (617) 666-9453
or e-mail: bostonsyc@yahoo.com

BOSTON

Trotskyist League/Ligue Trotskyiste Forum

Canadian Imperialists: Out of Afghanistan, Haiti!

Saturday, April 8, 7 p.m.

OISE, 252 Bloor St. West
University of Toronto
(at St. George Subway)

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

TORONTO

British SWP: Reformists Who Hailed Counterrevolution



“‘Communism has collapsed,’ our newspapers and TV declare. It is a fact that should have every socialist rejoicing.”
—**Socialist Worker (Britain)**
31 August 1991



British SWP rejoiced over capitalist counterrevolution in USSR. Left: Russian Orthodox priest on Yeltsin's barricades, August 1991. Right: Desperate men and women sell possessions at makeshift market in Moscow, 1993.

They Fought for the Post-Soviet World, Now They've Got It

We reprint below an article that originally appeared in *Workers Hammer No. 194 (Spring 2006)*, newspaper of the Spartacist League/Britain, section of the International Communist League.

In August 1991, when Boris Yeltsin's counterrevolutionary forces backed by George Bush Sr. seized power, every capitalist ruling class on the planet was triumphant. They loudly proclaimed this to be the “death of communism,” hoping to bury the prospect of working-class revolution that the Soviet Union represented. Equally jubilant was the Socialist Workers Party [SWP—then affiliated to the International Socialist Organization in the U.S.], whose front page trumpeted: “Communism Has Collapsed” followed by “Now Fight for Real Socialism.” The article described this as “a fact that should have every socialist rejoicing” (*Socialist Worker*, 31 August 1991).

We of the ICL fought with all our resources against counterrevolution. While the SWP was “rejoicing” for Yeltsin, our comrades in Moscow distributed by the thousands a leaflet dated 27 August 1991 titled: “Soviet Workers: Defeat Yeltsin-Bush Counterrevolution!” which said:

“The working people of the Soviet Union, and indeed the workers of the world, have suffered an unparalleled disaster whose devastating consequences are now being played out. The ascendancy of Boris Yeltsin, who offers himself as Bush's man, coming off a botched coup by Mikhail Gorbachev's former aides, has unleashed a counterrevolutionary tide across the land of the October Revolution.”

—reprinted in Spartacist pamphlet, *How the Soviet Workers State Was Strangled* (1993)

Our leaflet emphatically stated that, although Yeltsin & Co. then saw their way clear to implement the reintroduction of capitalism, *the outcome had not yet been definitively decided*. In calling on Soviet workers to defeat Yeltsin-Bush, we said that “Soviet workers are facing a disaster of catastrophic proportions: every gain for which they, their parents and grandparents sacrificed is on the chopping block.” In the ensuing months the Soviet working class did not mobilise in resistance to the encroaching capitalist restoration and thus counterrevolution triumphed. Due to decades of Stalinist lies and misrule, the working class was atomised and bereft of any leadership that opposed capitalism. It also lacked any consistent socialist consciousness and was sceptical of class struggle in the capitalist countries.

What we said at the time has been overwhelmingly confirmed by subsequent events. The political landscape around the

world today is still conditioned by the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union in 1991-92. The final undoing of the world's first workers state ushered in a global offensive against the world's working class and oppressed by the imperialist ruling classes. The programme that the ICL upheld—that of Trotsky's Left Opposition and of the Bolshevik Party that led the October Revolution—was proven correct. We fought to the end for unconditional military defence of the Soviet Union and the East European deformed workers states against imperialist attack and internal counterrevolution, while fighting for workers political revolution to oust the parasitic Stalinist bureaucracies and replace them with regimes based on workers democracy and revolutionary internationalism. This is the programme we apply today to the remaining deformed workers states—China, Cuba, North Korea and Vietnam.

In sharp contrast, the SWP got what they wanted in 1991. They rejoiced in Yeltsin's triumph because it represented victory for what their tendency has stood for since it came into existence: the notion that imperialist “democracy” is preferable to Stalinism. In this post-Soviet ideological climate, which is dominated by the widespread belief that “communism

is dead,” the SWP projected there would be a radicalisation. This was pure fantasy. Having contributed to this climate throughout the Cold War, and having spent the past 15 years trying to cash in on it, long-time SWP hack John Molyneux has criticised the party leadership because the SWP is not getting the pay-off. At a January SWP conference Molyneux stood as an oppositional candidate for election to the Central Committee on a document exposing the fact that, even according to the SWP's vastly inflated figures, “somewhere during this period of radicalisation and outward success the party appears to have lost up to 5,000 (50%) of its membership (without acknowledging that this was happening)” (from “Why I Intend to Stand” by John Molyneux, published in *Weekly Worker*, 5 January).

While Molyneux wants to bring the SWP's expectations into line with today's political climate, he firmly upholds the SWP's support for counterrevolution—the SWP's very own contribution to that climate. Molyneux writes:

“A key problem, in my opinion, was our estimation of the effects of the collapse of Stalinism. We were right to identify this as fundamentally historically progressive and to argue that internationally it created a space for genuine socialist ideas to get a hearing. However we seri-

ously underestimated the extent to which it was perceived by millions, indeed hundreds of millions as the defeat of socialism. This led to what was a major characteristic of the 90s and is still with us today: namely a yawning gap between the large numbers who could be mobilised against various things (pit closures, the criminal justice bill, the nazis, ‘capitalism,’ war) and the small number who could be recruited for active revolutionary socialism.”

—*Weekly Worker*, 5 January

Molyneux's statement that the collapse of Stalinism was “fundamentally historically progressive” is a declaration of support to the SWP's political perspective that the restoration of capitalism was preferable to Stalinism. Well, Molyneux and the SWP got what they wanted. For anyone not blinded by anti-communist loyalty to “democratic” imperialism, the restoration of capitalism in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe was a *defeat of historic proportions for the working masses of the whole world*. In the former Soviet Union alone, from 1991 to 1997 gross domestic product fell by over 80 per cent; according to (understated) official statistics, capital investment dropped by over 90 per cent. By the middle of the 1990s, 40 per cent of the Russian population was living below the official poverty line and a further 36 per cent only slightly above it. Millions were starving; unemployment was massive; life expectancy plummeted. Life for women was drastically altered for the worse, and there was a resurgence of religious backwardness, both Russian Orthodox and Muslim.

This followed the devastating consequences of the tide of counterrevolution that had swept the former deformed workers states in Eastern Europe and led to the capitalist reunification of Germany in 1990. In the “one superpower” world, U.S. imperialism's military might allows it to dominate the world and to rape and plunder neocolonial countries such as Iraq. All the imperialist powers feel they have free rein to grind the working class at home and are trying to reverse historic gains for workers, as seen in the Blair government's attacks on wages, pensions and welfare provision. However it is not the repercussions of counterrevolution for the working masses of the world that bother Molyneux, whose only concern is that the SWP's numbers have plummeted.

The Significance of the Russian Revolution

Historically the destruction of the Soviet Union through counterrevolution in 1991-92 represented the final undoing of the

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Pyongyang, North Korea, devastated by U.S. bombs during 1950-53 Korean War. Tony Cliff (inset) broke from international Trotskyism, refusing to defend North Korean deformed workers state under attack by U.S. and British imperialism.



Socialist Challenge

Parliamentary Cretinism

ISO Goes All the Way with Capitalist Greens

The International Socialist Organization (ISO) is running candidates for the Green Party, a *capitalist* party putting forward a *capitalist* program. Foremost among these efforts is Todd Chretien's "Million Votes for Peace" campaign—directed against pro-war incumbent Democratic Senator Dianne Feinstein—for the Green nomination for California Senate in the June primary elections. As our Los Angeles comrades wrote in a leaflet distributed to an event last month addressed by Chretien (reprinted in *WV* No. 865, 3 March):

"The only way to end this system of imperialist war and colonial occupations, like in Iraq, is through socialist revolution to do away with capitalism that generates racism and war. The ISO's strategy of pressure politics and class collaboration, whether in the streets or at

racy and reformist leftists who act to keep the working class politically chained to the bourgeoisie in its Democratic Party face.

The ISO's Lance Selfa promotes their work in the Greens as a fight for an "independent left-wing alternative outside the Democratic Party" (*Socialist Worker*, 8 April 2005). This is a cynical hoax. When anti-union populist Ralph Nader—heavily backed by the ISO—ran for president on the Green Party ticket in 2000, he said his campaign was "going to be a real hammer on the Democrats. It's going to pull them in the right direction" (*LA Weekly*, 30 June 2000). Four years later, ISOers who had joined the Green Party fought (unsuccessfully) for the party to run Nader again. Running on his own, this "alternative" told the *New York Times*

December 2005:
Todd Chretien (second from left) launches candidacy for capitalist Green Party ticket in front of Democratic senator Dianne Feinstein's San Francisco office.



Josh On

reformist aims explicit, a *Socialist Worker* (21 November 2003) report on a gathering of "left-wing" Green activists stated that "an alternative independent of both parties" is "the only thing that will ever force the politicians to do what we want."

The backdrop to this debate is the Democrats' drive to take back Congress (and the White House) by posing as the better "war on terror" party. *Socialist Worker* (24 February) is left to lament that "the Democrats aren't interested in carrying an antiwar message, much less an oppositional message, into the fall campaign." In a letter to the *Nation* (2 January) announcing his campaign, Chretien stated that he "was very encouraged to read that your editorial board will not endorse *prowar* Democrats in 2006" (emphasis added). This is a shameless appeal to liberals who, like the *Nation*, oppose the Iraq occupation because it undermines the imperialists' "war on terror."

With the Democrats trying to steal the Republicans' thunder, the Greens provide disgruntled liberals with a way station on the road back into the Democratic Party. This is typical of "progressive" bourgeois third parties in the U.S. Thus in 1948, as the Democratic Truman administration was spearheading the anti-Soviet Cold War, Henry Wallace's Progressive Party ran on a "pro-labor" stance and called for "friendship" with the Soviet Union. Wallace, who had been vice president under Franklin D. Roosevelt, was supported by the Stalinist Communist Party under the rubric of the "anti-monopoly coalition." (Nader was similarly touted as an opponent of "corporate greed," while the 1960s' Peace and Freedom Party offered a left-sounding program against racism and the Vietnam War in order to channel social discontent into bourgeois electoralism.) In reality, Wallace only had tactical differences with the mainstream Democrats over the interests of U.S. capitalism. Four years later, he recanted and lent his voice to the anti-Soviet crusade.

James P. Cannon, the founder of American Trotskyism, refuted the argument that Henry Wallace was not a capi-

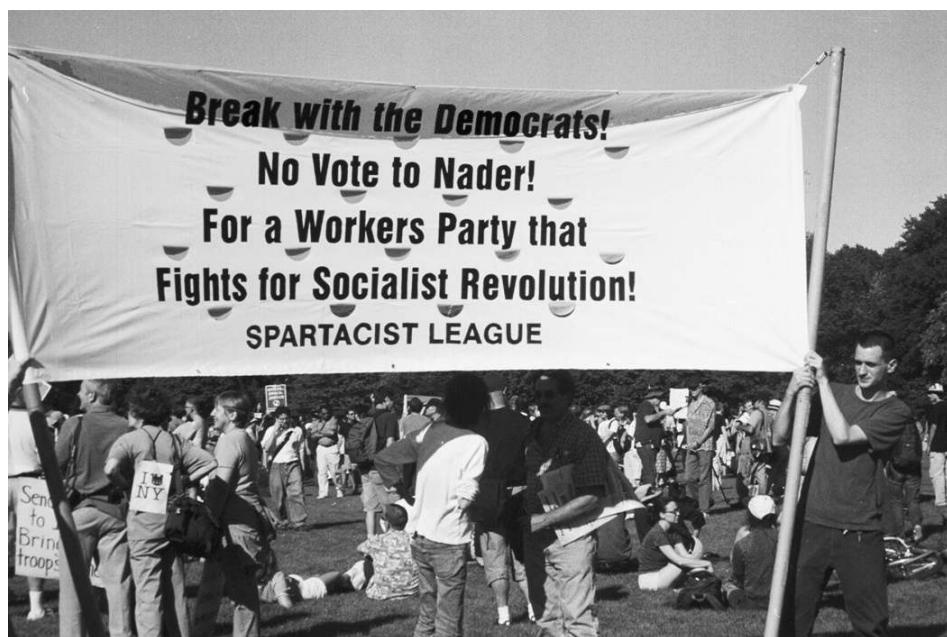
talist candidate because the capitalists did not support him. At a 1948 Central Committee plenum of the then-Trotskyist Socialist Workers Party, Cannon remarked: "The class character of the party is determined first by its program; secondly by its actual policy in practice; and thirdly by its composition and control. The Wallace party is bourgeois on all these counts.... We have to stir up the workers against this imposter, and explain to them that they will never get a party of their own by accepting substitutes."

When Spartacists condemn Chretien for running in a capitalist party, he responds that if the Greens were bourgeois they would have a lot more money. But that only makes the Greens a *small-time* bourgeois party. Its 2004 platform reads: "Greens support small business, responsible stakeholder capitalism, and broad and diverse forms of economic cooperation." Its eccentric, reactionary positions such as "creating and spreading local currencies and barter systems" and its insistence that "there is a fundamental conflict between economic growth and environmental protection" are pitched to layers of the petty bourgeoisie concerned with ecology and small-scale production. We noted in "The California Recall and the Left" (*WV* No. 812, 24 October 2003): "This anti-industrial stance is fundamentally anti-working-class, dreaming of a long-gone pre-industrial age, an America of small farms and small businesses...and rural idiocy and backwardness."

In his 2000 campaign, Nader was all but silent on the oppression of black people, but quite vocal in joining a racist, chauvinist chorus against Mexican truckers on U.S. roads and dismissing women's rights as "gonadal politics." Three years later, ISO favorite Peter Camejo, the "progressive investment banker," declared on his Web site as he was running for California governor: "The Green Party is the party of law and order." "Law and order" is the standard racist code word for bringing cop terror down on the ghettos and barrios.

It comes as no surprise that the Green Party embraces elements of the ideologically ultra-capitalist Libertarian Party, which appeals to the same layer of professionals, small business owners and intellectuals as the Greens. The Libertarians hate unions, taxes on the rich and social programs for black people and the poor. None of this stopped *Socialist Worker* (5 August 2005) from spilling favorable ink over one Kevin Zeese, a Libertarian cohort of the ISO in the GDI. An incurable bout of parliamentary cretinism has the ISO stumbling around in a fantasy world where a bloc of liberals and right-wing reactionaries constitutes a "left alternative"! Then again, the anti-communist ISO and Libertarians earlier found a common purpose when both

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WV Photo

Spartacists at 2004 Republican National Convention protests in New York City raised call for revolutionary workers party.

the ballot box, is an *obstacle* to fighting for the necessary mobilization of *independent working-class struggle* against imperialist war and the capitalist rulers."

The avowed socialists of the ISO are trampling on the most fundamental of Marxist principles: the political independence of the proletariat. More than 150 years ago, Karl Marx argued against calls for the German workers to support a petty-bourgeois party. In his 1850 "Address of the Central Committee to the Communist League," Marx declared, "The proletariat would lose its whole independent, laboriously achieved position and once more sink down to being an appendage of official bourgeois democracy. This union must, therefore, be most decisively rejected."

The ISO has acted as an appendage of bourgeois democracy from its inception, when it made common cause with the imperialists in their drive for counter-revolution in the Soviet Union. It is fully in character with the ISO's abject reformism that it has now pitched its tent in a party of the class enemy.

ISO and the Greens: From Flirtation to Consummation

The aim of the Spartacist League is to forge a workers party modeled on the Bolshevik Party that led the workers to power in Russia in the October Revolution of 1917. This task requires political struggle against the trade-union bureauc-

(10 January 2004) that his campaign "could work to the Democrats' advantage." By pounding populist themes, the article reported, Nader would "force the leading Democratic contenders to move left. That, he says, would expand the party's base."

As part of Greens for Democracy and Independence (GDI), the ISO is embroiled in a Green Party debate over *how best* to pressure the Democrats to fight the Bush administration. The GDI wants the Greens to give the Democrats a push from the outside; its opponents openly work with the Democratic Party's Progressive Democrats of America. Making the ISO's



German troops in Macedonia near Kosovo border. Greens in German coalition government joined 1999 U.S./NATO war against Serbia.

(continued from page 6)

The SWP rejected the programme of Trotsky and the Left Opposition, who systematically fought against the degeneration of the Soviet Union, seeking to maintain it as a bastion of world revolution. Trotsky defended the Soviet Union because it remained a workers state based on the planned, collectivised economy, while fighting against the bureaucratic misrule of the Stalinists. As he pointed out in *The Revolution Betrayed* written in 1936, the fact that within a decade the country had been transformed from a backward peasant-dominated country into an industrial powerhouse demonstrated the power of the planned economy, *despite* the bureaucracy. These gains included the collectivised economy that enabled the Soviet Red Army to smash the Nazis and liberate Eastern Europe and allowed the USSR to develop the military might to act as a counterweight to U.S. imperialism. Despite Stalinist degeneration, the fundamental gains of the October Revolution remained until the triumph of capitalist counterrevolution in 1991-92. Whereas Trotsky insisted that the Stalinist bureaucracy was an unstable caste, the SWP adopted the “theory” that the Soviet Union was “state capitalist” and that the bureaucracy was a new ruling class.

The SWP originated out of a capitulation to the anti-Soviet hysteria that accompanied the Korean War of 1950-53 by its founder, the late Tony Cliff, who

“The ‘new class’ theories of these renegades from Trotskyism like [1939 renegade from Trotskyism in the U.S., Max] Shachtman and Cliff were an attempt to justify their betrayal of the class interests of the proletariat and their own recon-



"While clinging to their threadbare theories, the Cliffites and their ilk are oddly modest about their real contribution. The restoration of capitalism in the USSR and East Europe was the implementation of their program. Like Shachtman, who supported Washington's Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba, Cliff & Co. did their utmost to seek to bring victory to U.S. imperialism in the Cold War, lustful for the bloodying of Soviet forces in Afghanistan, championing the 'trade union' credentials of Solidarność—instrument of the Vatican, Wall Street and Western social democracy for capitalist counter-revolution in Poland—and vicariously dancing with the black marketeers, monarchists and yuppies on Yeltsin's barricades in 1991."

In many countries of the world, hundreds of thousands have taken to the streets in protests against the Iraq War and there have been significant mobilisations in opposition to “globalisation.” But to win

The SWP's answer to the retrogression of consciousness is to adapt to it by moving further to the right, increasingly abandoning their erstwhile claim to be the "socialist alternative," which only ever amounted to pressuring the Labour Party to pressure British imperialism. Accepting the framework of "democratic" Brit-

The Respect coalition is the SWP's most blatant acceptance of the British imperialist status quo to date. Led by maverick MP [Member of Parliament] George Galloway, this coalition makes no pretence to being a working-class formation. From the outset SWP leaders made sure that no formal commitment to "socialism" appeared in its programme and voted down a motion calling for the abolition of the monarchy. Within Respect, the SWP tailored their demands to the mosques, abandoning the struggle for women's liberation or gay rights in all but name, and they have not publicly disagreed with

The SWP's capitulation to Islamic forces in Respect is a continuation of their cheering for the victory of the reactionary ayatollahs in the 1979 Islamic revolution in Iran. This was followed by their support to the U.S. and British imperialists against the Soviet Union in Afghanistan, where the Soviet Red Army was fighting a CIA-backed insurgency of mullahs, warlords and tribal chieftains. We said "Hail Red Army!" and "Extend the social gains of the October Revolution to the Afghan peoples!" The Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan was a prelude to counterrevolution in the USSR itself, which found the SWP rejoicing. Throughout our existence as a tendency, the ICL has placed the Trotskyist programme for defence and extension of the gains of the October Revolution at the centre of our work. As we noted in "The Bankruptcy of 'New Class' Theories," all the "state capitalist" and "new class" theories of the USSR "were predicated on the search for an illusory 'third camp' between capitalism and Stalinism, which always proved sooner or later (mainly sooner) to be firmly situated at the side of their 'own' ruling class. We take pride in having fought to the limits of our ability to defend the remaining gains of October against imperialism and counterrevolution." ■

Programmatic Statement of the Spartacist League/U.S.

\$2 (40 pages)

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Programmatic Statement of the Spartacist League/U.S.

The logo of the Spartacist League, which consists of a stylized hammer and sickle symbol.

**For a Workers Party
That Fights for a Workers Government!**

For Socialist Revolution in the Bastion of World Imperialism!


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Organizational Rules and Guidelines of the Spartacist League/U.S.

SEE PAGE 30

Opponents of the Revolutionary Internationalist Workers Movement

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ISO...

(continued from page 7)

served as foot soldiers in the imperialists' anti-Soviet Cold War.

Only Socialist Revolution Can End Imperialist War

As to Chretien's "Million Votes for Peace," we offer the words of revolutionary leader Leon Trotsky: "It is impossible to fight against imperialist war by sighing for peace after the fashion of the pacifists.... A peace concluded by imperialists would only be a breathing spell before a new war. Only a revolutionary mass struggle against war and against imperialism which breeds war can secure a real peace" ("Lenin and Imperialist War," December 1938).

Before and during the U.S. invasion of Iraq, the Spartacist League/Spartacus Youth Clubs called for military defense of semicolonial Iraq while politically opposing Saddam Hussein's bloody capitalist regime. Today we say: All U.S. and allied troops out of Iraq and Afghanistan! When insurgents strike against the U.S. occupiers, they strike against the greatest enemy of the working people and oppressed of the world. However, we are intransigent opponents of the murderous communal violence against ethnic, religious and national populations often carried out by the forces fighting the occupation armies. We call for international working-class struggle against the capitalist rulers, above all in the U.S. Our perspective is to defeat U.S. imperialism through socialist revolution.

Chretien's bourgeois "peace" campaign is of a piece with the ISO's efforts to build antiwar coalitions like United for Peace and Justice (UFPJ) around pacifist slogans to "Stop the war!" The call to defend Iraq was anathema to the ISO, which wanted to build a "movement" extending to anti-Bush Democrats to pressure the imperialists to end the war. This policy of *class collaboration*—



Young Spartacus

NYC, February 2003: While ISO seeks to pressure imperialists to change priorities (see sign at left), SYC fights for perspective of smashing imperialist order.

linking up with bourgeois forces whose concern is how best to carry out U.S. imperialism's interests—is the antithesis of mobilizing the proletariat in class struggle against the capitalist rulers. The ISO moaned about the withering of the antiwar protests in 2004 as pressure mounted to get out the vote for "anybody but Bush." But the fact is that the liberal program of all the antiwar coalitions—UFPJ, the ANSWER coalition of the Workers World Party and Party for Socialism and Liberation, and the NION initiative of the Revolutionary Communist Party—fed right into John Kerry's campaign.

While the ISO claims to oppose United Nations intervention in Iraq and elsewhere, they allied with liberals in UFPJ who preferred that U.S. imperialism pursue its predatory wars under the UN flag. Meanwhile, the Green Party openly calls for UN intervention. A Green Party "issue position comparison" posted on its Web site states: "Greens favor giving the UN and a regional coalition a major role

in dealing with security issues during Iraq's transition to a new government." The 2004 Green Party platform called for the U.S. "to render military assistance or service under U.N. command" to enforce Security Council resolutions. When the German Greens in 1999 held the foreign ministry in a coalition government, these "pacifists" helped carry out the U.S.-led NATO war against Serbia.

With mounting calls in bourgeois circles for an "exit strategy" out of the Iraq quagmire, Chretien is fond of repeating the liberals' patriotic slogan of choice: "Bring our troops home now!" Lynndie England and her fellow Abu Ghraib torturers are the true face of "our" troops carrying out the brutal occupation of Iraq. Taking the oldest page from the reformist playbook, Chretien calls for a "dramatic *reduction* in military spending in order to finance a radical reconstruction plan, both for New Orleans and for our public schools and hospitals" (todd4senate.org, emphasis added). In other words, calling for some

butter and slightly fewer guns from a government whose military budget is greater than that of the next 19 countries combined. In the tradition of German revolutionary Marxists Wilhelm and Karl Liebknecht, we say: Not one person, not one penny for the U.S. imperialist military!

Speaking from the floor at a March 1 New York City event featuring Chretien and others, an SL spokesman remarked that the ISO had "thrown away any 'anti-war' pretensions when they did their utmost to assist U.S. imperialism in their drive to destroy the Soviet Union." When Boris Yeltsin, backed by Bush Sr., seized power in Moscow in August 1991 and set in process the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet workers state, *Socialist Worker* (September 1991) cheered that the collapse of Communist Party rule "should have every genuine socialist rejoicing." The collapse of the Soviet Union—a world-historic *defeat* for the proletariat—has resulted in social catastrophe for the peoples of the former Soviet Union and emboldened the U.S. imperialists to pursue their unbridled appetite for world domination. (See "They Fought for the Post-Soviet World, Now They've Got It," page 6, for an in-depth polemic against the anti-Soviet tendency that spawned the ISO.)

In contrast, we fought to the end to defend the Soviet degenerated workers state and East European deformed workers states against imperialist attack and internal counterrevolution. We called for proletarian political revolution to restore soviet democracy and defend the social gains of the October Revolution through their extension internationally. Today we raise this program in defense of the remaining deformed workers states—China, North Korea, Cuba and Vietnam. This is a crucial axis of the struggle for socialist revolutions in the U.S. and around the world—the only road to destroying capitalist imperialism. As for the ISO, anti-communism abroad has always meant class betrayal at home. ■

Belfast...

(continued from page 4)

what they stand for from the statement by Socialist Party TD (member of parliament) Joe Higgins when a Loyalist mob attempted to march in Ireland through Dublin city centre on 25 February under the banner of "Love Ulster." This provocation failed because it was met by a determined protest of working-class youth and Republicans, who faced physical attacks by Dublin cops and a barrage of condemnation by capitalist politicians. Higgins stated in the Dáil (Irish parliament): "The Socialist Party condemns those who orchestrated Saturday's violence. It was a sectarian riot to prevent the Love Ulster group marching through

Dublin" (available on socialistparty.net, 1 March). The Socialist Party refuses to call for British troops out of Northern Ireland and is willfully blind to the oppression of Catholics. It has a track record of championing the "right" of the Orange Order to stage their anti-Catholic provocations. We stand in solidarity with the Dublin protesters who sent these Loyalist thugs home with their tails between their legs. At the same time we give no political support to the Republican nationalists, whose politics reinforce the sectarian division within the working class.

Another organisation active during the postal strikes was the Socialist Workers Party (SWP), which hailed the decision by Royal Mail to concede a "modest but crucial demand": an "independent review of employee relations and industrial rela-

tions," into which "Royal Mail has guaranteed that there will be no interference in the process or outcome" (*Socialist Worker* [Britain], 18 February). Leaving aside the reformist acceptance of "guarantees" from Royal Mail, Marxists stand for class independence and warn against any reliance on such "reviews" or inquiries. We argued with workers on the picket lines that it was necessary to rely only on their own power and, crucially, to spread the strike. By promoting the call for an "independent review," the SWP helped cover for the union bureaucracy, which was hell-bent on containing

the dispute and preventing workers elsewhere going out in solidarity.

Although sectarian hostility in Northern Ireland can often seem intractable, when major instances of integrated working-class struggle do occur, intervention by a communist vanguard will make a decisive difference to the outcome. We are dedicated to building vanguard parties capable of bringing socialist consciousness to the working classes of England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales and to the fight for an Irish workers republic as part of a voluntary federation of workers republics in the British Isles. ■

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Wednesday, March 22, 7:30 p.m.

**For Women's Liberation
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Abortion...

(continued from page 1)

in its opposition to any drug, vaccine, or initiative that could be interpreted as lessening the risks associated with premarital sex.” From their hostility to science to their criminal response to the raging worldwide AIDS pandemic, one thing is clear: to these demented religious fanatics, death is preferable to sex.

The onslaught against abortion rights is the spearhead for generalized social reaction. The anti-sex witchhunt in this current period of U.S. history began in the late 1970s and achieved full flower with AIDS hysteria and the child sex abuse witchhunts. Overall it served the purpose of bolstering the legitimacy of capitalist law and of fomenting anxiety and bigotry in the service of the social regimentation of the population behind the aims of U.S. imperialism at home and abroad.

Break with the Democrats!

The capitalist Democratic Party is seen as at least standing for the legal right to abortion, even though Democrats today pander to the anti-woman, anti-sex Christian fundamentalist bigots who thunder about sin and guilt, “woman’s place” as subordinate to her husband, and her role as a “vessel” to produce babies whether she wants to or not. The Democrats’ “pro-choice” position is paper-thin, catering to middle-class and bourgeois women—in practice they have repeatedly slashed access to abortion for working women and the poor. Hillary Clinton today expresses her “respect” for those opposing abortion rights, as do Howard Dean and other leading Democrats. In this November’s elections, the Democrats’ senatorial candidate in Pennsylvania against the loathsome all-sided reactionary Rick Santorum is Bob Casey Jr., who opposes abortion rights entirely.

The first major post-Roe attack on abortion rights took place under “born-again” Democrat Jimmy Carter, who in 1977 sneered, “There are many things in life that are not fair,” as he signed into law the Hyde Amendment that eliminated abortion coverage from the Medicaid health plans of 23 million poor women. The Democratic administration of Bill

Clinton carried out a relentless campaign against poor and black women that went virtually unopposed by feminists as long as abortion remained formally legal. In 1996, as part of his campaign to “end welfare as we know it,” Clinton signed the “Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act,” which slashed benefits for women and children and was a recipe for starvation and death for the most vulnerable members of society.

During Clinton’s eight years in office, safe access to abortion was effectively gutted across much of the country, as the number of abortion providers plummeted 14 percent between 1992 and 1996, and a huge number of laws chipping away abortion rights, including parental consent regulations targeting teenagers, were passed. Some 87 percent of U.S. counties have no abortion clinics, which are now outnumbered by “crisis pregnancy centers”—fake clinics set up by anti-abortion groups whose purpose is to subject pregnant women to anti-abortion propaganda and otherwise pressure them to carry the fetus to term.

Ruling Class Reaction, Religion and the Family

The oppression of women is rooted in the institution of the family, which arose with the advent of private property as the mechanism for passing property from one generation to the next—the monogamous wife is supposed to ensure the paternity of the heirs. The family serves in general as the social mechanism for rearing the next generation, and under capitalism, where the masses of youth are slated for wage slavery or service as cannon fodder in the armed forces, it seeks to instill obedience to authority. The institutions of organized religion and the family enforce social conservatism and conformity to the “family values” ideal. The institution of the family reinforces, as Friedrich Engels put it, “the supremacy of the man over the woman, and the individual family as the economic unit of society” (*The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*, 1884).

The private property system, upheld by the state, and the family are the most basic and deeply intertwined aspects of class society. They cannot be “reformed”

away. To succeed in winning freedom for women requires a workers socialist revolution to overturn capitalist property relations. While we fight to defend every gain wrested through hard struggle from this ruling class, the inescapable conclusion must be that the entire capitalist system must go, and a workers state created, which will rest on a collectivized and planned economy where production is for human need, not profit.



Johnson/ZUMA

California inmate chained to her bed after giving birth. Though now banned in California, this barbaric practice is common in U.S. prisons.

As Karl Marx wrote in the *Communist Manifesto* (1848): “On what foundation is the present family, the bourgeois family, based? On capital, on private gain.... The bourgeois family will vanish as a matter of course when its complement vanishes, and both will vanish with the vanishing of capital.” A workers government will be able to begin to provide social alternatives—in caring for children, the sick, the elderly, for housework, etc.—to the oppressive family structure. Religion, too, which enforces mindless subordination to “higher authority,” instilling so much guilt and misery, will begin to wither as its state props are kicked away. In a world of plenty, much of the despair and ignorance which drives people to seek solace in religion will be gone.

The young Soviet workers state, created by the 1917 Russian Revolution led by the Bolshevik Party, acted on this understanding of women’s oppression and did more to liberate women than any other society in history. While inheriting a largely peasant society devastated by the First World War and a bloody civil war, the Bolsheviks made heroic efforts to replace the family with social alternatives. They were the first government in the world to overturn criminal penalties for abortion in 1920 (health concerns prevented earlier legalization in those days before antibiotics).

As we pointed out in “The Russian Revolution and the Emancipation of Women” (*Spartacist* [English-language edition], No. 59, Spring 2006):

“Today, millions of women even in the advanced capitalist ‘democracies’ endure nasty and brutish lives of misery and drudgery.... But even 15 years ago women in the Soviet Union enjoyed many advantages, such as state-supported childcare institutions, full abortion rights, access to a wide range of trades and professions, and a large degree of economic equality with their male co-workers—in short, a state in some ways far in advance of capitalist societies today.

“The 1917 Bolshevik Revolution made these gains possible.”

The counterrevolutionary destruction of the USSR in 1991-92, which had remained a workers state despite degeneration under the Stalinist bureaucracy, was a deep blow to the world working class, not least women in the former USSR, and conditions the current period of reaction.

What is essential is a fight to forge a

multiracial workers party to lead the working class in a socialist revolution that sweeps away this system of capitalist exploitation and racial and sexual oppression. *For new October Revolutions!*

USA: “Salami Tactics” and Liberal Baloney

The legal right to abortion was won only as a result of the massive social struggles of the 1960s and 1970s, the civil rights movement and the radicalization of the Vietnam War years. This short but intense period of upheaval shook loose some gains for black people and women—from the end of Jim Crow segregation in the South to the legalization of abortion—from the bourgeoisie, which feared the unraveling of its control. As we wrote not long after the 1973 *Roe v. Wade* decision, “As the success of recent restrictive legislation on abortion makes clear, reforms are always reversible under capitalism. Only in a genuinely socialist society can gains for women be consolidated, maintained and extended” (“Anti-Abortion Laws: Weapon of Church and State,” *Women and Revolution* No. 9, Summer 1975).

The radicalization, which had the possibility of reaching into the working class and breaking in the direction of revolutionary socialist consciousness, was diverted back into bourgeois politics with the help of reformist leftists, who sought to keep struggles limited to what is acceptable within the bounds of the racist capitalist system. This treacherous and losing strategy, pursued for decades by groups like the International Socialist Organization (ISO), has kept working people, blacks and the oppressed tied to Democratic Party “lesser evilism.” The result is that *less* is exactly what people get.

The ISO’s Sharon Smith complains today that “without pressure from feminists to defend the right to abortion, the Democratic Party steadily retreated on choice” (*Women and Socialism* [Haymarket Books, 2005]). In fact, the goal of bourgeois feminism, which is hostile to working-class interests, has been at best to gain equality for middle-class women within capitalism. At the height of the battle in the early 1990s to defend abortion clinics against anti-abortion terror—exemplified by the 25,000 screaming anti-woman fanatics who blockaded clinics in Wichita, Kansas, in 1991—we communists fought to mobilize women and their allies, backed up by the organized labor movement, to keep the clinics open. In contrast, throughout the 1990s bourgeois feminist organizations such as NOW *demobilized* protest by preaching reliance on the “pro-choice” Clinton administration.

The Democrats are committed just as much as the Republicans to the preservation of the capitalist system, to the exploitation of the working class for profit, to the institution of the family, and to furthering U.S. imperialist interests abroad—they just differ with the Republicans on tactics. We oppose the Democrats on principle because they are a capitalist party. In contrast, the ISO opposes the current *policies* of the Democrats, seeking to be a left pressure group on them—sometimes through “grassroots” pressure, sometimes via the capitalist Green Party, sometimes directly. This was clear during the recent liberal hue and cry over Bush’s Supreme Court appointees John Roberts and Samuel Alito. The ISO’s would-be candidate for U.S. Senate on the Green Party ticket, Todd Chretien of California, openly appealed to Democratic Party senator Dianne Feinstein on his Web site (todd4senate.org): “There is only one way to stop Alito and protect women’s rights: Sen. Feinstein must draw a line in the sand and publicly call for an open-ended filibuster that makes it plain to the Republican leadership that she will not relent until they withdraw Alito’s name.” So the “only” way to “protect women’s rights” is the Democrats? This is no slip, but the ISO’s real program (see article, page 7).



Reuters

Left: Clinton signing 1996 bill to “end welfare as we know it.” Below: Ophthalmology clinic at L.A.’s King/Drew Medical Center filled to capacity with impoverished patients awaiting medical care, 2004.

Gauthier/LA Times



U.S. Out...

(continued from page 12)

the largest operation in CIA history, and included aid to Osama bin Laden, who would later turn on his former masters.

U.S. aid to the Afghan *mujahedin* began in the late 1970s under the Carter administration, which had launched an anti-Soviet “human rights” crusade. The Islamic fundamentalist *mujahedin* were in rebellion against the pro-Moscow People’s Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA), who took power in an April 1978 coup. The PDPA sought to implement some minimal reforms to bring Afghanistan closer to the 20th century: land distribution, freeing women from the *burka* (the head-to-toe “veil”), reducing the bride price to a nominal sum, and providing education for girls. These basic reforms sparked a ferocious rebellion by landlords, tribal chiefs and mullahs who launched a *jihad* (holy war), burning down schools and flaying teachers alive for the “crime” of teaching young girls to read. When the PDPA requested assistance from Moscow in quelling this bloody rebellion, the Soviet Army intervened, acting to defend the USSR’s southern border against the CIA-backed insurgency.

We declared: “Hail Red Army in Afghanistan!” Our defense of the Soviet intervention was based on our understanding that the USSR was a workers state, despite its degeneration under Stalinist bureaucratic rule. The Soviet intervention into Afghanistan—a country so backward it lacked a proletariat to carry out a social revolution—posed the possibility of extending the social gains of the 1917 October Revolution to the Afghan peoples.

Sending troops into Afghanistan was an unambiguously decent and progressive act that cut across the Stalinist bureaucracy’s dogma of building “socialism in one country,” which meant renouncing the struggle for world socialist revolution in favor of a futile quest for peaceful coexistence with imperialism. We warned that the Moscow bureaucracy might well cut a deal with the imperialists. Indeed, in an attempt to placate the imperialists, Moscow treacherously betrayed the Afghan peoples as well as Soviet defense by pulling out its troops in 1988-89. This opened the door to an all-sided civil war resulting in the fundamentalists taking power and the victory of the Taliban in 1996.

Supporting the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan was the duty of proletarian revolutionists. As historic American Trotskyist leader James P. Cannon said in 1939: “The question of the Russian revolution and the Soviet state which is its creation has drawn a sharp dividing line through the labor movement of all countries for 22 years. The attitude taken toward the Soviet Union throughout all these years has been the decisive criterion separating

the genuine revolutionary tendency from all shades and degrees of waverers, backsliders and capitulators to the pressure of the bourgeois world.”

As Trotskyists, we stood for the unconditional military defense of the Soviet degenerated workers state, while fighting for workers political revolution to oust the Stalinist bureaucrats and return the USSR to the revolutionary road of Lenin and Trotsky.

Capitulating to the imperialists’ anti-Soviet war drive, the bulk of the left internationally condemned the Soviet “invasion” of Afghanistan. The anti-Communist International Socialist Organization (ISO) and its then-parent group in Britain, Tony Cliff’s Socialist Workers Party (SWP), criminally stood with the imperialists. The 12 January 1980 issue of the British SWP’s *Socialist Worker* blared, “Troops Out of Afghanistan!” After the Soviets withdrew, the ISO declared: “Just as socialists welcomed the defeat of the U.S. in Vietnam, we welcome the defeat of the Russians in Afghanistan. It will give heart to all those inside the USSR and in Eastern Europe who want to break the rule of Stalin’s heirs” (*Socialist Worker* [U.S.], May 1988).

The anti-Communism of the Cliffites stretches back to their very origin, when Tony Cliff and his followers broke from Trotskyism by renouncing defense of the Soviet Union at the start of the Korean War in 1950. Under the fig leaf of the United Nations, U.S. and British imperialism launched a counterrevolutionary war against the North Korean deformed workers state, which was militarily backed by Red China. The Cliffite tendency was founded on a capitulation to international imperialism.

For its part, the Maoist Revolutionary Communist Party declared in *Revolutionary Worker* (11 January 1980): “Superpowers Square Off Over Afghanistan,” and condemned “Soviet social imperialism.” In order to cover for its treachery, the RCP invented Afghan Maoist groupings opposed to both the mullahs and the Soviets. But the real enemy of this “opposition” were the liberating Soviet troops, as the RCP made clear in a retrospective article in *Revolutionary Worker* (10 March 2002): “Revolutionary and progressive forces, including the country’s Maoist organizations, threw themselves into the fight against the Soviet invaders.”

Uniquely in modern history, the rights of women were a central issue in the civil war that raged in Afghanistan from the late 1970s to the early 1990s. The liberating effects of the Soviet intervention can be measured in hard statistics. In 1988, women made up 40 percent of the doctors and 60 percent of the teachers at the University of Kabul; 440,000 female students were enrolled in educational institutions and 80,000 more in literacy programs. Western dress was common in the cities, and women enjoyed some real measure of



Young Spartacus

Left: Spartacists at 1980 New York City protest hail Red Army intervention in Afghanistan against CIA-backed, anti-woman Islamic reactionaries. Right: Afghan women armed with Soviet AK-47s, 1988. Thousands volunteered for women’s militia, fighting for their rights and lives.



Baldev/Sygma

freedom from the veil and subjugation for the first time in Afghanistan’s history. As we wrote in “Afghanistan: Hell for Women” (WV No. 654, 25 October 1996), immediately after the Taliban took power: “*The blood of every unveiled woman butchered by the Afghan fundamentalists is also on the hands of those leftist organizations internationally which lined up behind U.S. imperialism’s anti-Soviet dirty war in Afghanistan!*” (emphasis in original).

For New October Revolutions!

Warning against Soviet premier Mikhail Gorbachev’s maneuvers to withdraw troops from Afghanistan, we declared that it was far better to fight and defeat the forces of counterrevolution there than be forced to take them on inside the Soviet Union itself. Following the Soviet withdrawal, the Partisan Defense Committee wrote to the Afghan government in 1989 offering to organize international brigades to help fight the CIA’s *mujahedin* killers. Though this offer was declined, the PDC and fraternal organizations raised \$44,000 to aid civilian victims of the *mujahedin* in the city of Jalalabad. But with the Soviets out, the PDPA regime collapsed by 1992, giving rise to a brutal civil war between the various warlords that culminated in the Taliban’s victory in 1996.

The Kremlin’s retreat from Afghanistan emboldened the imperialist rulers in their drive to destroy the Soviet workers state and strengthened the forces of capitalist counterrevolution within the USSR. Withdrawal from Afghanistan was followed by the capitalist reunification of Germany in 1990 and the final undoing of the October Revolution in 1991-92.

Today, U.S. imperialism feels it can ride roughshod over every perceived opponent and enemy. With the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union, U.S.

imperialism’s current strategic target is the Chinese deformed workers state, where capitalist rule was overthrown in 1949. Besides pursuing their economic penetration of the Chinese mainland under the Beijing bureaucracy’s “market reforms,” the imperialists are also increasing their military pressure against China.

The September 11 attacks served to temporarily divert Washington’s attention away from China. However, the occupation of Afghanistan and the placement of U.S. military bases in Central Asia and elsewhere in Asia under the rubric of the global “war on terror” point toward a strategic encirclement of China. Earlier this month, the Bush administration finalized a nuclear agreement with nuclear-armed India to help “counter the rising power of China,” as the *Los Angeles Times* (4 March) put it. The current bipartisan threats against Iran, a key trading partner with China, likewise pose a danger to the Chinese deformed workers state (see “U.S. Hands Off Iran!” WV No. 863, 3 February). We stand for the unconditional military defense of China and the other remaining deformed workers states—Cuba, Vietnam and North Korea—against imperialist attack and internal counterrevolution. We call for workers political revolution to oust the Stalinist misrulers and replace them with regimes based on workers and peasants councils.

The logic of the bloody imperialist system starkly poses the choice: socialism or barbarism. Young fighters against war and oppression must study and learn the lessons of past struggles and defeats if they are to go forward to win new victories. The ICL fights to forge Bolshevik parties internationally to lead the fight for new October Revolutions, opening the door to a socialist world in which imperialist war and oppression are relics of a barbaric past. ■

To be sure, Alito and Roberts are sinister reactionaries who want to overturn the legal right to abortion, reflecting the way the political winds are blowing these days. Feinstein herself, an ardent “war on terror” and “Homeland Security” supporter, said regarding Alito: “This is a man I might disagree with. That doesn’t mean he shouldn’t be on the court.” Samuel Alito thinks of women as perpetual minors: in the 1991 *Planned Parenthood v. Casey* decision, Alito dissented from the Third Circuit court’s decision (later upheld by the Supreme Court) that it was unconstitutional to require a husband’s consent for a woman’s abortion, citing *parental* notification rulings!

Alito helped devise the “salami tactics”—that is, slicing away bit by bit at abortion rights, as opposed to a frontal assault on *Roe*—that characterized anti-abortion tactics on the legal front in the 1980s and 1990s. Doctors and clinic workers were bombed, maimed and murdered, attacked by Operation Rescue and the KKK and other fascists, forcing the closing of many clinics nationwide. When abortion provider Dr. Barnett

Slepian was murdered in 1998 in Buffalo, we wrote, “While mainstream capitalist politicians hypocritically decry the murder of Dr. Slepian, it is the Congressional onslaught on abortion rights—embraced by Democrats as well as Republicans—which legitimizes and encourages the terrorist killers” (“Anti-Abortion Bigots’ Trail of Murder,” WV No. 700, 6 November 1998).

The continuing battle for women’s right to abortion in America shows that the capitalist class, notably in the most “advanced” societies, has long outlived its progressive role and is a fetter on further human progress. The inherent contradiction within the bourgeois-democratic approach to women’s oppression is that the outer limit of bourgeois democracy for women ends at the threshold of the family institution.

Today it falls to the proletariat, which owns nothing but its labor power, to assume the role of liberator of humanity, freeing women and all the oppressed from the many chains of capitalist society. It is the job of the revolutionary vanguard party, which we seek to build, to bring to the working class the under-

standing that they must fight for all the oppressed in their battle to free themselves from wage slavery. The entry of women into the working class opened the way to their liberation: their position

at the point of production gives them social power, along with the entire working class, to overturn the capitalist system. **For women’s liberation through socialist revolution!** ■

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JUST OUT!

Women and Revolution

The Russian Revolution and the Emancipation of Women

Women workers demonstrate in Petrograd, March 1917. Banner reads: “Comrade Workers and Soldiers, Support Our Demands.”

“Liberation” is an historical and not a social act, and it is brought about by historical conditions, the development of industry, commerce, agriculture, by conditions of economic and class struggle, and by the struggle of the oppressed.

The 1917 Bolshevik Revolution made these gains possible: No more cosmetic gloss on the surface, the Russian Revolution gave the world a glimpse of the future.

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17 MARCH 2006

11

WORKERS VANGUARD



EPA



AFP

U.S. Out of Iraq, Afghanistan Now!

Three years into the U.S. occupation of Iraq, that country has become a hellhole of all-sided bloodshed, with scores killed daily by occupation forces, government death squads and communal militias. Over 100,000 Iraqis have died in the war and occupation, on top of tens of thousands slaughtered in the 1991 Gulf War and more than 1.5 million killed as a result of United Nations sanctions between 1990 and 2003. As we warned from the beginning of the 2003 war, the U.S. occupation has unleashed a cauldron of ethnic and religious violence, pitting Shi'ite and Sunni Arabs as well as Kurds against each other and posing the real possibility of communally based civil war.

Meanwhile, some 23,000 U.S. troops supplemented by 10,000 NATO forces continue the murderous occupation of Afghanistan carried out after the September 11 attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. The U.S. and NATO plan to add some 10,000 more troops this year and to expand operations throughout the country in order to shore up the puppet government of Hamid Karzai. The occupation of Afghanistan has meant continued brutal oppression of women and warfare among the various tribal warlords. Afghanistan's U.S. overseers brokered a constitution that effectively enshrined Islamic fundamentalist *sharia* law, while in Iraq Islamic clerics are granted authority to strike down "un-Islamic" laws. Last October the Afghan Supreme Court sentenced a journalist to two years in prison for questioning the use of stoning to execute women accused of adultery.

The Spartacist League, U.S. section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist), stood for the military defense of Afghanistan and Iraq against imperialist attack without giving any political support to the reactionary, woman-hating Taliban cutthroats or the capitalist dictatorship of Saddam Hussein. Today, we call for the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of all U.S. troops and bases from Iraq, Afghanistan and Central Asia!

Insofar as the forces on the ground in Iraq aim their blows against the imperialist occupiers, we call for their military defense against U.S. imperialism. But as we wrote in "U.S. Out of Iraq Now!" (WV No. 830, 6 August 2004): "We do not imbue the forces presently organizing guerrilla attacks on U.S. forces with 'anti-

Left: U.S. bombing in January kills nine family members in Baiji, northern Iraq. Right: U.S. Army troops storm building in Afghanistan.

Break with the Democrats, the Other Party of War and Racism!

For a Workers Party that Fights for Socialist Revolution!

imperialist' credentials.... We are intransigent opponents of the murderous communal violence against other ethnic, religious and national populations oftentimes carried out by the very same forces fighting the occupation armies."

We have fought for *class struggle at home* against the U.S. capitalist rulers. This perspective is crucial to puncturing the illusion that the working class and its exploiters share common "national interests." That lie, propagated by both imperialist ideologues and the pro-capitalist labor bureaucracy, is meant to obliterate the class line that divides the proletariat from the bourgeoisie.

With even sections of the U.S. bourgeoisie embarrassed by revelations of abuse by the military in its Guantánamo

prison camp, Washington has announced that it will be expanding the detention camp at its Bagram air base in Afghanistan. Bagram is itself a notoriously brutal interrogation center, one of many maintained by the U.S. around the world. The hundreds of detainees in these torture centers include not only fighters against the invasion of Afghanistan but many who had no role in any fighting but just "looked the part" or had the "wrong" name. We say: Free all the detainees! U.S. out of Guantánamo, now!

With the Bush administration under increasing fire from sections of the bourgeoisie worried that White House policies are undermining U.S. imperialism's interests, the Democrats seek to regain control of Congress and the White House as the

party that can better carry out the "war on terror." It is notable that while many Democrats call for an "exit strategy" from Iraq in order to cut U.S. losses, none are calling for an end to the occupation of Afghanistan. There was exactly *one* vote in Congress opposed to the Afghanistan war (by California Democrat Barbara Lee), as well as near-unanimous approval of the draconian USA Patriot Act—the linchpin of the government's war on immigrants and on the civil liberties of the population at home.

Our fight for class struggle against the blood-drenched imperialist rulers means a fight against both the Democratic and Republican parties of capital. Thus we are not and have not been part of any of the various antiwar coalitions built by the reformist left—United for Peace and Justice, ANSWER, Troops Out Now, NION—whose purpose is to build a political alliance with "peace-loving" sections of the bourgeoisie, i.e., liberal Democrats. None of these coalitions took the elementary stand of military defense of Afghanistan and Iraq against the imperialists.

The call for the March 18 antiwar protests by the ANSWER Coalition, which was founded by Workers World Party, states: "In order to realize the demand 'Money for jobs, housing, education, and healthcare, Not for war and occupation' we must create a national grassroots movement." In other words, organizing right-minded people in large enough numbers can convince the war-crazed, profit-driven ruling class to address the needs of working people, blacks and the poor. In contrast, we fight for *proletarian revolution* to rip industry out of the hands of the capitalist exploiters and create a planned, collectivized economy. That is the only way to end imperialist war and to provide jobs and quality housing, education and health care for all.

We Said: "Hail Red Army in Afghanistan!"

Republican and Democratic party politicians rail against the barbarity of Islamic fundamentalism. Not so long ago, the American bourgeoisie, including the liberals who were tailed by most of the left, heralded the Islamic reactionaries as "freedom fighters" in the war against the Soviet "evil empire." In the 1980s, the CIA doled out billions to the *mujahedin* fighting the Soviet Army in Afghanistan. This was

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Steve McCurry

Women in U.S.-"liberated" Afghanistan are segregated, humiliated, degraded.