

For a Socialist United States of Europe!

Down With NATO!



EPA

Left: German chancellor Angela Merkel and U.S. president Barack Obama review troops in Baden-Baden, Germany, on April 3, immediately before NATO summit. Right: U.S. occupation troops, along with Afghan soldiers, in Afghanistan.



AFP

U.S./NATO Troops Out of Afghanistan Now!

The following statement was issued on March 27 by the International Executive Committee of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist). The statement was distributed by our comrades of the Ligue Trotskyiste de France and the Spartakist Workers Party of Germany, sections of the ICL, at anti-NATO protests in Strasbourg, France. It was also distributed by the Spartacist League/Britain at the London G-20 protests on April 1 and 2. To protect NATO's bloody imperialist rulers from justified outrage, the city center of Strasbourg was placed in a state of armed siege days before the summit, while in the suburbs thousands of anti-NATO demonstrators from across Europe were met with brutal cop terror. On April 4, an estimated 50 people were injured by France's notorious CRS riot cops. The French cops had taken their cue from the London cops, who had brutally suppressed the earlier G-20 protests. The police rampage in London led to the death of Ian Tomlinson, a 47-year-old man. Three witnesses told the London *Guardian* (7 April) that Tomlinson was struck with a police baton and thrown to the ground by a cop, his head hitting against the pavement. Over 300 people were arrested during the anti-NATO protests. At least six demonstrators have already been sentenced to three to six months in jail by a Strasbourg court. Such state repression targets the entire workers movement. **Free all the protesters! Drop all**

Statement of the International Communist League

charges! For working-class protests against state repression!

* * *

At their April meeting in Strasbourg, France, new U.S. president Barack Obama and the leaders of Germany, France and other NATO member states will celebrate the 60th anniversary of this imperialist alliance. The meeting will be held against

the backdrop of the ongoing, brutal neo-colonial occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan, the recent slaughter of Palestinians in Gaza, and a growing world economic crisis that threatens the livelihoods of hundreds of millions. Almost 18 years after the fall of the Soviet Union, the incessant bourgeois mantras about the superiority of capitalism notwithstanding, this deeply irrational system is itself

proving once again that Karl Marx was right.

The *only* way out of the blind alley into which capitalism has led humanity is international proletarian revolution to rip the productive forces from the hands of an exploiting minority and organize society on a rational basis. International workers rule is needed to clean up the mess that decaying capitalist imperialism has made and to lay the basis for a classless, communist society in which economic scarcity, exploitation, oppression and war are relics of a benighted past. The starting point is the Marxist understanding that the working class cannot wield the capitalist state for its own interests; rather that state must be smashed and replaced by a workers state, the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Tens of thousands are expected to demonstrate against the NATO anniversary summit, and the bourgeois state is preparing to meet them with the jackboot of police repression. But the aim of the protest organizers—who reject the aims of communism and the proletarian, revolutionary and internationalist strategy needed to realize them—is to lobby the imperialists for a little “change” to better sell their system of exploitation to workers and the oppressed. The social democrats, liberal “anti-globalization” types and bourgeois-pacifists peddle hoary phrases about a “policy of peace” and “international cooperation” in order to deceive the masses and advance the interests of their *own* bourgeoisies. The anarchists mobilizing for the demos—with the call, for example, “Smash, we can!”—have nothing to offer but the illusion of “forcing” disarmament under capitalism.

The drive toward war is as inextricably

continued on page 2



Reuters

Anti-NATO protesters brutalized by cops in Strasbourg, France, April 2.



7 25274 81030 15

NATO...

(continued from page 1)

rooted in the capitalist system as the drive to increase profit. Imperialism is the highest stage of capitalism, marked by the domination of the globe by a small exclusive club of capitalist great powers that lord it over the weaker, dependent nations. Twice in the past century, inter-imperialist competition for resources, markets and spheres of exploitation erupted in cataclysmic world wars. In 1915, in the midst of the first interimperialist war, the outstanding Bolshevik leader V.I. Lenin attacked those who spread illusions in capitalism by preaching “peace in general”:

“Nothing throws more dust in the eyes of the workers, nothing imbues them with a more deceptive idea about the *absence of deep* contradictions between capitalism and socialism, nothing *embellishes* capitalist slavery more than this deception does. No, we must make use of the desire for peace so as to explain to the masses that the benefits they expect from peace cannot be obtained without a series of revolutions.”

—“The Question of Peace” (1915)
Guided by this revolutionary program, Lenin and the Bolsheviks led the 1917 October Revolution, which overthrew capitalism and ripped Russia out of the First World War.

The NATO war alliance was forged

after World War II—and the Soviet Red Army’s victory over Hitler’s Third Reich—as part of the imperialists’ drive to “roll back Communism.” From the Korean War in the 1950s to the military coup in the NATO outpost Turkey in 1980, the U.S.-led anti-Soviet crusade was sealed with the blood of millions of workers, leftists and oppressed nationalities. The imperialist world order of today is shaped by the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union in 1991-92. This was a historic defeat for the working masses internationally, especially for the populations of the former Soviet Union, East Europe and the ex-DDR [East Germany] who have faced mass poverty. Capitalist restoration was accompanied by and further fueled communalist slaughter and fratricidal bloodletting, as seen most recently in the war between Russia and the U.S. client state of Georgia. The collapse of the USSR fueled the imperialists’ appetites to stomp all over the world with impunity. The catastrophic results of counterrevolution underline the vital importance today of the unconditional military defense of China, the most powerful of the remaining bureaucratically deformed workers states, and the other countries where capitalist rule has been overthrown: Cuba, North Korea and Vietnam. We call for proletarian political revolution to replace the parasitic Stalinist bureaucracies



Der Spiegel

Lance missile in West Germany was part of NATO arsenal aimed at Soviet Union.

with regimes based on workers democracy and Bolshevik internationalism.

Barack Obama: Commander-in-Chief of Racist U.S. Imperialism

Today, it’s necessary to reassert the elementary understanding that the president of the American capitalist state is the *class enemy* of the world’s workers and oppressed, especially of the U.S. proletariat, immigrants and the specially oppressed black population. While the decision to close Guantánamo (within a year) and review the release of some detainees was much-hyped, Obama has endorsed indefinite detention, reminiscent of police-state dictatorships, and he is more generally dedicated to continuing Bush’s “war on terror.” In this, he is in full agreement with the European rulers, who merely wished to give a little “humanitarian” window-dressing for this crusade, which has been used by every imperialist government to strengthen state repression against oppressed minorities and the working class and to ideologically justify imperialist depredations. The U.S., UN and EU [European Union] have applied sanctions against Iran and continue to threaten it over its nuclear program. It could not be clearer that Iran *needs* nuclear weapons to deter an imperialist attack.

As U.S. imperialism seeks an “exit strategy” from the quagmire in devastated Iraq, the focus under Obama has shifted to Afghanistan, where a NATO occupation force of 68,000 troops, including a non-U.S. contingent of 32,000, continues in its eighth year of ravaging the country. Obama campaigned and took office pledging to draw down U.S. troop levels in Iraq in order to pursue what a significant section of the U.S. bourgeoisie sees as more strategic aims. Now he is doing just that, sending an additional 17,000 U.S. troops to Afghanistan and escalating murderous U.S. bombing attacks on villages in neighboring Pakistan. For years, the U.S. propped up one dictatorial regime after another in Islamabad, simul-

taneously fostering the growth of Islamic fundamentalist forces favored by the Pakistani military. Now this unstable, nuclear-armed country could well start coming apart at the seams under the impact of Obama’s extension of the Afghan war and U.S. pressure on the Pakistani military to clear the Taliban and its allies out of the tribal areas bordering Afghanistan.

The military escalation takes place as the economic base of U.S. imperialism is undergoing a meltdown that has taken on international proportions. The contradiction between U.S. imperialism’s overwhelming military might and its weakened economic position is the cause of the heightened irrationality and aggressiveness of the U.S. rulers. They see the Obama presidency as their best bet in this situation for asserting their dominant position. Doing its bit, the reformist left in the U.S. embraced a perspective of “Anybody but Bush.” They were over the moon about Obama’s victory, as exemplified by the Workers World Party, which gushed in the 20 November 2008 issue of its paper: “As communists and revolutionaries we take joy with the oppressed and other progressives as they gather in jubilation from Harlem to Colombia to Japan to Kenya with the election of Obama.”

In sharp counterposition to such grotesque enthusing over the new Commander-in-Chief of blood-drenched U.S. imperialism, the Spartacist League/U.S., section of the International Communist League, opposed on principle any support to Obama and all other bourgeois politicians, fighting to break workers, youth and oppressed from illusions in the capitalist Democratic Party and to forge the revolutionary multiracial workers party needed to sweep away U.S. imperialism. Our U.S. section told the *truth* about what the Obama presidency will mean, writing directly after the elections:

“From the standpoint of the international working class and oppressed there is

continued on page 7



TROTSKY

Trotskyists Denounced Formation of NATO

Sixty years ago, our political forebears in the then-Trotskyist Socialist Workers Party (SWP) denounced the formation of NATO as military muscle for U.S. imperialism, which emerged from World War II as the new top cop of the capitalist world order. NATO’s role as the anti-Soviet juggernaut in Europe was baldly proclaimed by its first General Secretary, Lord Ismay, who said that the alliance’s purpose was to “keep the Russians out, the Americans in and the Germans down.”

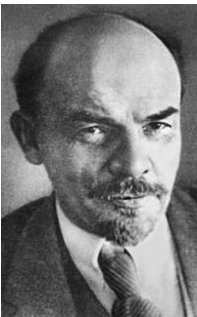
As Trotskyists, we have always opposed NATO as part of our fight for the unconditional military defense of the Soviet Union, for workers political revolution against the Stalinist bureaucracy, and for the triumph of the working class over their capitalist exploiters and the establishment of a Socialist United States of Europe. The SWP’s prediction that NATO’s birth signaled the demise of the United Nations was mistaken. The UN served then, and continues to serve today, as a “democratic” shell for the imperialist powers, centrally the U.S., dispatching blue-helmeted “peacekeepers” around the globe.

As we go to press the signatures of twelve European nations are being affixed to the North Atlantic Pact. The immense significance of this event transcends by far its effect on the “cold war” for which it is immediately designed. Four years after the collapse of Hitler’s “New Order” a new balance of power is being forged on the old continent. At the head of the coalition, for the first time in modern history, stands a non-European power—American imperialism, chief victor in the recent war, inheritor of the mantle of the British Empire, unrivalled pretender for the role of master of the world....

While the pact will hasten the demise of the United Nations, it is important to note, as the architects of the alliance continually assure us, that the pact is legally sanctioned by the UN charter itself. Once again the class character and class aims of a bourgeois institution has dynamited the illusions and demagoguery of liberals, social democrats and Stalinists. Just as Hitler was able to use the statutes of the Weimar Constitution, “the most democratic in the world” to create his Nazi dictatorship, so American imperialism is establishing its juggernaut of war in the very bosom of “the organization of world peace.” The UN, like its predecessor, the League of Nations, as we predicted long ago, has been the breeding ground for war.

The general staffs have carefully calculated all contingencies and eventualities—all but one. That one is the alliance of the peoples of the world who above all want peace. Not the maneuverings of the Kremlin, but the class struggle in Shanghai and Indonesia, in Milan, the Ruhr and Detroit will prove the Achilles heel of this unholy compact of death, reaction and dictatorship.

—“North Atlantic Alliance,” *Fourth International* (April 1949)



LENIN

WORKERS VANGUARD

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

DIRECTOR OF PARTY PUBLICATIONS: Bonnie Brodie
EDITOR: Alan Wilde
EDITOR, YOUNG SPARTACUS PAGES: Elizabeth Johnson
CIRCULATION MANAGER: Susan Fuller

EDITORIAL BOARD: Steve Henderson (managing editor), François Donau (production manager), Blandine Hauser (letters editor), Bruce André, Ray Bishop, Jon Brule, Helen Cantor, Ed Clarkson, Paul Cone, Michael Davison, George Foster, Liz Gordon, Linda Jarreau, Walter Jennings, James Robertson, Joseph Seymour

The Spartacist League is the U.S. Section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist).

Workers Vanguard (ISSN 0276-0746) published biweekly, except skipping three alternate issues in June, July and August (beginning with omitting the second issue in June) and skipping the last issue in December, by the Spartacist Publishing Co., 299 Broadway, Suite 318, New York, NY 10007. Telephone: (212) 732-7862 (Editorial), (212) 732-7861 (Business). Address all correspondence to: Box 1377 GPO, New York, NY 10116. E-mail address: vanguard@tiac.net. Domestic subscriptions: \$10.00/22 issues. Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *Workers Vanguard*, Box 1377 GPO, New York, NY 10116.

Opinions expressed in signed articles or letters do not necessarily express the editorial viewpoint.

The closing date for news in this issue is April 7.

No. 934

10 April 2009

Spartacus Youth Club Class Series

BAY AREA

Thursday, April 16, 6:30 p.m.

1917 Bolshevik Revolution: How the Workers Took Power

San Francisco State University
Cesar Chavez Student Center
Room: Rosa Parks E

Thursday, April 30, 6:30 p.m.

The Trotskyists’ Fight Against Capitalist Counterrevolution

San Francisco State University
Cesar Chavez Student Center
Room: Rosa Parks F
Information and readings: (510) 839-0851
syccbayarea@sbcglobal.net

LOS ANGELES

Wednesday, April 22, 6 p.m.

Workers Struggle During the Great Depression Lessons of the 1934 Trotskyist-Led Teamsters Strike

UCLA, Bunche Hall, Rm. 1221A
Information and readings: (213) 380-8239
slsycla@sbcglobal.net

NEW YORK CITY

Wednesday, April 29, 7:45 p.m.

Marxism and Science:

A Tribute to Darwin and the 150th Anniversary of *On the Origin of Species*
Hunter College, West Building, Rm. 407
Information and readings: (212) 267-1025
nysl@tiac.net

Visit the ICL Web Site: www.icl-fi.org

Reinstatement of Death Sentence Still Looms—Free Mumia Now!

Racist Supreme Court Denies Mumia's Appeal

The following statement was issued on April 7 by the Partisan Defense Committee—a class-struggle, non-sectarian, legal and social defense organization associated with the Spartacist League.

Mumia Abu-Jamal's life is in imminent danger! In a naked display of racist contempt, the U.S. Supreme Court on April 6 summarily turned down without comment Mumia's petition to overturn the frame-up conviction that led to a death sentence for this innocent man. While it took less than one business day for the Court to reject Mumia's petition, which was based on the exclusion of eleven of 15 prospective black jurors from his 1982 trial, the racists in black robes have for weeks been considering the Philadelphia district attorney's appeal to reinstate the death sentence, which was overturned by U.S. District Court Judge William Yohn in 2001. Make no mistake! **The neo-segregationist high court of American capitalism could well be preparing the noose for Abu-Jamal's legal lynching.** What is necessary is the mobilization of the multiracial working class independent of and

in opposition to the capitalist state and its political representatives, whether Democrat, Republican or Green. **Free Mumia! Abolish the racist death penalty!**

A former Black Panther Party spokesman, supporter of the Philadelphia MOVE organization and award-winning journalist, Mumia was framed up on charges of killing Philadelphia police officer Daniel Faulkner on 9 December 1981. For 27 years, the cops, prosecutors, bourgeois politicians and their media jackals have howled for Mumia's blood because they see in Mumia a voice of defiant opposition to all forms of racist discrimination. Mountains of evidence, not least the confession of Arnold Beverly that he, not Mumia, shot and killed Faulkner, have proven Mumia's innocence. But court after court has refused to even consider the evidence. As Mumia put it in an April 6 interview, the Court's decision shows that "law is politics by other means and that the Constitution means nothing," that a fair jury means nothing." Mumia's case demonstrates that **there is no justice in the capitalist courts.** The courts, prisons



Jennifer Beach

and police exist to maintain, through organized violence and terror, the rule of the capitalists over working people.

Since taking up Mumia's case in 1987, we have advocated pursuing all possible legal proceedings, while fighting against any illusions in the courts of the capitalist class enemy. Our program of class-

struggle defense is diametrically opposed to that of the liberals and reformists, who promote dangerous illusions that the courts can provide justice for Mumia. These illusions have been codified in the subordination of the demand for Mumia's freedom to the call for a "new trial." This has been promoted for many years by the Workers World Party, International Socialist Organization, Socialist Action (SA), International Concerned Family and Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal led by Pam Africa and the San Francisco Mobilization to Free Mumia Abu-Jamal led by SA honcho Jeff Mackler.

We fight for Mumia's freedom as part of the struggle for black liberation based on the program of revolutionary integrationism. We fight against every manifestation of racist oppression, a struggle that can be victorious only through the full social, political and economic integration of black people into an egalitarian **socialist** society. **For black liberation through socialist revolution! Mumia Abu-Jamal is innocent! Free Mumia now! Abolish the racist death penalty!** ■

Young Spartacus

Revolutionary Marxism vs. Democratic Party Pressure Politics

For Free, Quality, Integrated Education for All!

We reprint below a leaflet by the New York Spartacus Youth Club issued on April 3.

Democratic New York State governor David Paterson wants to make working people and the oppressed pay for the capitalist economic crisis through draconian cuts to social services, including with budget cuts and tuition hikes at SUNY and CUNY schools. This has sparked protests on campuses and citywide, including a March 5 rally at City Hall that drew tens of thousands of city workers and other unionists, joined by a contingent of hundreds of students from Hunter and BMCC. However, misleaders from local trade unions, including the UFT [teachers union], 1199SEIU, DC 37 and the CUNY Professional Staff Congress (PSC), built the March 5 rally as a groveling appeal to the very same Democratic Party politicians who are responsible for carrying out the austerity measures.

After helping Obama's Wall Street cronies bankroll his election victory, the trade-union sellouts (and their left tails) have turned to pushing "fair share tax reform," "tax the rich" shell games and appeals to the Obama and Paterson administrations to "bail out the people, not the banks." Lobbying for "fairer" taxes is one of the standard ways the labor bureaucrats divert union members from the militant class struggle necessary to defend their livelihoods. By pushing the lie that the capitalist system can serve the interests of working people and the oppressed, these labor misleaders chain the multiracial working class to the bankrupt system of capitalism, which is based on the exploitation of labor, racial oppression and imperialist war. In rallies at CUNY campuses, fake socialists including the International Socialist Organization (ISO) and Internationalist Group (IG) have been pushing a narrow, campus-parochial version of the same class-collaborationist politics, based on appeals to local Democrats and university administrators to stop the budget cuts.



Young Spartacus

SYC at 16 December 2008 budget cuts protest outside Democratic governor Paterson's offices in NYC.

Down With Budget Cuts and Tuition Hikes!

At a March 5 Hunter College rally built by the IG and ISO, a Spartacus Youth Club member explained, "None of these attacks are simply a by-product of mismanagement or 'greedy individuals' or some legacy of a right-wing president. Economic crises are endemic to capitalism and both the Republicans and the Democrats are political parties of the capitalist rulers." The Spartacus Youth Club opposes the budget cuts and the

capitalist class' austerity measures against the working class and oppressed. We fight for free, quality, integrated education for all, and for open admissions with no tuition and a state-paid living stipend for students. While student protest can be a catalyst for broader social struggle, students lack social power and must ally with the working class. Only the working class has the social power and historic interest to liberate all the oppressed by

the revolutionary overthrow of the system of capitalist exploitation.

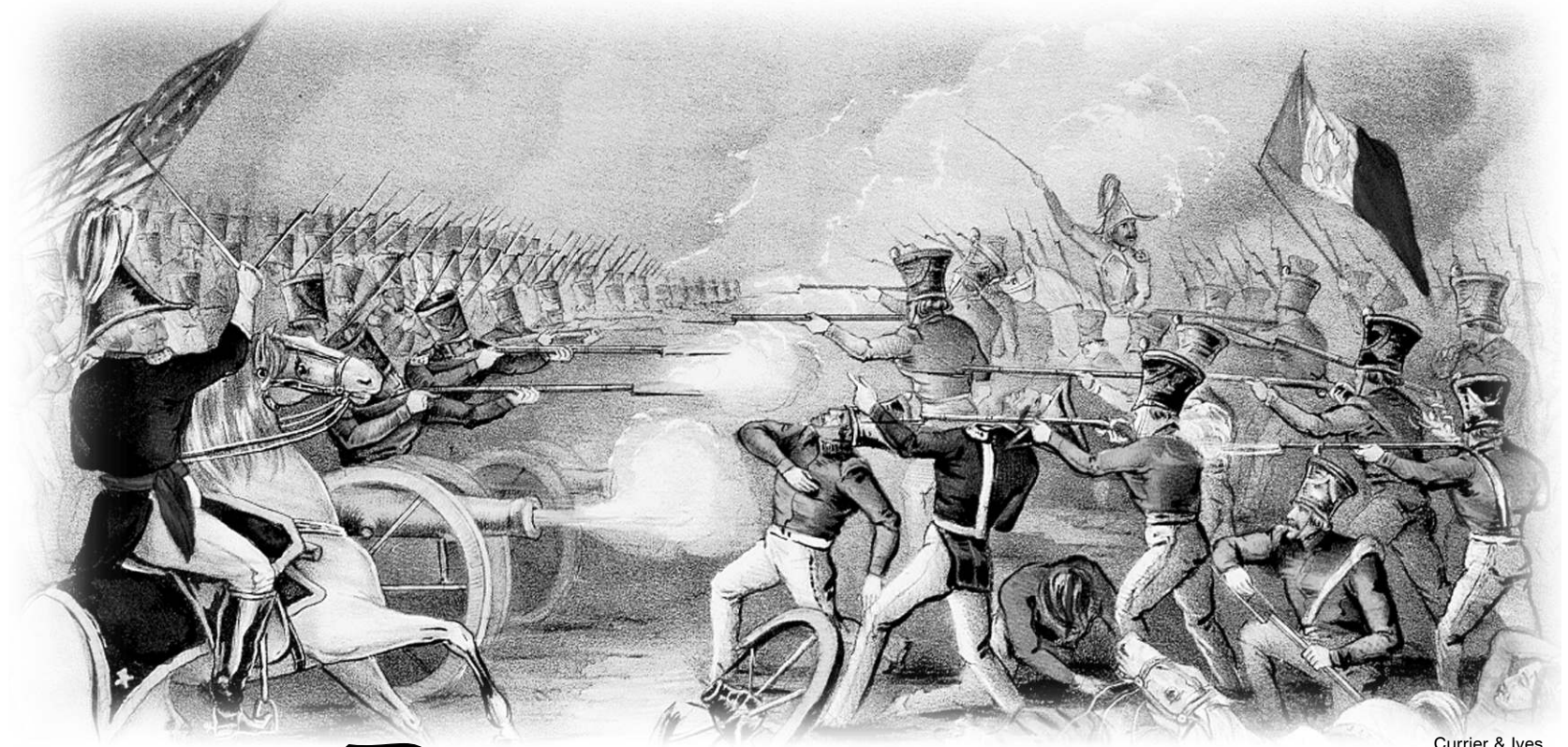
The capitalist class monopolizes the vast wealth of society for its own ends. There can never be equality between oppressed and oppressor: race and class bias are inherent to education under capitalism. The capitalists and their agents run the education system to serve bourgeois interests, including propagating bourgeois ideology and training the next generation of Dr. Strangeloves. In the U.S. the oppression of the black population as a race-color caste, overwhelmingly segregated at the bottom of society, is key for the capitalist class maintaining its rule. This has meant systematic attacks on education for black youth, from the defeat of Boston busing to the rollback of affirmative action to the racist purge of universities through tuition and fee hikes. It will take a socialist revolution to win the quality of education offered to the sons and daughters of the ruling class for blacks, minorities and the working class.

The campus administrations are the agents of the capitalist class on campus, breaking unions, cracking down on student protest and implementing austerity measures. In a leaflet distributed at City Hall on March 5, the centrist fake Trotskyists of the IG blamed the reformist ISO for circulating a petition "calling for Hunter College president Raab to 'come out against tuition hikes and support student activities in opposition to the tuition hikes.'" They go on to make the correct point: "To call on her to support student protests against that can only promote illusions." These are fine words on paper, but the IG never raised any criticisms of the ISO in their voluminous speeches at the March 5 and 25 campus protests we attended that were built by both organizations.

The IG criticizing the ISO for "promoting illusions" is a joke. Well-known IG supporter Sándor John serves as the Hunter College representative of CUNY

continued on page 11

MEXICAN-AMERICAN WAR



Currier & Ives

PRELUDE TO AMERICAN CIVIL WAR

We print below, in edited form, the conclusion of a presentation by Jacob Zorn of the Spartacist League at a February 28 New York City forum. Part One was published in WV No. 933 (27 March).

PART TWO

Why did the United States invade Mexico? As Marxists, we understand that there were class interests at play; the main class pushing for the war was the slavocracy. As veteran American Trotskyist Richard S. Fraser put it, “The war was fought not just for conquest in general but more particularly to extend slavery and the political power of the slave system.” The slave power’s goal of expanding slavery through invading Mexico was not a secret. One Georgia newspaper stated that taking territory from Mexico would “secure to the South the balance of power in the Confederacy [i.e., the United States], and, for all coming time...give to her the control in the operations of the Government” (quoted in James McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era* [1988]). In his *Personal Memoirs*, Ulysses S. Grant recognized that the annexation of Texas was “from the inception of the movement to its final consummation, a conspiracy to acquire territory out of which slave states might be formed for the American Union.”

The invasion was very unpopular among Northerners, and they derided it as “Mr. Polk’s War,” referring to then-president James Polk, a Southern Democrat. William Lloyd Garrison, one of the leading abolitionists of the day, argued in the *Liberator*: “We only hope that, if blood has had to flow, that it has been that of the American, and that the next news we shall hear will be that General Scott and his army are in the hands of the Mexicans.” In 1846, Frederick Douglass denounced the annexation of Texas as “a conspiracy from beginning to end—a most deep and skillfully devised conspiracy—for the purpose of upholding and

Lithograph of 1847 Battle of Buena Vista.

sustaining one of the darkest and foulest crimes ever committed by man” (*Belfast News Letter*, 6 January 1846).

The war was a catalyst. It caused the Southern slave masters and the Northern capitalists to become less and less compatible. It made clear, as Abraham Lincoln put it in a famous speech in 1858, that “this government cannot endure permanently half slave and half free.” Many Northerners felt betrayed by Polk’s 1846 compromise with Britain over Oregon—which relinquished American claims to large parts of Canada and set the current U.S.-Canadian border—and opposed the invasion of Mexico. Lincoln, at the time a newly elected Whig Congressman from Illinois, denounced President Polk as a liar for declaring that Americans had been killed on American soil. Lincoln was representative of an increasing section of the Northern bourgeoisie, which, while willing to tolerate the continued existence of slavery in the South, opposed its *extension* and wanted to limit the extension of the slave power. Before the invasion, Northerners in both parties had been willing to accept the domination of the slavocracy; in the aftermath of the invasion, both parties were increasingly torn apart between their Northern and Southern wings. Former Democratic president Martin Van Buren of New York opposed the annexation of Texas and the extension of slavery; he broke from the Democrats, eventually running for president on the Free Soil party ticket in 1848.

David Wilmot, a Democratic Congressman from Pennsylvania, expressed this hostility when he attached a proviso to the appropriations bill for the invasion

in 1846 that banned slavery from any territory taken from Mexico. The House of Representatives passed this proviso in both 1846 and 1847, but the Senate voted against it in both years because the South dominated the Senate. The Wilmot Proviso shows that the contradictions between the slave system in the South and the capitalist system in the North could no longer coexist in the same country. This did not mean that various representatives of both sides did not try other compromises, but these attempts were increasingly fruitless.

The End of the War

In 1848, with U.S. troops occupying much of the country, including Mexico City, Mexico signed a peace treaty with the United States—the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. The treaty set the border at the Río Bravo [Rio Grande], giving the United States almost half of Mexico; in exchange, the U.S. agreed to pay Mexico \$15 million and promised to keep Indians living in the United States from attacking Mexico. Even so, many Southern expansionists complained that the United States didn’t get enough: many slaveholders wanted their “empire for slavery” to extend through all of Mexico into Central America, into the Caribbean and maybe even down to Brazil.

Shortly after the war, with the discovery of gold, thousands of migrants moved into California. There is a very interesting book that recently came out called *The California Gold Rush and the Coming of the Civil War* (2007) by Leonard Richards, which shows how many Southerners wanted to expand slavery to Cali-

fornia. In 1854, the United States purchased *la Mesilla*—currently southern Arizona and southwestern New Mexico—in order to build a railroad through to California. In the United States this is usually called the Gadsden Purchase, after James Gadsden, who was the U.S. envoy who dealt with Santa Anna over this question. It is usually remembered because Gadsden was a railroad executive who stood to benefit personally from the Gadsden Purchase. It could also be called the Gadsden-Davis purchase, since Secretary of War Jefferson Davis supported the railroad as a way of connecting California to the South and expanding the power of the slavocracy over the Southwest. Davis, who also had fought in the U.S. Army in the invasion of Mexico, of course would become the leader of the Confederacy in the Civil War.

Southerners did not give up their desire to expand southward. A decade after the Mexican-American War, one Southern leader argued: “I want Cuba. I want Tamaulipas, [San Luis] Potosí, and one or two other Mexican states; and I want them all for the same reason—for the planting or spreading of slavery.” Then there were the so-called Filibusters, Southern-backed Americans who tried to set up pro-slavery governments, who invaded various places in northern Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean. Among the most famous of these was one Dr. William Walker, who even briefly made himself president of Nicaragua in 1856. One of the things he did in his time there was to try to return slavery to Nicaragua. The U.S. also unsuccessfully tried to purchase Cuba from Spain. There was still plantation slavery practiced in Cuba. In 1898, of course, the United States fought a war against Spain to take Cuba along with Puerto Rico and the Philippines; by this time, although slavery had already been abolished, the U.S. did manage to export Jim Crow-style discrimination to these countries.

Even though the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo gave U.S. citizenship after one year to those Mexicans in

FINISH THE CIVIL WAR! FOR BLACK LIBERATION THROUGH SOCIALIST REVOLUTION!

the new U.S. territory, these Mexicans faced racist discrimination. Many Mexican landholders had their land north of the Río Bravo stolen from them. And Mexicans were also subjected to racist attacks by sheriffs, Texas Rangers and armed vigilantes. Between 1848 and 1928, mobs lynched at least 597 Mexicans in the U.S. The Native Americans who lived in the territory were also subjected to genocidal attacks, just as they were on the Mexican side.

For Mexico, the loss of so much of its national territory increased its instability. It would be too simple to say that the invasion of Mexico by the U.S. in 1846 led to the later U.S. imperialist domination of the country, but it did play an important role in stunting the development of Mexico. By the last quarter of the 19th century, when Mexico was under the bloody dictatorship of Porfirio Díaz, American capitalists owned much of the wealth of Mexico and kept the country subjugated to enrich American imperialism.

Marxists and the Invasion of Mexico

When we were working on the flyer announcing this forum, I suggested the headline, “The Mexican-American War: A Marxist Analysis.” Luckily, we didn’t go with this, but it’s actually a lot trickier issue than it sounds. As Marxists in the United States, we oppose the predatory expansion of the U.S. Nonetheless, in



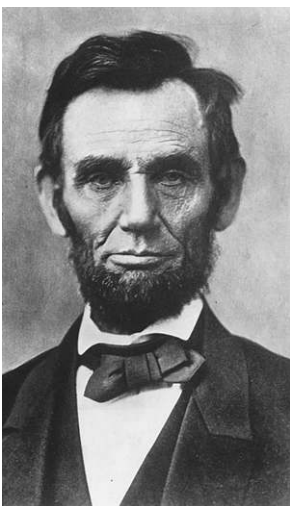
François Séraphin Delpech
Napoleon Bonaparte

1846 the United States was not, in a Marxist sense, imperialist. Imperialism doesn’t just mean a big country taking over a little country’s land, but is, as Lenin explained, the last stage of capitalism, an epoch of wars and revolutions in which the world economy comes into violent collision with the barriers imposed by the capitalist nation-state. In 1846, the United States was still a developing capitalist economy and the American bourgeoisie was still, objectively speaking, a progressive class: its task of destroying chattel slavery was still outstanding.

Today, of course, the United States is the most powerful imperialist country and there is nothing progressive about the American bourgeoisie. It keeps Mexico and Latin America subjugated through trade deals like the North American Free Trade Agreement [NAFTA] and, if necessary, through military force. We wrote in the Programmatic Statement of the SL/U.S., “For Socialist Revolution in the Bastion of World Imperialism!”:

“A workers government in the U.S. would also return to Mexico certain contiguous regions, predominantly Spanish speaking, of the Southwest which were seized from Mexico. This internationalist gesture would powerfully undercut the anti-Yankee nationalism that the Latin American ruling classes use to tie the workers to them and would be of significant value in extending support to proletarian revolution throughout Latin America.”

Although they chafe at the domination of the U.S., Mexican and other Latin American capitalists fear their own working class even more. They use the Mexican-American War, *La Invasión Norteamericana*, the North American Invasion as it’s called, along with the ongoing U.S. oppression of Mexico, to tout the lie that Mexican workers and capitalists share a common interest. The Mexican bourgeoi-



U.S. Signal Corps

President Abraham Lincoln led the North in U.S. Civil War, the last great bourgeois-democratic revolution, which destroyed Southern slavocracy. Right: Artillery battery manned by black soldiers in 1864. Over 200,000 black troops helped ensure Northern victory.

sie also seeks to obscure the fact that the United States itself is a class-divided society and that American workers are the class brothers—and increasingly the real brothers—of Mexican workers. Ending the imperialist subjugation of Latin America—and the rest of the semicolonial world—requires the working class in the U.S. taking power as part of socialist revolutions in all of the Americas. And American workers must also fight for full citizenship rights for all immigrants and against U.S. imperialism in Latin America and the rest of the world. It’s for this reason that we oppose NAFTA, the “free trade” rape of Mexico—not for protectionist reasons, but because it has meant misery for the workers and peasants of Mexico. And opposition to anti-immigrant racism in the U.S. is also intertwined with the struggle against black oppression, as the history of the Mexican-American War shows.

In Mexico, nationalists trying to discredit socialism sometimes denounce Marx and Engels for having supported the United States invasion. And throughout the Third World, they are also sometimes labeled “racists.” In 1848, Engels wrote about the war:

“In *America* we have witnessed the conquest of Mexico and have rejoiced at it. It is also an advance when a country which has hitherto been exclusively wrapped up in its own affairs, perpetually rent with civil wars, and completely hindered in its development, a country whose best prospect had been to become industrially subject to Britain—when such a country is forcibly drawn into the historical process. It is to the interest of its own development that Mexico will in future be placed under the tutelage of the United States. The evolution of the whole of America will profit by the fact that the United States, by the possession of California, obtains command of the Pacific. But again we ask: ‘Who is going to profit immediately by the war?’ The bourgeoisie alone.”

Several years later, in 1854, Marx wrote to Engels about the war, calling it “a worthy prelude to the military history of the great land of the Yankees.” And several days later, in another letter, he praised the “Yankee sense of independence and individual proficiency” and criticized the Mexicans: “The Spanish are already degenerate. But a degenerate Spaniard, a Mexican, is an ideal.”

Well, this is what is used against Marx and Engels. And Marx and Engels were wrong—but not because they were in favor of U.S. imperialism or because they were racists. The time of the Mexican-American War was very early in the development of Marxism, before the *Communist Manifesto* was published. Industrial capitalism was still in the process of development and Marx believed that it needed to fully develop in order to make proletarian revolution possible. Capitalism was then a progressive force, and Marx and Engels believed that one of its most progressive features was creating a nation with a unified working class. As a result, Marx and Engels opposed self-determination for small nations; they thought that such peoples should be assimilated into bigger nations. They mainly wrote about the Slavic peoples of Central and East Europe, but they also extended this to Mexico. In this view, the expansion of capitalism on a world scale would benefit not only the developed capitalist countries but the backward countries as well. As they wrote



Timothy O’Sullivan

in the 1848 *Communist Manifesto*, “The bourgeoisie, by the rapid improvement of all instruments of production, by the immensely facilitated means of communication, draws all, even the most barbarian, nations into civilisation.”

Marx and Engels’ empirical judgment on the Mexican-American War was wrong, but their theoretical premises were not incorrect. They were derived from a key experience in modern European history, which, in fact, directly affected Marx’s family: the Napoleonic occupation of Germany in 1806-1813. Where he went, Napoleon, bringing with him gains of the French Revolution, overturned the remaining feudal property relations and established formal equality before the law for all social classes. In Germany, these liberal reforms, including the emancipation of Jews, gave a major impetus to the beginnings of industrial capitalism. That is, the gains of the bourgeois-democratic revolution came to western and southern Germany, large parts of Italy and even the northern Balkans, not through an indigenous revolution, but through conquest from without. In many cases it encountered reactionary resistance under the name of national independence; so for the German intellectuals of Marx’s generation, a major division between the left and the right was one’s retrospective attitude toward these so-called “wars of liberation,” which in the German states were led by the Prussian monarchy against the Napoleonic occupation. Marx and Engels’ theoretical principle that social and eco-

nomic progress stands higher than national independence, when the two conflict, was correct. I would argue that Marx and Engels’ attitude toward the Napoleonic occupation was a theoretical precursor to our position supporting the 1979 military intervention by the Soviet Union, a degenerated workers state, in Afghanistan (which is, in fact, not a nation).

Marx and Engels were not blind or indifferent to the monumental crimes committed by Western powers against the peoples of Asia, Africa and the Americas. But they viewed such crimes as the overhead historical cost for the modernization of these backward regions. And as I already mentioned, in the 19th century Mexico was a mess without much hope of a proletarian revolution, and American “tutelage,” as Engels put it, seemed the only possible way forward. In 1853, in an article called “The Future Results of British Rule in India,” Marx and Engels wrote:

“England has to fulfill a double mission in India: one destructive, the other regenerating—the annihilation of old Asiatic society, and the laying of the material foundations of Western society in Asia.”

But this projection was not borne out by the actual course of development. In fact, even though the capitalists did introduce certain elements of modern industrial technology into their colonies and semicolonies, for example transportation, the overall effect was to arrest the social and economic development of backward countries. By the mid 19th century, the European bourgeoisies ceased to be a

continued on page 6

Karl Marx (left) and Friedrich Engels (right). Below: Workers defend barricades in Frankfurt, Germany, during 1848 revolutions that swept Europe.



Dietz Verlag Berlin



Beard

G. Lester



Mexican-American War...

(continued from page 5)

historically progressive class against the old feudal-derived aristocracies—with the key turning point being the defeat of the 1848 European revolutions.

Marx and Engels generalized the experiences that Europe went through during the period of the Napoleonic Wars. In the 1867 *Preface* to the first German edition of *Capital*, Marx wrote: “The country that is more developed industrially only shows, to the less developed, the image of its own future.” This statement aptly described European capitalist development in the early years of the 19th century. At the same time, this observation, which Trotsky later described as “conditional and limited” (*Lessons of October*, 1924), was at odds with the fact that European colonialism reinforced the social and economic backwardness of the countries and peoples it dominated.

Marxism is a science. It is based not on received wisdom but on observation and analysis of social reality. Marxists are not infallible, and, indeed, Marx and Engels learned from their observations and analyses of capitalist development and expansion. It wasn’t long after 1848 that Marx and Engels would develop a very different attitude toward colonialism, expressed, for example, in their defense of the Sepoy rebellion in British-occupied India in 1857-58. Ireland is probably the country to which they paid the most attention because of their knowledge of the British working class. By the 1860s Marx and Engels called for Irish independence from Britain, not only out of justice for Ireland, but also as the precondition for the organization of *English* workers. By the late 19th century, Marx and Engels had become champions of colonial independence and recognized that the modernization of Asia, Africa and Latin America could take place only within the context of a world socialist order. Marx’s *Capital* (written in 1867) contains biting analysis of what he called the “primitive accumulation of capital” by the blood and the death of peasants and workers and others. There is a good article in the current issue of *Workers Vanguard* that goes over the development of the Marxist position on the national question (see “The National Question in the Marxist Movement, 1848-1914,” *WV* No. 931, 27 February).

More generally, imperialism had not fully developed in Marx and Engels’ time. It was left to the Bolsheviks to fully grapple with the importance of the national question in the epoch of imperialism. And the Bolsheviks under Lenin and Trotsky fought against all forms of national oppression and for the right of self-determination of nations. And just as Marx recognized that the modernization of Asia, Africa and Latin America could take place only within the context of a world socialist order, Trotsky underlined in his theory of permanent revolution that in countries of belated capitalist development national liberation and social and economic modernization can take place only under the dictatorship of the proletariat, with the working class fighting to extend its revolution to the advanced capitalist countries.

In terms of the Mexican-American War, Marx and Engels, in a more specific historical sense, failed at the time to fully appreciate the fact that the invasion of Mexico strengthened the power of the *slavocracy*—the very power standing in the way of further bourgeois development. In the 1840s, they did not know very much about the U.S. But by the time of the U.S. Civil War, Marx and Engels had carefully studied the country. Marx’s writings are among the most perceptive on the U.S. Civil War of any contemporary observers because he understood that the war was a *class war* between two opposed social systems.

In 1861, at the start of the Civil War, Marx wrote: “In the foreign, as in the



January 2008: Protest by union miners in Mexico, one day after federal and state police brutally attacked strikers at copper mine in Cananea.

domestic, policy of the United States, the interests of the slaveholders served as the guiding star.” He mentioned in this context the U.S. attempt to purchase Cuba and pro-slavery Filibusters in northern Mexico and Central America, concluding that U.S. foreign policy “was conquest of new territory for the spread of slavery and of the slaveholders’ rule” (“The North American Civil War,” 1861). Marx wrote that slavery was the key issue in the Civil War, which he tied to the war with Mexico:

“Not in the sense of whether the slaves within the existing slave states should be emancipated outright or not...but whether the 20 million freemen of the North should submit any longer to an oligarchy of 300,000 slaveholders; whether the vast Territories of the republic should be nurseries for free states or for slavery; finally, whether the national policy of the Union should take armed spreading of slavery in Mexico, Central and South America as its device.”

The Mexican Invasion and the Coming of the Civil War

So by the time of the American Civil War, Marx recognized that the invasion of Mexico was integrally connected to the development of the slavocracy and that this was one of the key questions for American capitalism.

I want to talk a bit about the invasion of Mexico and the coming of the Civil War. The invasion of Mexico called the question: would the slavocracy or the bourgeoisie control the United States? The answer was not obvious. One of the best historians of the period, James McPherson, has said: “On the eve of the Civil War, plantation agriculture was more profitable, slavery more entrenched, slave owners more prosperous, and the ‘slave power’ more dominant within the South if not in the nation at large than it had ever been.” And the South was increasingly belligerent. Although many Northerners wanted to compromise more with the South, especially those merchants here in New York who benefited from selling Southern cotton, it became clearer as the bourgeoisie grew that establishing a unified capitalist society would require smashing slavery—that is, another bourgeois revolution. The conquest of so much territory from Mexico directly led to the Civil War. In his *Memoirs*, Grant wrote:

“The Southern rebellion was largely the outgrowth of the Mexican war. Nations, like individuals, are punished for their transgressions. We got our punishment in the most sanguinary and expensive war of modern times.”

The immediate question posed by the Mexican invasion was: would this new land taken from Mexico be slave or free? In the San Francisco Gold Rush, tens of thousands of people rushed to California, and in 1850 the territory petitioned Congress to be admitted as a free state. This led to another crisis, and in 1850 there was another “compromise.” Like its predecessors, the Compromise of 1850 merely delayed the inevitable conflict between the North and South. This compromise allowed California to enter as a free state but kept the rest of the territories con-

quered from Mexico in limbo, with their status to be decided when they applied for statehood sometime in the future.

This would be the last major compromise. And in fact certain parts of it—like the 1850 Fugitive Slave Act, which required that Northern states return escaped slaves to their masters in the South—infamed divisions between the North and the South even more. The 1850s were marked by the North becoming aware that its continued development as a capitalist society meant breaking free from the slave power, and the slavocracy increasingly realizing that its domination of the country was threatened. In other words, the unity between the capitalist North and the slave South was breaking down. National politics reflected this. Even though General Zachary Taylor of the Whig Party was elected president in 1848, after the war, he would be the last elected Whig president, as his party split apart between North and South over the Fugitive Slave Act.

Even many Northern Democrats could not stomach the slave power domination of the country and their party. There was a series of parties that opposed the expansion of slavery. In 1856, John C. Frémont was the first candidate to run for president for the Republican Party. He ran on the slogan of “Free soil, free speech and Frémont,” which was in explicit opposition to the slavocracy. Although it was by no means an abolitionist party, the Republican Party understood that in order to safeguard the growth of capitalism, the slave power would have to be checked and the growth of slave territory stopped. The 1857 Supreme Court decision *Dred Scott v. Sandford*, which declared that Congress could not restrict slavery—and also declared that black people had no rights in the United States—made the Civil War almost inevitable. In 1860, when the first Republican president, Abraham Lincoln, was elected on the platform of stopping the expansion of slavery, the South declared that it was seceding from the Union in order to guarantee slavery, which they wrote into the Confederacy’s constitution. Or as Marx put it, “the war of the

Southern Confederacy is in the true sense of the word a war of conquest for the spread and perpetuation of slavery” (“The Civil War in the United States,” 1861).

Without going into too much detail, I’ll just say also that the Southern slavocracy maintained its designs on Mexico. During the Civil War, northern Mexico became an important geographical point for the Confederacy to try to break the Union blockade and sell cotton to Europe. According to Eugene Genovese, the Confederacy had plans to march “into New Mexico with the intention of proceeding to Tucson and then swinging south to take Sonora, Chihuahua, Durango, and Tamaulipas,” and “the Confederate government tried to deal with Santiago Vidaurri, the strong man of Coahuila and Nuevo León, to bring northern Mexico into the Confederacy.” At about the same time, Mexico itself was in the middle of its own war, in which Benito Juárez fought against French monarchists and Mexican conservatives like Vidaurri as he attempted to modernize Mexico.

Finish the Civil War!

The Civil War was the Second American Revolution, the last of the great bourgeois-democratic revolutions. It took four years and the deaths of some 600,000 Americans—almost as many as those who died in all other U.S. wars—to at last break the slave power. Included in this struggle were the almost 200,000 black troops who fought on the side of the Union. The North’s victory in 1865 ushered in the most democratic period in U.S. history, Reconstruction. The war, by ensuring the development of American capitalism, also laid the basis for the development of the American working class—the power that can get rid of capitalism. Black workers today make up a very important component of this working class.

The Northern capitalists betrayed Reconstruction and the promise of black freedom, as they pursued the economic advantages of their victory over the Confederacy, rather than advancing black rights. Toward the end of the century, the vicious segregation of Jim Crow was imposed. Meanwhile, the bourgeoisie moved from the consolidation of power nationally to the pursuit of imperialist power abroad—not least against Mexico and other Latin American countries.

Bloody American imperialism is the enemy of workers and the oppressed here in the United States and around the world. And this remains the case with President Obama, who is now planning to increase by 50 percent the imperialist troops occupying Afghanistan. The liberation of workers and peasants in Mexico and Latin America today requires socialist revolutions throughout the Americas, from the Yukon to the Yucatán, from Alaska to Argentina. We in the Spartacist League/U.S. are dedicated to forging a revolutionary class-struggle workers party that will be able to lead the working class to power in the U.S., which is what is necessary to smash U.S. imperialism. The fight for black liberation is central to this task. And that’s why we raise the slogan to “Finish the Civil War! For black liberation through socialist revolution!” ■


Programmatic Statement of the Spartacist League/U.S.

Adopted in 1999 at the Tenth National Conference of the SL/U.S.

\$2 (40 pages)

Make checks payable/mail to:
Spartacist Publishing Co.
Box 1377 GPO
New York, NY 10116

Programmatic Statement of the Spartacist League/U.S.



For a Workers Party That Fights for a Workers Government!

For Socialist Revolution in the Bastion of World Imperialism!

SEE PAGE 2

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

SEE PAGE 30

Opponents of the Revolutionary Internationalist Workers Movement

SEE PAGE 37

52 November 2000 Spartacist Publishing Co., Box 1377 GPO, New York, NY 10116

France...

(continued from page 12)

Interior of about 900,000 euros for the subsequent five years (to be more precise, 897,132.93 euros, as stipulated in the 27 January decree, confirmed on 16 February). The answer to our question is simple: officially they didn't dissolve the LCR! Thus *Rouge* (12 February) wrote in black and white:

"In order to ensure the continuation of public assistance to political parties (based on the LCR's results obtained in the June 2007 parliamentary elections), the [LCR's "liquidation"] congress unanimously decided to maintain an 'LCR structure,' the constitution of a 'follow-up committee' and payment to the NPA of the totality of the public subsidy (after deducting the former LCR's dues to the Fourth International)."

So much for the NPA's "independence" from the capitalist state: the 900,000 euro government subsidy to the LCR was roughly equivalent to the dues paid by LCR members (part of which the latter could deduct from their taxes!) and much more significant than their annual 100,000 euro fund drive. In contrast, we have always refused on principle to take any money from any capitalist state, which is the executive committee of the capitalist class enemy. He who pays the piper calls the tune!

Their subsidy contradicts even the NPA's vague and classless statement in its "Founding Principles" that "It is not possible to put the state and current institutions at the service of political and social transformation." The Pabloites' attitude flows from their social-democratic understanding that the bourgeois state is in itself a neutral entity above social classes and that it cares about equally supporting all democratic organizations that participate in bourgeois elections.

Occasionally the Pabloites might complain that the state is prejudiced against the people—in order to spread the illusion that this is not always the case and could be corrected by the victims applying pressure in the streets. Thus, in their "General Resolution," they demand "effective means for community control of the police and punishment for attacks on the dignity of persons perpetrated by the forces of law and order." The idea of controlling the police is counterposed to the Marxist understanding that the state is composed of special bodies of armed men, prisons, etc., committed to defending ruling-class power through the monopoly of violence, and that it must be destroyed in a socialist revolution that puts in its place a dictatorship of the proletariat. In his work *The State and Revolution*, written in August 1917 in preparation for the October Revolution, Lenin reestablished the teachings of Marx and Engels that had been emptied of content by their epigones:

"A state arises, a special power is created, special bodies of armed men, and every revolution, by destroying the state apparatus, clearly shows us how the ruling class strives to restore the special bodies of armed men which serve it, and how the oppressed class strives to create a new organisation of this kind, capable of serving the exploited instead of the exploiters."

Not surprisingly, the NPA boasts that it counts a capitalist judge among its founding members (see François Cous-



François Lafite

Olivier Besancenot, spokesman for now-liquidated LCR, addresses founding conference of "New Anti-Capitalist Party" in February (left). Anti-Communist cartoon in LCR's *Rouge* showing fall of Berlin Wall reads: "1989: End of the communist nightmare." Man adds, "It took us 72 years to find the exit," referring to the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution.

tal's fairy tale, *The Incredible Story of the New Anti-Capitalist Party*).

"Anti-Capitalism" and Anti-Sovietism

To dot the i's and cross the t's, the NPA congress decided by a clear majority in favor of the name "New Anti-Capitalist Party" rather than "Revolutionary Anti-Capitalist Party." It wouldn't have changed anything to add the word "Revolutionary," as the fakers from the former minority of Lutte Ouvrière (LO) and other fake leftists who have joined the NPA proposed in order to cover up their own reformism. But to remove it—as well as any reference in their two founding documents to

and capitalist counterrevolution right to the very end. Today, the disarray of the capitalist economy, which workers are being called on to pay for, highlights the murderous anarchy of this system and the intrinsic superiority of a planned economy, even in spite of the parasitic Stalinist bureaucratic excrescence that existed in the USSR after 1924. In particular, we intervened in the DDR [East Germany] in 1989-1990 when there was an incipient proletarian political revolution against the Stalinist bureaucracy; we called for a red Germany of workers councils and opposed capitalist reunification of Germany. We lost, but we were the only ones to have fought against capitalist reunification.



Le Bolchevik

Ernest Mandel (left) and Michel Pablo in 1988.

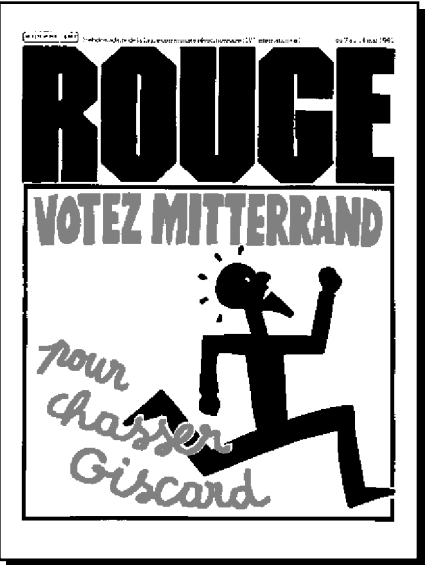
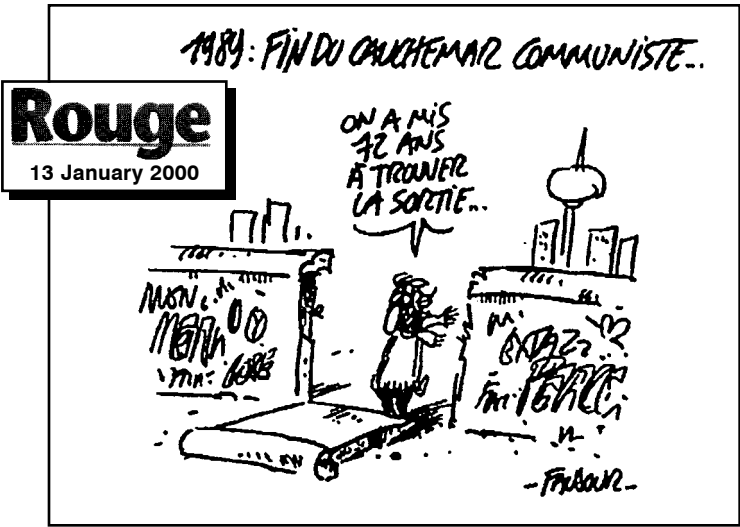
communism, to Lenin or Trotsky, or even to Marx, with the exception of two quotes from the *Communist Manifesto*—is an explicit pledge to the bourgeoisie that they are enemies of socialist revolution.

In fact the word "anti-capitalist" is a code word to say that they can agree that capitalism is no good and that something better is needed, but no way will they call that socialism because that could lead people to wrongly think of "real socialism," i.e., the Russian Revolution and the Soviet Union. Today the regroupment of the "left of the left," as offered up by the NPA, is based on shared hatred for the first workers state in history and on shared support to capitalist counterrevolution in the USSR and Eastern Europe by those organizations who have signed up for the NPA (principally the LCR but also LO's former minority, Gauche Révolutionnaire [Taaffeites], the CRI group [ex-Lambertist], etc.). We, in contrast, defended the USSR and its gains for the workers of the world against imperialism

In the NPA's "Founding Principles" you can find, if you look hard enough, a sentence near the end that says, "A social revolution [not a socialist revolution] will be necessary to overthrow capitalism." In reality this is just a variation of their reformist "revolutionize society" or, as Mitterrand put it in the 1970s, "break with capitalism." They continue: "Our choice for how to get there is exclusively through the expression and participation of a majority," i.e., bourgeois-democratic elections (supported by mobilization in the streets). This is exactly what they lay out in their "General Resolution": they are for "putting an end to the Fifth Republic by a constituent process for an anti-capitalist social republic" and "the abolition of the Senate."

Down With Executive Offices of the Bourgeois State!

The NPA is really trying to show the capitalists that they are reasonable and responsible and capable of governing,



Le Bolchevik

Far left: May 1981 issue of LCR newspaper *Rouge* calls for vote to Cold War "socialist" Mitterrand. Left: Union protest at Citroën-Aulnay auto plant, 1982. Immigrant workers played key role in auto strikes against Mitterrand's popular-front austerity in 1982-83. In response Mitterrand's government launched a racist campaign.

and they regularly put forward a candidate for President of the republic, i.e., the head of the capitalist state. In contrast, we oppose any participation in the bourgeois executive and thus we also oppose running for executive office in the bourgeois state, such as president or mayor, because running for such posts feeds illusions that one could administer the bourgeois state in the interest of the working class, negating the need to fight for a socialist revolution [see *Spartacist* (English-language edition) No. 60, Autumn 2007]. As Rosa Luxemburg said over a hundred years ago: "The entry of a socialist into a bourgeois government is not, as it is thought, a partial conquest of the bourgeois state by the socialists, but a partial conquest of the socialist party by the bourgeois state." Thus the CP in France took direct responsibility for managing capitalism as part of the government in 1944-1946, 1981-1984, 1997-2002, and they also ran working-class municipalities for decades. Claiming to want to improve the daily lives of people in working-class suburbs, they administered for example the capitalist housing shortage, with its inevitable racist quotas in assigning subsidized housing. They demoralized countless militants who wanted to fight for socialism.

In the past, the Pabloites considered it "taboo" to *openly* speak about their lust for governmental power under capitalism. Now they have made it into a question of principle, declaring in their "Founding Principles" (approved by 540 votes in favor and one against): "From the municipality to parliament, we will support all measures which would improve the workers' lot, democratic rights and respect for the environment. *We will contribute to implementing them if the voters give us this responsibility*" (our emphasis).

The Pabloites have a long history of exercising the responsibilities of executive office in the bourgeois state: starting with Pablo as an adviser in the post-independence Algerian government and continuing in Martinique in the early 1970s, where they had at least one "revolutionary" mayor, Jean Elie, the local representative of the colonial state apparatus (see [the LCR's newspaper] *Rouge* No. 188, 20 January 1973). Then in Switzerland in the late 1980s their leader Hanspeter Uster was elected minister of Justice and Police in the Zug canton. Most recently, in the 23 January *Rouge*, the LCR interviewed an "anti-capitalist mayor" in Kabylia [Algeria], Mohand Saddek Akrou, a member of the PST, their sister party in Algeria. He acknowledges that "two-thirds of our [town] budget is directly managed by the prefecture [regional government], while the remaining third goes to private business"!

But the Pabloites' proudest ministerial post came in Brazil at the beginning of this decade, when one of their leaders, Miguel Rossetto, who had previously been vice-governor of the state of Rio Grande do Sul, was named minister of agrarian development in the Lula [Luiz Inácio da Silva of the Workers Party] government. Of course Rossetto was not the real Minister of Agriculture, but he was still the one responsible for lulling millions of landless peasants

with the illusion that he was going to give them some land taken from the big landlords, while at the very same time Lula’s military police continued their job of “restoring order” in the countryside with baton blows and bullets. Rossetto, doubtless dizzy with success, ended up dropping the Pabloites, who went on to form a new organization, the PSoL, which aroused great hopes in the USec before mysteriously fading into the background.

**The Fable of Independence
Vis-à-Vis the SP**

Today, Besancenot has built up his business based on “opposition” to “social-liberalism” [social democrats who have embraced neo-liberal capitalism] and “independence” from the SP. The NPA realizes that many activists and working-class voters feel bitter towards the Mitterrand and Jospin SP governments (which had CP participation half the time) as well as towards the SP today. In the 1990s, especially in the wake of the destruction of the USSR, it was these parties (elected every time with the Pabloites’ votes) that were in charge of implementing capitalist austerity programs to attack the working class, immigrants and their children.

The social-democratic parties (whether the SP or CP, or in Germany the SPD or Die Linke [see “Germany: SPD in Deep Crisis—Left Party: No Alternative!” in WV No. 928, 16 January]) are bourgeois workers parties, torn by the contradiction between their pro-capitalist program and leadership and their trade-union base. Revolutionary Marxists seek to set the working-class base of these parties against the top in order to build the revolutionary party required to carry out a successful workers revolution.

To ensure the survival of its huge (although rapidly shrinking) apparatus, the CP depends on its electoral deals

**Lech Walesa prays
in front of Gdansk
shipyard, 1980.
Striking workers
shook Polish
Stalinist regime but
knelt before
Catholic church.
Spartacists
fought against
Solidarność
counterrevolution.
LCR called for
“Solidarity with
Solidarność.”**



Der Spiegel

municipal majorities. At Gentilly, on the outskirts of Paris, they participate in running the capitalist municipality, having been elected on the first round as part of the incumbent CP mayor’s slate. At bottom, the Pabloites’ raison d’être, like Mélenchon’s Left Party, is to put pressure on the SP to become less “social-liberal” and form a “left” popular front—a capitalist coalition of bourgeois workers parties with outright bourgeois formations—to defeat Sarkozy. The Pabloites will support it, from within—or perhaps from outside, since they know very well that if they lie down before the “social-liberals” and enter their government, as their comrades recently did in Brazil, or if they slavishly support their official parliamentary majority as in Italy, they would be booted out in the subsequent elections.

But the Pabloites need workers mobilizations in the streets to put pressure on the SP. And the slightest hint of struggle exposes how the NPA seeks unity at any price with the SP (“a united policy towards the whole social and political left,” as the NPA’s “General Resolution” puts it). In a 21 January interview in the CP paper, *L’Humanité*, Besancenot said

We saw another example of the NPA’s “unity in struggle” with the threat to privatize the post office, an important subject for the NPA given that their trademark rests on the “little postman,” Besancenot. Far from proposing an important class struggle, a solid strike, the LCR/NPA promotes committees of consumers against privatization, where one finds all mixed up together village mayors (i.e., the municipal representatives of the privatizing state!) and users of the post office from all social classes. The Pabloites cynically use the workers’ desire for unity in struggle against the bosses to unite not only with the treacherous social-democratic leaderships of the workers movement, but with the class enemy itself.

**Nationalization or Socialization
vs. Revolutionary Expropriation**

At its conference, the NPA decided on a hodgepodge of reformist “social emergency” demands for the economic crisis, like 300 euros more per month for a 1,500 euro minimum wage, a ban on layoffs, etc. One could say they thought of everything, including: “For companies which

they avoid the fundamental question: who owns the means of production?

One can easily get lost in the Pabloites’ declarations: in accordance with the milieu they’re capitulating to they are for nationalizations under capitalism (the classic social-democratic/Labourite solution) or on the other hand for “self-management” under capitalism (the social-democratic solution in the style of the CFDT [trade-union federation] in the 1970s). When it comes to capitalist property, the Pabloites are ready for anything—except its expropriation by a revolutionary proletarian government, i.e., the Marxist program of the dictatorship of the proletariat and its international extension. That’s the only program that can reorganize and plan the economy rationally in the interest of the workers and the oppressed.

**The LCR’s Reformist
Emergency Plan**

But the Pabloites explicitly reject the model of the Russian Revolution. For example, Olivier Besancenot and Daniel Bensaïd write in their latest book:

“Revolutionary in the actual sense of the term, this anti-capitalist party hasn’t signed up to one single political lineage, that of the struggle issuing out of the Russian Revolution and the opposition pitting Stalinists against anti-Stalinists.... “We anti-capitalists give a radical logic to the reforms we fight for; this logic is inscribed from now on in the perspective of the future. These reforms are consistent with and contradictory to the market economy. They carry within them the will to develop other social relations where wealth and power would be subjects of a collective division. To carry them out to the end, a radical break with the existing order is unavoidable.”

—Besancenot and Bensaïd, *Let’s Take a Side—For a Socialism of the 21st Century* [Prenons Parti—Pour un Socialisme du XXI^e Siècle]

For the Pabloites, it’s the struggle for reforms that is “revolutionary”! This is the same kind of talk we hear from Mélenchon of the Left Party, who declares himself to be “breaking with capitalism” (19 January interview in *L’Humanité*), and it is the very opposite of Trotsky’s Transitional Program, which said:

“The strategic task of the Fourth International lies not in reforming capitalism but in its overthrow. Its political aim is the conquest of power by the proletariat for the purpose of expropriating the bourgeoisie....

“The Fourth International does not discard the program of the old ‘minimal’ demands to the degree to which these have preserved at least part of their vital forcefulness. Indefatigably, it defends the democratic rights and social conquests of the workers. But it carries on this day-to-day work within the framework of the correct actual, that is, revolutionary, perspective. Insofar as the old partial, ‘minimal’ demands of the masses clash with the destructive and degrading tendencies of decadent capitalism—and this occurs at each step—the Fourth International advances a system of *transitional demands*, the essence of which is contained in the fact that ever more openly and decisively they will be directed against the very foundations of the bourgeois regime. The old ‘minimal program’ is superseded by the *transitional program*, the task of which lies in systematic mobilization of the masses for the proletarian revolution.”

At bottom, the LCR’s maximum program is the welfare state such as was conceded by the capitalists at the end of World War II to avoid a workers revolution after the Red Army had liberated

continued on page 10



Spartakist

**East Berlin, 3 January
1990: ICL-initiated
250,000-strong
demonstration at
Treptow Park against
fascist desecration of
Soviet war memorial
and in defense of
East German and
Soviet workers states.
Banner reads:
“For a Red Germany
of Workers Councils
in a Socialist Europe.”**

with the SP to preserve their control of working-class municipalities and to get people elected to parliament, with the state subsidies this brings in. The LCR/NPA, on the other hand, with its smaller operation, as well as the 900,000 euro bonanza from the capitalist state, can claim some level of independence from the SP, which boosts its popularity.

But the LCR’s “independence” from the SP is unfailingly transformed, as soon as the first round of voting is over, into calls to “fight the right” in the second round. In Marseilles, their comrades called for votes for the SP-led slate in the 2008 municipal elections, even after the SP had fused its slate with the right-wing bourgeois party MoDem [a Christian-Democratic party]! In those elections they went so far as to propose to the SP a systematic fusion of their slates in the second round, i.e., agreeing to contribute to the victory of popular-front municipal majorities and to participate in them, with the proviso that the LCR might from time to time register a token vote against certain measures (token because the electoral system provides a bonus to a slate that won by a narrow margin, granting it a stable and comfortable majority). But the SP refused their offer.

That didn’t stop the LCR from hunting down opportunities elsewhere to join

concerning the January 29 trade-union mobilization:

“In this context, the left can come together and decide on a nationwide initiative against layoffs, as we had proposed in mid-December to all parties, including the SP. Unfortunately we have not received any answer.”

They finally did get an answer: for the first time since the election of the Jospin-Buffet government in 1997, the SP made a show of force with a massive mobilization of its members in the January 29 workers demonstrations. Starting with their congress last November, the SP realized they had to go back to a more traditional social-democratic line of opposing the right and claiming to be on the side of the workers, or risk continuing to lose crucial elections. Then on February 3 the SP, CP, MRC (bourgeois Chevènementists), Left Party, NPA and LO signed a joint statement congratulating themselves on the success of the 29 January day of action and demanding the government offer a “social shield” to the poor against the current wave of layoffs. The SP signed the call to “impose a different division of the wealth and another kind of development” and immediately used the credibility that such joint statements with the “left of the left” gave them to propose a plan for “getting out of the crisis” in higher education (see *Le Monde*, 12 February).

turn out to be really struggling, financing will be assured by a banking public service and sustained by a special assessment paid by all shareholders” (“General Resolution”). In other words, the capitalist state should subsidize unprofitable companies through a tax on capital.

In their “Founding Principles” they do plenty of “Sunday speechifying” about “ending...private property of the main means of production.” They offer ringing declarations for “Nationalization (in the sense of socialization) of all banking organizations with no buyouts or compensation, and expropriation of their shareholders” (“General Resolution”). Besancenot explains in an interview published in their new journal, *Contretemps* (No. 1, First Quarter 2009):

“Faced with capitalism, social democracy and Stalinism insinuated that the solution was the state ownership of the means of production. Our reading has never been that, but rather the perspective of the socialization of the means of production. For us, public intervention means intervention by the majority of the population and not necessarily by the state. This is one of the essential issues of what we call ‘21st-century socialism,’ which others call ‘eco-socialism,’ ‘libertarian self-management,’ ‘communism with a human face’.”

Behind their “majority of the population” and their rhetoric about democracy,

Education...

(continued from page 3)

Contingents Unite (CCU), a formation in the PSC that seeks to pressure the existing PSC leadership to adopt a more militant posture. What they really offer is the same class-collaborationist strategy, organizing protests outside Paterson’s office and distributing a November 18 fact sheet on CUNY and SUNY budget cuts, which mobilizes people to go to the Board of Trustees meeting and contact “your local representatives” in the Democratic-controlled New York State Assembly, Senate and City Council. They draw no class line against the Democratic Party in their fact sheet and newsletters.

Telling of the political basis for this lash-up is CCU member Jennifer Gaboury’s February 2 open letter to Hunter College president Jennifer Raab, signed by other prominent members of CCU. In reference to “labor and contract issues,” Gaboury advises Raab that “the head of a college has a bully pulpit from which to take a stand on an issue that is central to the health and success of the college.” Such appeals can only build illusions in the anti-union campus administration. At a November 2008 rally, IG supporter Sándor John carried a sign referring to CUNY Chancellor Goldstein that called to “Cut his salary—or lay *him* off!” So while the IG criticizes the ISO for calling on the college president to “support students protests,” the IG’s John is calling on the Board of Trustees, the top body of the CUNY administration, to pick a different henchman or at least pay the current one less! We say: Abolish the administration! For worker/student/teacher control of the universities!

The ubiquitous Sándor John is also



Young Spartacus

IG pushes illusions in benevolence of bourgeois campus administration and Board of Trustees, carries sign demanding “Bail Out CUNY!” at CUNY Graduate Center protest, 22 September 2008.

listed as a contact together with ISO spokesman Doug Singen on a March 4 press release that bemoans: “For several decades, the city and state have been rolling back their commitment to provide a quality higher education for all New Yorkers.” Tell that liberal pabulum to the poor, largely black and minority youth trapped in inner-city holding pens more segregated today than in the past four decades! The capitalist class’ “commitment” to education extends only so far as they believe it will serve their interests, and in a period of capitalist economic crisis, social services, including education, are first on the chopping block.

The ISO is defined by its support for counterrevolution in the former Soviet Union, which was a devastating defeat for workers and the oppressed internationally. As Trotskyists, we stand for unconditional military defense of the remaining bureaucratically deformed workers states—Cuba, North Korea, China and Vietnam—against imperialism and capitalist counterrevolution, and for proletarian

political revolution to oust the nationalist Stalinist bureaucracies and replace them with workers democracy based on revolutionary internationalism. As a centrist, sometimes revolutionary in words but reformist in deeds, Sándor John may, rarely, say the same thing. But the ISO is on to something when they make John their contact person while excluding us Spartacists, who sharply raise political differences, from their “public” events. The ISO can depend on the IG not to expose their treacherous politics, past or present, because the IG is simply pushing the same tired campus pressure politics in more inflated, militant language. (See “IG Disappears Red Army Fight Against Islamic Reaction in Afghanistan,” WV No. 772, 11 January 2002.)

When it comes to the Commander-in-Chief of racist U.S. imperialism, the IG presents its opposition to Obama like the reformists do, as a question of policy. Comically, they wrote in “No to Teacher-Basher McCain and Education-for-War Obama” (*The Internationalist* online,

November 2008) that Obama wouldn’t be “teacher- and student-friendly” because “Obama himself was educated in an elite private school in Hawaii and went on to the elite private institutions of Columbia University and Harvard Law School. He has no real experience of the public schools except from the outside.” By this criterion, CCNY graduate Colin Powell, imperialist war criminal and former Secretary of State, would be a better candidate! As revolutionary Marxists, we oppose Democratic Party politicians and politicians of all capitalist parties on principle, not because of policy differences or “experience,” but because they are agents of the capitalist class enemy.

As for the centrists, Leon Trotsky, leader of the Left Opposition and defender of the banner of the 1917 Russian Revolution, aptly noted: “A centrist always remains in spiritual dependence on rightist groupings and is inclined to cringe before those who are more moderate, to remain silent on their opportunist sins and to cover up their actions before the workers” (“Centrism and the Fourth International,” 22 February 1934). The IG provides a pseudo-Marxist cover for the rotten campus reformists and the class-collaborationists in the unions, who tie the working class and militant youth to the system of capitalist exploitation. By combating the politics of these opportunist frauds, the Spartacus Youth Club seeks to win students to the revolutionary Marxist program that can free working people worldwide from the obsolete system of capitalist exploitation, which threatens us all with annihilation. The only way out is through world socialist revolution, led by a vanguard party modeled after the Bolshevik Party of Lenin and Trotsky that led the October 1917 Russian Revolution. ■

North Korea...

(continued from page 12)

international working class, nuclear weapons are necessary.

The greatest menace to the workers and oppressed of the world is U.S. imperialism, whose rulers have not only acquired the means to destroy the world several times over, but have actually carried out nuclear holocaust, incinerating some 200,000 Japanese people in the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945. This slaughter was not only aimed at Japan, but, in fact, primarily intended as a threat against the Soviet Union, the world’s first workers state, born through the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution, the only successful workers revolution to date. In his Prague speech, Obama arrogantly intoned, “as the only nuclear power to have used a nuclear weapon, the United States has a moral responsibility to act.” I.e., the U.S. imperialist mass murderers have the “moral responsibility” to ride roughshod over

any country that would stand up to them.

The U.S. capitalist rulers have tried to crush North Korea ever since capitalist/landlord rule was overthrown there under the protection of the Soviet Army following World War II. In their drive to “roll back” not only the social revolution in Korea but also the Chinese Revolution of 1949, the U.S. and its imperialist allies, under the aegis of the UN, devastated the Korean peninsula in the Korean War of 1950-53, killing some three million people. During this war, the Joint Chiefs of Staff deliberated about using nuclear bombs, and came close to it several times. The U.S. imperialists’ war drive was finally stopped by the heroic struggle of Korea’s workers and peasants, with the aid of a massive Chinese military intervention. But from 1957 to 1991, the U.S. kept a stockpile of nuclear weapons close to the Demilitarized Zone, designed to intimidate the then non-nuclear North. The Korean War ended with a cease-fire, but the U.S. has refused to sign a peace treaty. There are still some 28,500 U.S. troops in capitalist South Korea alongside

the South Korean military, dedicated to destroying North Korea. U.S. troops out of Korea now!

The defense of the North Korean and other deformed workers states against imperialism is undermined by the rule of the nationalist Stalinist bureaucracies, whose policies are encapsulated in the dogma of “building socialism in one country,” expressed as *Juche* (self-reliance) in North Korea. The Stalinists oppose the fight for international proletarian revolution and instead pursue the futile quest for “peaceful coexistence” with imperialism. A case in point is the Beijing bureaucracy’s treacherous partnership with the U.S., Japan and others in the attempt to disarm North Korea. In 2006, after Pyongyang conducted its first nuclear test, China criminally voted for sanctions against North Korea in the UN Security Council as well as for the UN resolution banning all ballistic missile tests by the North Korean regime. While not condemning North Korea’s April 5 rocket launch, Beijing is pressuring Pyongyang into resuming the “six-party talks”—involving the U.S., China, Japan, Russia and the two Koreas—whose aim is none other than to disarm North Korea. Beijing’s craven appeasement of the imperialist drive against North Korea is particularly dangerous to China’s own defense.

Since the early 1990s, North Korea has suffered from widespread malnutrition,

the absence of access to critical resources and the decay of its industry. This is the direct product of the 1991-92 capitalist counterrevolution in the Soviet Union, which had been the North’s main economic partner. At the same time, Kim Jong Il’s nepotistic and mythologized regime heads a parasitic, Stalinist bureaucratic caste whose extreme nationalism and class-collaborationist politics undermine the defense of North Korea. In 2007, Pyongyang agreed to shut down its nuclear facilities in exchange for fuel aid and steps toward the normalization of relations with the United States and Japan, revealing their dangerous illusions that these imperialists can be appeased. The North Korean Stalinists have also long called for “peaceful reunification” with the South, which is a recipe for reunification on the basis of capitalist wage slavery.

What is desperately needed is the forging of a Leninist-Trotskyist party with a proletarian internationalist perspective to lead the struggle for the revolutionary reunification of Korea—for socialist revolution in the South and workers political revolution to oust the Stalinist bureaucrats in the North. The fight for revolutionary reunification must be linked to the struggle for proletarian political revolution in China and the extension of proletarian power to Japan, the industrial heartland of Asia, as well as to the U.S. imperialist colossus. ■

SPARTACIST LEAGUE/U.S. Local Directory and Public Offices

Web site: www.icl-fi.org • E-mail address: vanguard@tiac.net

National Office: Box 1377 GPO, New York, NY 10116, (212) 732-7860

Chicago Box 6441, Main PO, Chicago, IL 60680, (312) 563-0441
chicagospartacist@sbcglobal.net
Public Office: Sat. 2-5 p.m., 222 S. Morgan (Buzzer 23)

Los Angeles Box 29574, Los Feliz Sta., Los Angeles, CA 90029, (213) 380-8239
slsycla@sbcglobal.net
Public Office: Sat. 2-5 p.m., 3806 Beverly Blvd., Room 215

New York Box 3381, Church St. Sta., New York, NY 10008, (212) 267-1025
nysl@tiac.net
Public Office: 1st and 3rd Sat. of every month, 1-4 p.m., and by appointment, 299 Broadway, Suite 318

Oakland Box 29497, Oakland, CA 94604, (510) 839-0851
slbayarea@sbcglobal.net
Public Office: Sat. 1-5 p.m., 1634 Telegraph, 3rd Floor

TROTSKYIST LEAGUE OF CANADA/LIGUE TROTSKYSTE DU CANADA

Toronto Box 7198, Station A, Toronto, ON M5W 1X8, (416) 593-4138
spartcan@on.aibn.com

Vancouver Box 2717, Main P.O., Vancouver, BC V6B 3X2, (604) 687-0353
trotskyist_vancouver@shawcable.com

WORKERS VANGUARD

Marxist Working-Class Biweekly of the Spartacist League

- ☐ \$10/22 issues of *Workers Vanguard* (includes English-language *Spartacist* and *Black History and the Class Struggle*) international rates: \$25/22 issues—Airmail \$10/22 issues—Seamail
- ☐ \$2/6 introductory issues of *Workers Vanguard* (includes English-language *Spartacist*)
- ☐ \$2/4 issues of *Espartaco* (en español) (includes Spanish-language *Spartacist*)
- ☐ I would like to contribute \$ _____ to the production of *Workers Vanguard*.

Name _____

Address _____

_____ Apt. # _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone (____) _____ E-mail _____

934
Make checks payable/mail to: Spartacist Publishing Co., Box 1377 GPO, New York, NY 10116

Imperialist Saber Rattling Over Rocket Launch

APRIL 7—As the leaders of the U.S. and West European imperialist powers gathered in France and Germany to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the anti-Communist NATO alliance, North Korea launched a rocket intended to put a satellite into orbit. The April 5 launch has been seized upon by the U.S. and Japanese imperialists to increase economic and military pressure against North Korea and raise a hue and cry over Pyongyang's nuclear capability. An array of military might was ready to go into action in the waters between North Korea and Japan and in the skies off the North Korean coast. Two U.S. destroyers—the USS *McCain* and USS *Cha-*

Defend North Korea!

fee—equipped with Aegis technology intended to track and destroy missiles had left Sasebo port in southwestern Japan. For its part, the Japanese government sent its own Aegis-class destroyers and threatened to fire Patriot missiles supposedly targeting “debris” that might fall on Japan. South Korea also dispatched an Aegis-equipped destroyer off the east coast to monitor the launch.

Japanese prime minister Taro Aso denounced the launch as “an extremely

provocative act,” while U.S. president Barack Obama, speaking in Prague, asserted, “North Korea broke the rules once again by testing a rocket that could be used for long range missiles.” He added, “Now is the time for a strong international response.” Both the U.S. and Japanese imperialists are calling for a United Nations Security Council resolution condemning North Korea.

As Trotskyists, we call for the unconditional military defense of the

North Korean deformed workers state, as well as the deformed workers states of China, Cuba and Vietnam, against imperialist attack and internal counter-revolution. North Korea's rocket

launch has been hysterically characterized by most bourgeois commentators as the product of a bizarre, deranged and rogue dictatorship. But North Korea's rocket launch is not only rational—its Taepodong-2 rocket could indeed be critical to making nuclear weapons deliverable, acting as a deterrent against U.S. imperialism's unrelenting threats. For the defense of the workers state, a historic gain of the

continued on page 11

“New Anti-Capitalist Party” Founded in France

“Death of Communism” Leftists in New Guise

The following article is reprinted from *Le Bolchévik* No. 187, March 2009, the publication of the *Ligue Trotskyste de France*, section of the *International Communist League*.

LE BOLCHEVIK

The founding conference of the New Anti-Capitalist Party [Nouveau Parti Anticapitaliste] (NPA) took place at Plaine-Saint-Denis near Paris from February 6 to 8, beginning one day after Olivier Besancenot's *Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire* (LCR) voted to dissolve itself at its final conference. The NPA adopted “Founding Principles” and a “General Resolution on the Political and Social Situation”; it also adopted interim statutes, elected a 192-person leadership and decided, pending the latest negotiations with the Communist Party (CP) and Left Party [recent split from the Socialist Party], to run on its own in the upcoming European Union (EU) elections.

The Socialist Party (SP), showing its fear of competition from the NPA on the terrain of social democracy, commented that people shouldn't be fooled by the NPA's democratic airs because really they are just unreconstructed Trotskyists and proponents of “the most extreme archaism” (as SP Senator Henri Weber put it in the 7 February issue of *Le Monde*), in other words “Soviet-style totalitarianism.” Nothing could be further from the truth: the NPA is a new social-democratic formation that wants to cash in on the LCR's support for capitalist counterrevolution in the Soviet Union and East Europe, as well as the death agony of the CP. That's why they denounce the Russian Revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat. They want to be recognized as France's “21st-century socialists,” i.e., social democrats to replace the “20th-century socialists,” the SP and CP.

Far from being Trotskyists, Besan-

cenot's forebears, led by Michel Pablo and his lieutenant Ernest Mandel, destroyed Trotsky's Fourth International in the early 1950s. As we documented in our February supplement on the history of Pabloite liquidationism: “The common thread defining the whole history of Pabloism for more than 50 years has been looking for a substitute for building a Leninist party.” In the 1950s the Pabloites liquidated, wherever they could, into the Stalinist CPs (and elsewhere into social-democratic or petty-bourgeois nationalist organizations). In the 1980s their leading section, the French LCR, supported [former president François] Mitterrand's Cold War popular front and the forces that were committed to restoring capitalism in the former Soviet Union: notably,

Boris Yeltsin addresses counterrevolutionary rabble in Moscow in 1991. Graffiti at base of statue reads, “Lenin butcher of Russia.” USec and other fake Trotskyists took their place with Yeltsin on barricades of capitalist counterrevolution.

Corbis



they supported the CIA-financed mullahs then fighting in Afghanistan against the Red Army, Solidarność's Catholic counterrevolutionaries in Poland, and finally Boris Yeltsin's barricades as Yeltsin took power in August 1991 to restore capitalism in Russia. Thereby the Pabloites became the hardcore social democrats that they are today. The International Communist League alone stands on the principles and program of revolutionary Marxism, based on the historical lessons dearly paid for by the working class. Our goal is to establish communism worldwide. As we say in our International Declaration of Principles [*Spartacist* (English-language edition) No. 54, Spring 1998]:

“The victory of the proletariat on a world scale would place unimagined material

abundance at the service of human needs, lay the basis for the elimination of classes and the eradication of social inequality based on sex and the very abolition of the social significance of race, nation and ethnicity. For the first time mankind will grasp the reins of history and control its own creation, society, resulting in an undreamed-of emancipation of human potential, and a monumental forward surge of civilization.”

In spite of its later degeneration at the hands of a Stalinist bureaucracy that usurped political power beginning in 1924, the Russian Revolution showed that it was possible for the working class to overthrow capitalism, ushering in an unprecedented development of the productive forces. The fundamental lesson of the Russian Revolution is that to emancipate humanity the working class needs a revolutionary communist vanguard to lead it, at the head of all the oppressed, in the overthrow of this rotting capitalist system. That's why we say we are the party of the Russian Revolution. Notwithstanding the myth of the so-called “death of communism,” a myth of which the NPA is itself a by-product, the building of such a Bolshevik party is the task facing revolutionaries today.

NPA: Suckling at the Teat of the Capitalist State

To give guarantees to the most rabid anti-communists, the Pabloites promised they would entirely dissolve the LCR and even prohibit anyone in the NPA from forming a faction affiliated to their fake “international,” the so-called United Secretariat of the Fourth International (USec). We in the LTF were wondering how they would manage to keep drawing the hefty subsidies they receive from the capitalist state, which are calculated largely on the basis of their electoral performance in the last parliamentary elections. In the 2007 elections they were still running as the LCR and their vote totals entitled them to an annual check from the Minister of

continued on page 8