

The

Special Supplement

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Internationalist



Why We Fight for **Workers Strikes** **Against the War** (and the Opportunists Don't)



**Defeat U.S. Imperialist War
and the Bosses' War "At Home"!**

**Break with the Democrats –
For a Class-Struggle Workers Party!**

An Internationalist Group Pamphlet

October 2007

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Front page: IG contingent in New York antiwar march, 18 March 2006.

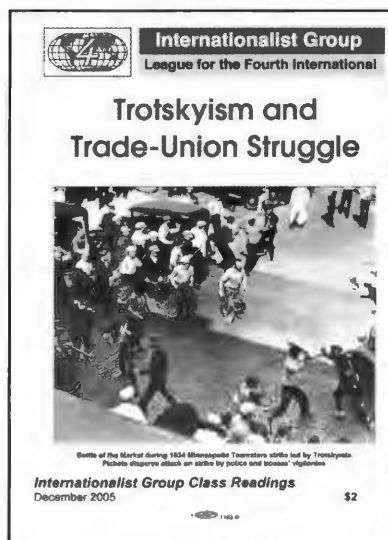
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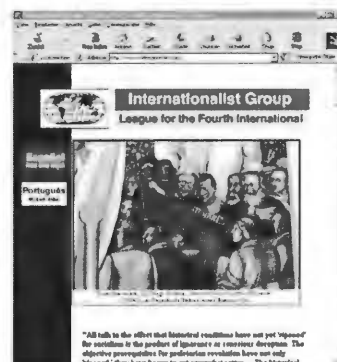


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The Internationalist

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Special Supplement

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October 2007

Why We Fight for Workers Strikes Against the War (and the Opportunists Don't)

**Break with the Democrats –
For a Class-Struggle Workers Party!**

The U.S.' imperialist war against, and colonial occupation of, Iraq and Afghanistan is at a dead end. Despite the vaunted "surge" of U.S. forces in Iraq last spring, bringing troop levels to the highest since the 2003 invasion, attacks by insurgents have not diminished one bit, while the number of Iraqi civilian casualties has increased significantly. In Afghanistan, Taliban forces control large areas in the south. "Public opinion" in the U.S., that measure of the impact of the bourgeois media, has long since turned decisively against the war. In the mid-term elections last November, the Democrats won control of both houses of Congress mainly due to the perception that they would "do something" to end the war. Prominent Republican Senators have deserted President George Bush. Staff officers at the Combined Arms Center debate where the U.S. went wrong on Iraq; colonels accuse their superiors of a "failure of generalship" for not standing up to Bush and his war secretary Donald Rumsfeld. Bourgeois defeatism is rampant, and yet ... the war keeps going on. No end in sight. No "light at the end of the tunnel." No exit.

Early this year, we published a tabloid special issue of *The Internationalist* (27 January) headlined: "Don't Beg Congress! Defeat U.S. War on Iraq!" and calling "For Workers Strikes Against the War!" Yet the entire activity of the antiwar movement has consisted precisely of seeking to pressure the Democratic Party into opposing the war on Iraq. The slogans "Bring the (or "Our") Troops Home," and "Money for Jobs (Books, Health Care, etc.) Not War," are geared to appeal to Congress to oppose the war on budgetary or other grounds acceptable to capitalist politicians. Forget it. The Democrats voted for war powers resolutions on Afghanistan and Iraq, and have voted over and over for the military budget, sometimes adding billions to the request from the Republican administration. Leading Democratic candidates Hillary Clinton, Barack Obama and John Edwards all have promised to keep U.S. troops in Iraq or in the region to defend "U.S. interests." But we seek to *defeat the imperialist war* and the war



Infophoto

Italian trade unionists of the CGIL federation and antiwar activists stop NATO war train outside Vicenza, in February 2002.

on working people, immigrants, minorities and civil liberties "at home" *through militant workers action.*

Last month, the administration issued its interim "national assessment" of the situation in Iraq. Having previously replaced its proclamation of "victory" and "mission accomplished" with a "way forward," the White House now added the sucker bait of "gradual reductions" in U.S. forces starting next spring. In fact, independently of domestic opposition to the war, the Pentagon will have to start cutting back units on the battlefield. But at the same time, when Bush's Iraq commander General David Petraeus testified before Congress, Democratic House Speaker Nancy Pelosi summed up his testimony saying it sounded like "a 10-year, at least, commitment to an open-ended presence and war" (*New York Times*, 12 September). A couple of days later in a televised speech to the nation, Bush announced that "success will require U.S. political, economic, and security engagement that extends beyond my presidency," and that Iraq must have "an enduring relationship with America." Actually, Bush has said several times that he wants a "Korea model," in other words a U.S. presence in Iraq lasting at least half a century.

Various Democratic Party politicians, starry-eyed liberals and even gullible leftists have argued that given the level of opposition to the Iraq war at all levels of American society, the U.S. will eventually have to get out. But Bush, the “chicken hawk” who hid out in the Air National Guard to avoid duty in Vietnam, now denounces the U.S. withdrawal from Indochina. This government, which took power in what amounted to a judicial coup d’état, is not about to walk away from its Iraq “debacle.” Instead, Bush wants to escalate, by gearing up for war on Iran. As demented as this may be, with U.S. forces already stretched to the breaking point, military casualties in many units approaching levels where they become inoperable, top Pentagon officials report that they have been ordered to prepare battle plans for bombing hundreds of Iranian sites, including with “tactical” nuclear weapons.

Bush just spelled out what this means by threatening a nuclear “World War III” against Iran. Even though the former top U.S. Near East commander General John Abizaid stated recently that “there are ways to live with a nuclear Iran,” Bush has declared that he would never “tolerate” this. Those who are “interested in avoiding World War III,” he said at a news conference, had better join in “preventing them [the Iranians] from having the knowledge necessary to make a nuclear weapon” (*New York Times*, 18 October). Why? Because if Tehran does develop atomic weapons it would at least cause the U.S. to hesitate before attacking it, as North Korea has shown. If the U.S. does attack Iran, in addition to throwing the entire Near East into turmoil it would put Washington on a collision course with Russia. While White House officials brandish the argument that a nuclear-armed Iran might attack Israel, the well-known fact is that Israel has hundreds of nuclear weapons and is ready to use them, while no one claims that Iran has or is close to achieving nuclear weapons capability.

Even under the bogus Non-Proliferation Treaty, Iran has the perfect right to develop nuclear power (as it says it is doing). And in any case, we defend Iran and its right to nuclear or any other kind of weapons to defend itself against the nuclear-armed imperialists in partnership with the Zionist madmen. From the outset, even before the Iraq invasion, we have warned that the U.S. war pointed to a world conflagration: “Pentagon’s ‘First Strike’ Strategy: Careening Toward World War III” we wrote in a headline in *The Internationalist* No. 14 (September-October 2002). The real aim of U.S. imperialism was not simply to topple Saddam Hussein, under whatever pretext, but to cement U.S. hegemony as the global “superpower.” Washington wants the oil not for domestic consumption (the U.S. imports very little from the Near East), but in order to control oil supplies to its imperialist rivals in Europe and Japan. Thus the Near East wars, from Afghanistan and Iraq to Israel/Palestine, could serve as a precursor to World War III, as the 1908-13 Balkan Wars heralded the first imperialist world war and the wars in Spain and Ethiopia led to World War II.

The Internationalist Group and League for the Fourth International call not just for U.S. withdrawal, which would just lead to the next war as it has repeatedly over the last century, but to drive the imperialist occupiers out of Iraq and Afghanistan and to defeat U.S. imperialism’s wars through international socialist revolution. No “antiwar movement” ever stopped an imperialist war,

as we have insisted. The only successful struggle against imperialist war was by the Bolsheviks in the 1917 October Revolution, which pulled Russia out of World War I. Class-conscious workers must stand with the victims of imperialist attack, defending Iraq and Afghanistan during the invasions and taking the side of those resisting the colonial occupation forces, even as we politically oppose all the Islamic fundamentalist and Arab or Iraqi bourgeois nationalists. We seek to mobilize the power of the workers movement in sharp class struggle, including *workers strikes against the war* and “hot cargoing” war material. And we call to break with the Democratic Party of war and racism, to build a revolutionary workers party.

Antiwar Movement Flounders

Leading up to the Iraq war, millions marched in Western capitals and other large cities to protest the impending invasion. In New York City, half a million people were in the streets on 15 February 2003. Even a year later, hundreds of thousands marched against the war. But today, after hundreds of thousands of Iraqis have been killed (and several thousand U.S. soldiers are dead and many more gravely injured), the antiwar movement is at loose ends. The September 2007 marches in Washington, D.C. were far smaller than previous peace parades, and the upcoming regional actions come after Congress has already voted the latest “emergency” war budget. Why? An obvious reason is that the various peace “coalitions” are each doing their own thing, so that this fall there have been national marches on September 15 and 29, and others scheduled for October 27. But more basically, the competing coalitions are based on appealing to ruling-class politicians, the Democratic Party in particular, and the fact that after all is said and done the Democrats continue to back the war has produced widespread demoralization among antiwar demonstrators.

For the past five years, various opportunist socialist groups have busily built and rebuilt the “anti-war movement,” consisting of occasional peace marches to demand that the imperialist government end the war. The reformist organizations that lead the major peace groups are pretending that it’s ever onward and upward. The Workers World Party (WWP), which directs the Troops Out Now Coalition (TONC), effused over the latest, very modestly sized and very ordinary peace parades, as “Anti-War Marches of a New Type” (*Workers World*, 11 October). Their former comrades in the Party for Socialism and Liberation (PSL), who now lead International ANSWER, exult: “we are waking to a new morning of action, resistance and militant struggle.... Sept. 15 in Washington, D.C. will be remembered as historically relevant if it emerges as a step toward an even greater development” (*Liberation*, 11 October).

While WWP and PSL are heirs of the Stalinoid current led by the late Sam Marcy and occasionally put on radical airs (while parading Democratic speakers on their platforms), the arch-reformist Internationalist Socialist Organization (ISO) is an utterly social-democratic outfit. Yet the ISO, which leads the Campus Antiwar Network (CAN), has preferred to tail along after the larger coalitions. Lately, it has adopted a critical posture, asking: “Why is the antiwar movement so weak?” (*Socialist Worker*, 12 October). After blaming “the general political period,” it complains of ANSWER’s “top-down methods” and avers that the

United for Peace and Justice (UFPJ) “makes the movement hostage to the politicians.” Surprise, surprise. The UFPJ, a condominium of the Committees of Correspondence for Socialism (CoC) and the Communist Party USA (CPUSA), from which the CoC split in the mid-1980s, are past masters at tying the working class and whatever movement they are currently building to the Democratic Party. It’s called the popular front.

The ISO goes so far as to say that “‘Out now’ is an appropriate slogan for an antiwar protest, but this message can easily become diluted in the context of today’s do-nothing ‘antiwar’ Democrats” (*Socialist Worker*, 19 October). Yet the ISO has repeatedly raised the call for “Out now” in antiwar marches and meetings with Democratic Party politicians. Moreover, at recent demonstrations ISO activists chanted, “Stop the funding, stop the war, What the hell is Congress for?” Internationalist Group marchers responded that Congress was for imperialist war!

The ISO says that “the key” to overcoming the “weakness” of the antiwar movement is “building a strong grassroots movement, independent of both the Democrats and Republicans, with the power to force the politicians of both parties to abandon their support for the war.” So while supposedly remaining “independent” of the leading capitalist parties (and running the capitalist red-white-and-blue Green candidate Ralph Nader for president), its whole aim is to build a “grassroots movement” that could somehow convince the capitalist politicians to oppose their imperialist war! This is pure reformist illusion. The U.S. bourgeoisie was *driven out of Vietnam* by the Vietnamese and it will not abandon the strategic Near East unless forced to do so by catastrophic losses on the battlefield and the mobilization of the power of the working class internationally.

The fact is that all of these groups, despite claiming the legacy of the Marxism, have abandoned the core of its revolutionary logic. Imperialist war is not the policy of one administration or party that can be changed by pressure campaigns, but the bloody expression of the rivalries among the “great powers” to decide who shall lord it over the colonial and semi-colonial slaves. In this imperialist war, which is a war to enslave Iraq and Afghanistan and maintain U.S. imperialism’s domination of the planet, the question for the workers is not how to end the war and achieve “peace” between Washington and whatever oppressed nation it is attacking, but how to *defeat* the imperialist warmongers once and for all through a socialist revolution.

The Struggle for Workers Strikes Against the War

Since well before the launching of the Iraq invasion, the Internationalist Group and League for the Fourth International



German workers strike against imperialist world war, January 1918.

have been calling for working-class action against the war. We called for this in 1998 and 1999 when Democrat Bill Clinton bombed Iraq and attacked Yugoslavia (see page 14), and again in 2001 when Bush invaded Afghanistan. In the run-up to the Iraq war, we agitated for workers to refuse to handle military goods, as well as for strike action against the impending war. We raised these demands with West Coast longshore workers in the United States when they were locked out by the employers (see page 24). In February 2003, the LFI organized a worker/immigrant demonstration on the docks in Rotterdam, the Netherlands (see page 37). We also highlighted in our press when train drivers in Scotland refused to move a munitions train bound for the Persian Gulf in January 2003, and when Italian railroad workers joined with peace demonstrators trying to block the rails as NATO jeeps and tanks were being transported to the ports to be shipped to Kuwait (see page 6).

These incidents showed that workers action against imperialist war is possible. But they are a small example of what has occurred in the past. During World War I, German workers repeatedly engaged in strike action against the imperialist slaughter. When revolutionary socialist (and later Communist) leader Karl Liebknecht was being tried (and was then sent to prison) for daring to vote against the war budget and agitate against the war, in June 1916 some 55,000 tool and die makers in the big Berlin factories suddenly shut down their machines. The news spread through the plants like wildfire, “The machine workers are striking for Liebknecht.” And this was a first: the German working class had never engaged in a political mass strike before. The majority Social Democrats (SPD) supported the war and did everything possible to sabotage such working-class protest action. But militant union activists carefully prepared the strikes in the underground, and later formed the Revolutionary Shop Stewards (Revolutionäre Obleute) which organized the later strike actions.

A second wave of strikes occurred in April 1917, under the influence of the Russian February Revolution and touched off by a cut in bread rations. In Leipzig, more than 10,000 workers

British Antiwar Train Drivers Stop Arms

—reprinted from *The Internationalist* No. 16, April-May 2003

The English Welsh and Scottish (EWS) railway tried to cover it up, and blame it on the weather. But on January 8 [2003] two drivers from the Motherwell train depot refused to move a freight train carrying munitions from Glasgow to the NATO Glen Douglas base on Scotland's west coast. The drivers said that believed the ammunition was destined for the British expeditionary forces in the Gulf, and as they opposed war on Iraq they would not move it.

EWS management attempted to persuade the drivers, but to no avail. The next day, another attempt to take a train of military supplies to the NATO base failed, as drivers refused to move it. Efforts to get the ASLEF railway union to ask the drivers to relent went nowhere, as the union has been actively campaigning against the war. Several Labour MPs put forward a motion in parliament hailing the drivers' action. Eventually, the Ministry of Defense (MoD) moved the ammunition by road.

While this action is modest, even the bourgeois *Guardian* (9 January) recalled the London dock workers who in 1920 refused to load arms destined for opponents of the Bolsheviks onto the *Jolly George*, as well as a dockers' boycott of arms to Chile after the bloody 1973 Pinochet coup. The unions should not only defend these courageous workers against company reprisals, but also follow their example. Indeed, workers around the world should follow their lead!

Britain is decidedly a weak line in the imperialists' anti-Iraq alliance. At a recent "Stop the War Coalition" conference, a former officer in a tank regiment even evoked the 1919 mutiny of British troops in Archangel, who had been sent to Russia against the Soviets. But this popular-front coalition is dominated by the politics of perennial social-democratic "pacifist" Tony Benn and his line of pressuring Blair to pressure Bush.

The British train drivers' action underscores that it is urgent and possible to mobilize international working-class power against the imperialists.

struck and raised a series of political demands, including for a peace without annexations, the abolition of wartime censorship, lifting of the state of siege, an end to labor conscription, freeing political prisoners, and universal suffrage (the right to vote) at all levels. In Berlin, striking workers called for German workers to take up the example of their Russian comrades. By now an Independent Social-Democratic Party (USPD) had split from the pro-war SPD and adopted a pacifist program. But while many in the Independent ranks looked to Russia, the USPD leaders feared a revolution. They and the metal workers union leaders called off the strikes after one day. Even so, more than 50,000 workers continued the strike and denounced their leaders' betrayal.

A third wave of strikes took place in January 1918, this time influenced by the victorious Bolsheviks' offer to negotiate peace at Brest-Litovsk. This time the numbers had grown enormously, with 400,000 striking in Berlin on the first day, and then swelling to half a million. There was civil war in the air. A leader of the Spartakusbund and future German Communist Leo Jogiches commented, "Like a revolutionary breeze, a certain readiness, but no one knew what to do." The German Spartakists "emphasized that the leadership in the struggles should be placed in the hands of elected workers' councils, and that the revolutionaries should win over the soldiers" (Pierre Broué, *The German Revolution, 1917-1923* [Brill, 2005]). Once again, the SPD and USPD leaders managed to undercut the strikes. Some 50,000 workers were drafted into the military as punishment. Nevertheless, within a few months, sailors rose up in the Baltic port of Kiel and the German Revolution of November 1918 began. Yet it ended in a defeat with the bloody repression of the Spartakist uprising of January 1919, and the assassination of Communist leaders Liebknecht, Luxemburg and Jogiches on the orders of the SPD government.

The German workers' strikes prepared the way for revolution and imperial Germany's capitulation in the war. Yet the recounting of this history underscores that by themselves, strikes are not enough. The lack of a seasoned revolutionary

leadership meant that at every turn the reformist SPD and centrist USPD misleaders were able to divert the struggle. Today, the reformist leaders of the class-collaborationist antiwar coalitions (WWP, PSL, ISO, CoC, CPUSA) may give lip service to labor as one more "constituency" as build their "popular front" with the bourgeois "dove" politicians. Others, centrists, such as the Spartacist League once called for workers strikes against the war and "hot cargoing" military cargo, but then dropped these demands like hot potatoes as soon as they were posed concretely over Iraq (see pages 19 and 31). They claim that such actions are either (a) nothing but a big political demonstration, or (b) tantamount to revolution, and in any case such calls don't find "resonance" in the working class. Maybe they need a resonator. German workers had no tradition of mass political strikes either, until they held the first walkout.

As we struggle for workers strikes against the war in the U.S., we must wage a political battle to break from the Democratic Party (and all capitalist parties) and undertake the forging of a class-struggle workers party. Such a party must be built by combating the illusions spread by the popular-front antiwar movement in the possibility of pressuring the Democrats to end the war. Those who seek to build a revolutionary workers party must also confront head-on the chauvinist calls to "support our troops," and call openly for the *defeat* of "our own" imperialist rulers. Such a party must be founded on an internationalist program defending the Afghan and Iraqi peoples under the guns of U.S. imperialism, as well as the Palestinians rising up against Israeli Zionist colonial rule.

Today there is growing frustration among those who would put an end to the seemingly never-ending slaughter in Iraq and Afghanistan. Their frustration is a direct result of the subordination of the "antiwar movement" to the Democrats and the realization that they, like the Republicans, are a war party. This realization can lead to demoralization, as it has in recent months, or it can lead to radicalization. The task of building revolutionary leadership on a *class* program is key. ■

For Workers Strikes Against the War!

Oakland Dock Workers Honor Picket, Shut Down War Cargo Shipper

—reprinted from *The Internationalist* No. 26 (July 2007)

On May 19 in Oakland, California dock workers of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) Local 10 refused to cross picket lines outside one of the most notorious war cargo shipping firms, Stevedoring Services of America, leaving three ships idle for consecutive shifts. The picket was also called against American President Lines, however no APL ships docked that day.

When scores of picketers blocked the gates at the SSA terminal beginning at 7 a.m., the company eventually gave up and called off the shift. In the evening, an arbitrator ruled that this was not a bona fide “health and safety issue” and ordered the workers to go to work. However, the dock workers collectively refused. A black longshoreman insisted that there was indeed a safety issue because of the heavy police presence, and everyone there remembered how on 7 April 2003, shortly after the U.S. invasion of Iraq began, police shot pointblank at protesters and longshoremen at the same docks, injuring six ILWU members.

The May 19 picket line was called by a “popular front” coalition of antiwar groups, the Port Action Committee, rather than a labor group. PAC includes the Oakland Green Party and the pro-Democratic Party United for Peace and Justice (UFPJ). In addition, Oakland’s Democratic mayor Ron Dellums sent a sympathetic letter to the PAC. But the Oakland Education Association, which is part of the Action Committee, declared it was holding an official union picket (not a bogus “informational picket line”). Union picket signs declared “OEA Says Honor the Picket Lines.” And ILWU longshoremen did.

The ILWU has officially opposed the war and occupation of Iraq from the outset, as have most Bay Area labor bodies. But paper resolutions have not translated into union *action*. In May 2006, Local 10 passed a resolution, “Strike Against the War, No Peace, No Work,” calling on unions and working people nationally to “mobilize for a strike action” of 24 hours “to demand an immediate end to the war and occupation in Iraq and Afghanistan and the withdrawal of U.S. troops from the Middle East.” But the resolution was buried in committee at the union’s annual convention.

The dock workers’ action shows the depth of anger against the war in the U.S. working class and the *real possibility of labor action against the war*. Longshoremen emphasized the union’s opposition to the war. Local 10 executive board mem-



Jeff Paterson/Courage to Resist

Dock workers at Port of Oakland honored antiwar picket line, refusing arbitrator’s order work ships during two shifts.

ber Jack Heyman was quoted on Oakland’s KTVU (Channel 2) news saying, “I think the message is loud and clear... If longshoremen at the Port of Oakland can honor picket lines against the war in Iraq, then they can do that in other ports. And this will be the beginning of the end of the war.” At the onset of the U.S.-led imperialist invasion of Iraq, British railway engineers refused to move weapons trains, and Italian rail unions joined with antiwar protesters in seeking to stop shipments of military equipment to Iraq. Labor action *in the U.S.* would send shock waves around the world.

Since before the war began, the Internationalist Group has uniquely called for *workers strikes against the war* and for transportation unions to “*hot cargo*” (refuse to handle *war cargo*). A host of opportunist socialist groups dismissed this call as hopelessly utopian “pie in the sky.” The Spartacist League, which regularly called for such workers action during prior wars, suddenly dropped these slogans on the eve of the U.S. invasion of Iraq. At the time of Democrat Clinton’s bombing of Iraq in 1998, the SL dismissed the IG’s call for hot cargoing, claiming the demand had no “resonance” with workers today. Yet on May 19, West Coast some 200 union dock workers were respecting antiwar picket lines and shutting down war shippers.



Pickers meet outside gates of Stevedoring Services of America (left), a notorious war cargo shipper, on May 19. ILWU longshore workers refused to cross picket line, and three ships sat idle throughout the day. Internationalist Group has called since beginning of the war to “hot cargo” war materiel and for workers strikes against the war. This could be first step toward mobilizing labor’s power to defeat imperialist war.

This can be an important first step toward the mobilization of workers power to shut down the war machine, but that requires a sharp struggle against the *bourgeois* politics of the antiwar groups and union officialdom. The OEA calls for money for schools not for war, as if it were a matter of budget priorities, and the PAC poster made a social-patriotic pitch to “Bring the Troops Home Now, and give them the care they need.” Such “peace is patriotic” rhetoric is a staple of the UPFJ, but all the antiwar coalitions make similar appeals to garner support from Democratic Party liberals. Revolutionaries and class-conscious workers, in contrast, emphasize that this *imperialist war* must be opposed by *class war*.

The Internationalist Group, section of the League for the Fourth International, struggles to *defeat* the imperialist war abroad and the war on working people and minorities “at home.” Strike action by the unions against the war will mean a direct confrontation with the government and its strikebreaking Taft-Hartley Act. This slave labor law was pushed through Congress by the Democrats at the height of the Cold War. In 2002, it was used against the ILWU on the basis that any strike would harm the “war effort.” The ILWU tops buckled before the government’s threats. Yet in the 1978-79 coal strike, militant miners ripped up Taft-Hartley injunctions. Thus the call for workers strikes and labor boycotts must be part of a fight to oust the pro-capitalist union bureaucrats, break with the Democrats and build a revolutionary workers party. ■

Following the May 19 picket of war cargo shippers in the Port of Oakland, ILWU Local 10 passed a motion at its June meeting to call a conference on workers action against the war. Numerous national, state and local union bodies have issued resolutions against the war in Iraq. But what is urgently needed is to turn opposition to the war into internationalist, class-struggle action.

SL on Oakland Port Picket

Musings of Some Thoroughly Modern Labor Corporals... of the Rear Echelon

The 8 June 2007 issue of *Workers Vanguard*, newspaper of the Spartacist League, has a schizophrenic back-page article on the May 19 antiwar picket at the Port of Oakland in the San Francisco Bay Area. After noting that longshore workers honored the picket line, the rest of the article dumps cold water on the action: “it’s not clear that any war materiel was stopped that day,” ILWU members handle cargo at the Concord Naval Weapons Station, and it didn’t measure up to the Port Chicago mutiny or the Seattle general strike of 1919.

WV finally admits that longshoremen could “inflict a direct setback to the imperialist war machine through political strikes and the hot-carguing of military goods.” Yet nowhere does it say that this action could be a step in that direction, and nowhere does the SL *advocate* such class-struggle action.

For decades, when it stood on the program of revolutionary Trotskyism, the SL and *WV* regularly called for labor strikes against the war and “hot-carguing” war materiel. But in late 2002, on the eve of the Iraq invasion, the now-centrist SL dropped this call, under the direct pressure of the bourgeoisie in the form of a Taft-Hartley injunction. Nor do they call any longer for the defeat of “their own” imperialist bourgeoisie.

The port workers are indeed held back from using their power by the labor lieutenants of the capitalist class, who chain them to the bourgeois parties. But the sellout bureaucrats are also aided by opportunist labor corporals who talk the talk of class struggle but don’t walk the walk.

Militant Protest Against Racist Cop Attack on Bay Area Longshore Workers

OCTOBER 10—On October 4, upwards of 250 demonstrators rallied outside the Yolo County Courthouse in Woodland, California to protest the vicious police assault last August on two black dock workers from San Francisco who were working in the port of Sacramento. Two busloads of workers came from Bay Area Local 10 of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU), while others traveled from every ILWU local in northern California and Portland, Oregon. Ken Riley of the East Coast International Longshoremen's Association (ILA) traveled all the way from Charleston, South Carolina to join the protest. They were joined by local community activists denouncing the brutal actions of the West Sacramento police they face day in and day out.

Local media pdescribed the energetic crowd as “angry” and “defiant.” The call “You ready to fight?” was met with a loud response, “Damn right!” Protesters demanded that all charges against union brothers Aaron Harrison and Jason Ruffin be dropped. Speakers described how port security singled out the two black workers who were working at the Stevedoring Services of America facility. The rent-a-cop guards demanded to search their car for no apparent reason, then called the police, who dragged the workers from their car, assaulted and handcuffed them, spraying one in the face with pepper spray. Former Local 10 president Trent Willis declared: “They roughed them up and maced them.... You have a clear case of police brutality and racial profiling” (“ILWU Cries Foul,” *Woodland Daily Democrat*, 5 October).

While the turnout was large and energetic, the rally was strictly a rank-and-file affair notable for the absence of ILWU officialdom. In fact, the ILWU International tops sought to undercut the mobilization, while trying to foist a treacherous “deal” on the two Local 10 members even though they are innocent of all charges. Riley of the ILA asked pointedly from the microphone, “Where is the International?” The union tops’ non-participation is no accident but reflects the role of the labor bureaucracy as flunkys of the bosses inside the workers movement, constantly seeking to hold back and even sabotage workers’ struggles, particularly when they affect vital interests of capital. And the August incident at the port of Sacramento is only the tip of the iceberg of mounting repression and militarization of the docks.



Union protesters outside courthouse near Sacramento, October 4. “You ready to fight?” “Damn right!” Labor must take lead in defending all the oppressed.

Bay Area port workers are fighting mad over the recent series of attacks and dangerous work conditions on the waterfront. In late September, a longshoreman, Reginald Ross, was killed after being struck by a container while working a ship at the SSA terminal in Oakland. (SSA is a notoriously anti-union outfit, a major shipper of military cargo to the Persian Gulf, and also runs Iraq’s only seaport for the U.S. occupation authorities.) Local 10 workers immediately walked off the job and shut down the port for 36 hours, despite howls from the employers’ Pacific Maritime Association (PMA). On top of this, Homeland Security is gearing up to introduce the Transport Worker Identification Card (TWIC), a major attack on port workers. Using the “war on terror” as a smokescreen, the TWIC will be used to “weed out” longshoremen the PMA or government consider “undesirable” or a “risk,” as well as undermining the union hiring hall.

Rev. Ashiye Odeye spoke for local residents fed up over the police department arrogantly trampling on their rights as it sought an “anti-gang” injunction. “This is just more fodder against the West Sac PD,” said Odeye, director of the Sacramento-based civil rights group, Justice Reform Coalition. “This just shows what they’ve been doing to the citizens of West Sacramento. But now they have made the mistake of doing this to members of a union.” While the black and Latino populace take the brunt of the police attacks, a white longshoreman described how he was rousted out of his van by the local cops. If the ILWU brings its power to bear, it can strike a blow against the rampant police brutality and racial “profiling.”

The next court date is set for October 22, two days after a Labor Conference to Stop the War, called by ILWU Locals 10 and 34. Conference organizers noted how S.F. dock workers have in the past refused to load military cargo for rightist dictatorships in Chile and El Salvador, refused to unload cargo from apartheid South Africa, honored “illegal” picket lines supporting dock workers’ struggles in Liverpool, England and in Australia, while the ILWU shut down all West Coast ports demanding freedom for Mumia Abu-Jamal, the former black Panther and renowned radical journalist held for the last quarter century on Pennsylvania’s death row.

By now it should be clear to all that the war and colonial occupation of Iraq and Afghanistan is reflected in the war on immigrants, minorities and labor here. As ICE immigration cops escalate their raids, they have singled out union activists to be picked up and deported. In 2002 the government threatened union officials with military occupation of the West Coast ports, then slapped a Taft-Hartley injunction on the Bay Area docks, saying any work stoppage was a threat to the “war effort.”

Beaten on the Docks

By Mumia Abu-Jamal

10 October 2007

It was a sunny day, right after lunch, when all hell broke loose for two longshoremen, sitting in their car, about to return to work.

Jason Ruffin and Aaron Harrison were approached by private security guards who demanded to search their vehicle.

The men asked to see the maritime security (or MARSEC) regulations, and one of them phoned the local business agent to try to clear up the matter.

Rebuffed at their search attempt, and angry that the two men didn’t immediately acquiesce in this illegal and unwarranted search, the security guards called the West Sacramento cops.

While on the phone, both men were attacked, assaulted, dragged from the car, maced and jailed by the cops, without provocation, and charged with trespassing.

Trespassing — at the job! Previously, the guys showed their Port ID, and the driver showed his driver’s license!

They were also charged with resisting arrest!

If these were just average folks, perhaps it never would’ve made the news; but they were union members of the ILWU, the historically militant International Longshore and Warehouse Union, Local 10.

Local 10 didn’t take this lying down. Along with Local 34, the ILWU has called for union protests against this naked, unprovoked brutality.

The union’s executive committee called for a rally to support their union brothers, Harrison and Ruffin, and demanded that all charges be dropped against them. Before the first court hearing the ridiculous charge of trespassing was dropped. The committee also demanded the release of the port security videotape of the assaults.

The union’s business agent, Melvin MacKay was on the phone with Ruffin when this ugly event occurred.

The ILWU looks at this assault on two Black union mem-

bers by white security guards and cops, for what it is: racial profiling — and parking — *not even driving!* — while Black.

The ILWU says, “This is our Jena.”

But they also see it in larger terms, as part and parcel of the wave of repression sweeping the nation since the inception of the so-called ‘War on Terror.’

And the ILWU has urged its members, and other unions, to recognize and utilize their labor power to change the way things are going. In a statement on the Web, they’ve called for a Labor Conference to End the War, finding inspiration from history. The unions wrote:

“As historian Isaac Deutscher said during the Vietnam War, a single strike would be more effective than all the peace marches. French dockworkers did strike in the port of Marseilles, and helped bring an end to the war in Vietnam. To put a stop to this bloody colonial occupation, labor must use its power.”

“The International Longshore and Warehouse Union has opposed the war on Iraq since the beginning. In the Bay Area, ILWU Local 10 has repeatedly warned that the so-called “war on terror” is really a war on working people and democratic right. Around the country hundreds of unions and labor councils have passed motions condemning the war, but that has not stopped the war. We need to use labor’s muscle to stop the war by mobilizing union power in the streets, at the plant gates and on the docks to force the immediate and total withdrawal of all U.S. troops from Afghanistan and Iraq.” (From: “A Call to Action; Labor Conference to Stop the War!”10/3/07)

On Oct. 20, 2007, at 9 a.m., the ILWU is hosting a “Labor Conference to Stop the War”, at Local 10’s office, 400 North Point St., San Francisco, CA.

For the ILWU, the slogan, “an injury to one, is an injury to all” ain’t just rap.

Port Shutdown Over Dock Worker Killed in Oakland, Union Mobilization Over “Anti-Terror” Security Assault

ILWU Dock Workers Under Attack



ILWU dock workers in San Francisco antiwar march, March 2004. It's not just “Bush's war” but bipartisan imperialist war.

Dump the TWIC Card – Strike Against the War!

SEPTEMBER 28 – Twice in the space of a month, longshore workers in California have been victimized amid the ruling class hysteria over port “security threats” while actual safety conditions on the docks deteriorate. First, on August 23, police in West Sacramento beat up, maced and arrested two longshoremen from the SF Bay Area Local 10 as they were returning to work at the port of Sacramento. Local 10 has voted to call a mass rally to defend the union brothers at the court house when their case comes up on October 4. Port workers are also outraged over the Transport Worker Identification Cards (TWIC) containing “biometric” data, police records and who-knows-what other info that will be used to weed out “undesirable” workers. This is a centerpiece of the 2002 Maritime Transportation Security Act. Shutting down Bay Area docks would be a powerful protest against the government’s “war on terror” whose real aim is to terrorize workers and the population in general.

Then on September 24, a worker in the port of Oakland, Reginald Ross, 39, was killed after being struck by a container. Outraged fellow workers immediately shut down the entire port, bringing one of the U.S.’ busiest harbors to a grinding halt. Nothing moved on the docks the next day. The employers’ Pacific Maritime Association (PMA) complained that the work stoppage was “not authorized,” but defiant workers stayed out. Now

the bosses are counseling to await the outcome of an investigation by the U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA). There can be no trust in the bosses’ government any more than in the employers themselves. OSHA is notoriously lax in tolerating dangerous working conditions that have led to an average of over 5,700 workplace deaths every year. The ILWU itself should conduct the investigation and union safety committees must be empowered to shut down any suspect operation in this extremely dangerous occupation.

The September 25 port shutdown and upcoming October 4 rally are a demonstration of the tremendous potential strength of labor, if the workers movement decides to use it. Coming up is an October 20 “Labor Conference to Stop the War” sponsored by Bay Area ILWU locals. This could set the stage for mobilizing union power. Yet leadership of the unions is in the hands of a conservative bureaucracy that blocks such mobilization at every turn. It acts, in the famous phrase of socialist Daniel DeLeon as the “labor lieutenants of the capitalist class.” By rights, the ILWU leadership ought to be at the forefront of the port shutdowns and extend them up and down the West Coast. Instead, the pro-capitalist labor fakers have at best stood on the sidelines and more often sought to undercut class-struggle actions. On May 1, when Local 10 voted to stop work in solidarity with immigrant

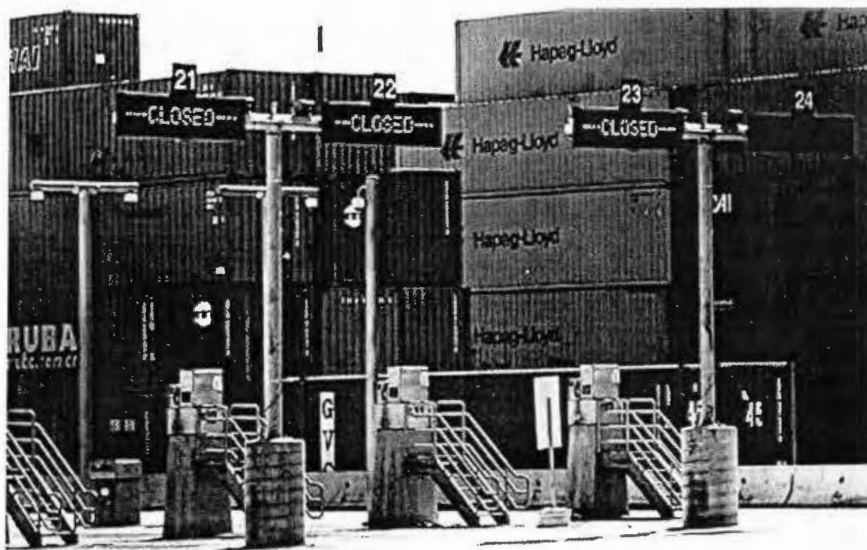
rights protests, ILWU International and Local officers, enforcing the decision of the PMA's hand-picked arbitrator, ordered that there be no walkouts or demonstration. But now anger is building and the question of union action against war and repression is coming to a head.

Racial Profiling, Union-Busting and the "War on Terror"

The August 23 attack on the two Bay Area longshoremen in Sacramento was a clear case of racist repression. It was no accident that the two, Aaron Harrison and Jason Ruffin, are black, while the police in West Sacramento (where less than 3 percent of the population is African American) have been accused of "racial profiling" of minorities, particularly in enforcing a local "anti-gang" ordinance. Harrison and Ruffin were returning from lunch when security guards aggressively demanded to search their car. Since the two workers had already shown a driver's license and PMA ID, they asked what was the maritime security regulation justifying a search. The enraged guards called the cops, who arrived and assaulted the two as they were talking on the phone with the ILWU business agent. The workers were dragged from the car, one sprayed with mace, and then jailed on the absurd charge of "trespassing"!

The attack on the union brothers comes in the context of mounting police attacks on dock workers in the Bay Area, and a "security" frenzy on the docks nationwide. In October 2002, the government imposed a Taft-Hartley injunction on West Coast docks so that war cargo could flow to the Persian Gulf in the build-up for war. When an antiwar protest was called at the port of Oakland on 7 April 2003, barely two weeks after the start of the invasion of Iraq, cops on orders from Democratic mayor (now California attorney general) Jerry Brown launched a brutal assault, firing rubber bullets and wooden dowels, tossing concussion grenades and "sting balls" into the crowd, injuring six longshoremen who were treated by paramedics, and arresting 25 people. The victims of this vicious attack subsequently sued the city of Oakland and won. More recently, last May ILWU longshoremen refused to cross a picket line of the Oakland Education Association and the antiwar Port Action Committee outside the terminal of Stevedoring Services of America (SSA). Trying to undercut the protest, police set up "checkpoints" a mile away from the location.

The role of SSA in these events is also noteworthy. This prime shipper of war cargo was one of the two companies picketed in the April 2003 antiwar protest. The workers who were beaten in Sacramento this August were working at an SSA facility. And the longshoreman killed on the job last week was on a ship unloading at the SSA terminal. Stevedoring Services of America (now calling itself SSA Marine) is notorious among unionists as the most anti-labor maritime outfit on the West Coast. It focuses on using technology in order to get rid of workers. The



Laura A. Oda/Oakland Tribune

After dock worker Reginald Ross was crushed to death by a container at SSA terminal in Oakland September 24, longshoremen shut down port for 36 hours. Mobilize labor's power against war and repression!

privately held company has millions of dollars in contracts with the U.S. government. In March 2003 it got a \$14 million USAID contract to manage the Iraqi Port Authority, notably the docks at Umm Qasr, the only port in the country that can handle ocean-going vessels. Working together with Bechtel Corporation, SSA was accused by shippers of "gross profiteering" for the extortionate rates it charged on the basis of its monopoly position. These are certified union-busting war profiteers.

Meanwhile, introduction of the TWIC card has longshore workers up in arms. A rank-and-file newsletter, the *Maritime Worker Monitor* (19 September) comments that it "reminds you of the racist South African government's 'pass cards' forced on workers under apartheid." Do the initials stand for "Transport Workers In Chains"? it asks. The article goes on:

"Why are maritime bosses and their government so hot for TWIC? By invoking 'port security' in the 'war on terror,' the feds want to bypass the union hiring hall. They want to say who can and can't work on the waterfront. Intrusive background checks are made by Bush's Transportation Security Administration (TSA) to see who's been arrested before. You can be deemed a threat to port security and denied access to marine terminals for many different kinds of past arrests and 'offenses' that have nothing to do with terrorism."

The *Monitor* article points out that during the McCarthyite witch hunts of the 1950s, when the government tried to deport ILWU president Harry Bridges and ban militant maritime workers from ships and docks, longshoremen would stop work if a fellow union member was blacklisted by government screening. But now the feds want to "interface with other federal, state and local agencies" so that their card can include all sorts of information. Including credit history, phone calls, Internet sites visited, asks the *Monitor*? "TWIC will carry electronic snoop data of every kind. It's another step towards the national ID card they've been dreaming about for so long."

This will be racial profiling with a vengeance. As a result of

the government strategy of policing black ghettos, Latino barrios and immigrant neighborhoods like they are occupied territories, a far higher portion of minority populations, particularly young black and Latino men, have been hauled in by the cops on one grounds or another. Implementing this will mean a blatant racial purge of port workers, and everyone knows it. This is part and parcel of a large-scale militarization of the docks, whose aim will be to bust the ILWU (and the East Coast International Longshoremen's Association). And leading the charge on "port security" is the Democratic Party, notably California Senator Dianne Feinstein and New York Senator Chuck Schumer. Feinstein also called on Bush to impose an injunction under the slave-labor Taft-Hartley Act in 2002. Democrats and Republicans alike voted for the U.S.A. PATRIOT Act, the Maritime Security Act and every other piece of police-state legislation, as well as authorizing the war on Afghanistan and Iraq.

For Labor Strikes Against the War!

There have been numerous resolutions by local and national unions and labor councils around the country denouncing the war on Iraq, as well as the repressive legislation by which the bosses' government seeks to strike at "the enemy within." ILWU banners in San Francisco antiwar marches proclaim: "Down with the PATRIOT Act! Uphold the Bill of Rights! Defend Immigrant Workers Rights! Bush's 'War on Terror' = War on Workers." Of course, the "war on terror" (like the war on Iraq and Afghanistan) is not just "Bush's war" but a bipartisan imperialist war. As for concrete action by labor, there has been none. Last year ILWU Local 10 passed a resolution calling to "Strike Against the War – No Peace, No Work!" but the resolution was deep-sixed by the union tops. Now ILWU Locals 10 and 34 have issued a "Call to Action" for a Labor Conference to Stop the War to be held at the San Francisco union hall October 20. This could be an important step toward bringing to bear workers' power against the imperialist war, including through strike action. The point is not to have a "talk shop" where left-talking bureaucrats can blow off steam, but to actually prepare the ranks for class-struggle action.

It is urgent that the ILWU and Bay Area labor come out in force on October 4 in defense of longshoremen Harrison and Ruffin against the racist, anti-labor cops assault. As the *Maritime Worker Monitor* noted, adding a touch of irony to the old IWW slogan, "An injury to two is an injury to all!" Particularly if the Bay Area docks are effectively shut down, this could be the first mass labor action against the government's terrorist "war on terror." It is also vital to prepare the way for workers strikes against the war. After the 2006 mid-term elections in which the Democrats gained control of Congress, many liberals and reformist leftists fostered the illusion that this could bring about a change of course in Iraq. Dream on. In a recent debate, Democratic presidential hopefuls kept repeating that "everyone up here wants to take a responsible course to end the war in Iraq," "everyone" agrees that there is "no military solution," "everyone" is for withdrawal of the troops ... in one year, in six months, in three months, even immediately. But meanwhile they vote for every military budget in the name of "supporting the troops."



Transport Workers Solidarity Committee

ILWU picket during 2002 lockout. Government threatened military occupation of the docks, then imposed injunction under slave labor Taft-Hartley law, all in name of the "war effort."

The fact is that the only way to stop the war is for the warmongers to be defeated on the battlefields of the Near East and by mobilizing workers' power here.

The Internationalist Group and League for the Fourth International have uniquely fought for workers strikes against the imperialist war and for transportation unions to "hot-cargo" (refuse to handle) war materiel. In early 2003, there were examples in Britain and Italy of workers action against the impending invasion of Iraq. Scottish engineers refused to move a munitions train and Italian railroad workers joined with antiwar demonstrators in blocking trains carrying jeeps, tanks and other military equipment bound for the Near East. But when we Trotskyists raised the call for working-class action against the war, virtually the entire left dismissed this as hopeless illusions, pie in the sky, cloud cuckooland, etc. For years, leftist-led antiwar demonstrations have sought to pressure the Democratic Party into ending the war. Yet no matter how many demonstrators they attract, no matter how many peace crawls are held begging the Democrats in Congress, bourgeois pressure politics will never stop the war. It is high time for class-conscious worker militants across the country and internationally to take up the struggle for labor strikes against the war, and against the terror war on workers and immigrants "at home." ■

“Resonance” vs. Revolutionary Struggle SL Rejects Calls for Labor Strikes Against Imperialist War Moves

—reprinted from *The Internationalist* No. 5 (April-May 1998)

According to *Workers Vanguard* (No. 687, 27 March 1998), a sign of the Internationalist Group at a Mexico protest calling to “Break with the Popular Front! Forge a Revolutionary Workers Party!” is “deep-sixing opposition to bourgeois-nationalist PRD of Cárdenas.” Of a piece with this sophistry is *WV*’s hue and cry in the same article about the call made by our Brazilian comrades for international workers action against the imperialist war moves against Iraq. A motion by the Class-Struggle Caucus (CLC) was printed together with the 27 February IG statement on the Persian Gulf war moves, “Defend Iraq Against U.S. Imperialist Attack” (see page 16).

According to the ICL, the CLC motion supposedly shows our “touching faith in the ‘anti-imperialist’ credentials of the Latin American bourgeoisies and promotes illusions in a class-collaborationist ‘anti-imperialist united front’ with bourgeois nationalists.” How is that? Because, “while denouncing ‘Yankee imperialists,’” the CLC resolution “call[s] on our class brothers and sisters in Argentina to carry out a labor boycott against the scandalous material support by the Menem government to imperialist aggression.” Evidently, what *WV* finds scandalous is “denouncing ‘Yankee imperialists’” but *not* Menem sending materiel to aid Uncle Sam in killing Iraqis.

As has become its norm of late, *WV* simply lies about the IG’s propaganda. It claims that our call for a revolutionary workers party “on the front page of its statement and in signs carried at protests was conspicuously *not* linked to the need to break workers and minorities from the capitalist Democrats.” Yet Internationalist Group signs conspicuously declared “Democrats/Republicans Murder Iraqis, Starve Welfare Moms & Kids,” and far from showing “appetites to tail after liberal/reformist ‘antiwar movements,’” as *WV* claims, the IG statement repeatedly said that “most of the left is desperately seeking Democratic doves to ally with,” that the protests were organized by “a classical antiwar popular front,” etc.

As for *WV*’s new criteria, counterposing the call for socialist revolution to “phony agitation for trade-union actions—like the boycott of military shipments,” we encourage SLers to take a look at the *Spartacist* July 1971 supplement, “Against NPAC Pop Fronts: For Class Action Against the War,” which (like the Internationalist Group leaflet on the Persian Gulf war moves) called for a revolutionary workers party, for labor strikes against the war, no popular fronts, for defeat of U.S. imperialism. Or try applying the SL’s new checklist to *most* of the leaflets and articles on the Vietnam War included in the first bound volume of *Spartacist*.

We might note that there was nothing in the Spartacist

League statement on Washington’s war moves against Iraq (*WV* No. 685, 27 February 1998) calling for defense of China, North Korea or Cuba — a notable absence in an extensive declaration about U.S. war threats. Nor did SL signs in previous demonstrations from November to late February call for military defense of Iraq. In fact, their signs were indistinguishable from those of the reformist Workers World and SWP. We asked why there was no sign defending Iraq and were told that they didn’t find one around the office. Quite possibly true, we figured.

Unlike the ICL today, our method is not puerile point-scoring and inventing straw men to knock down. We prefer to discuss the real politics of those we polemicize with, and here there is a glaring omission in the SL statement: nowhere does it call for workers action against the imperialist war build-up. Nor is this accidental: challenged by the Internationalist Group, Spartacist spokesman stated that they deliberately did *not* call for workers strikes over the imperialist war measures against Iraq. Even more interesting is the SL’s explanation for why they aren’t raising such demands today.

At a March 28 [1998] Spartacist forum in New York City, an IG member noted that *WV*’s hullabaloo over the word “scandalous” was to divert attention from the next sentence in the CLC statement, in which our Brazilian comrades called “on our brothers and sisters, the workers of the United States, to use their class power against imperialist aggression.” He asked whether ICL supporters in the trade unions had fought for this, and if so how? ICL international secretary Parks responded by saying that the party’s trade-union fractions had been decimated in the late 1970s mass layoffs in auto, steel and other industries. True, but hardly an explanation, since sitting in the audience were supporters of the SL in two different public transport unions.

The second “argument” was to demand where the CLC motion had been *passed*, as if this were the criterion for whether revolutionaries raise particular demands. Another SL spokesman, a member of the central committee and *WV* editorial board, said that if the Persian Gulf War of 1990-91 had gone on a little longer, the call for labor strikes against the war might have had some “resonance” among U.S. workers. Again, this was a rather strange argument, since the Spartacist League did repeatedly call, for example in the SL statement “Defeat U.S. Imperialism! Defend Iraq!” (15 January 1991), “For labor political strikes against the war!”

Outside the New York forum another long-time SL cadre argued that *Spartacist* had not called for labor strikes against the Vietnam War at first, because it would not have had “resonance” then. IG members responded that it would have been perfectly correct to call for labor strikes against the Vietnam War in 1965.

These were clearly not chance remarks, but a political line:

the SL was not calling for labor action against Washington's latest war moves. So when the forum was given again in Boston on March 30, in the discussion period an IG speaker attacked the SL's new policy, saying: "What is this 'resonance'? It is bowing down before the accomplished fact. The ICL [International Communist League] abstains from concrete struggle against U.S. imperialism's social-patriotic trade-union bureaucracy."

A Spartacus Youth Club supporter responded that "you couldn't call for labor strikes against the war" as the U.S. went up to the brink of war with Iraq. Why? Because, "if you talk to the workers, most of them supported the bombing." The Spartacist speaker at the forum, Joseph Seymour, went on:

"Why just limit yourself to something piddling like labor strikes against the war? Why don't you call for insurrection now? After all, what would a labor strike against the war be? A more or less effective protest. That's not a defeat for U.S. imperialism.

"We don't call upon workers to do stuff where they'll say 'you're crazy.' When we call for things we're serious about it."

The SL's national organizational secretary, also present at the Boston meeting, raised the same objection: "When you raise these demands, you have to be serious." Over the Vietnam War, Seymour argued, the SL didn't call for labor strikes until 1967, when the mood in the U.S. army was mutinous and the ghettos were aflame with unrest. To call for labor strikes today would be "adventurist" and would "discredit" revolutionaries.

What does it mean to say that it is wrong to call for concrete workers action against imperialist war moves because this would not have "resonance"? It means that the workers don't want to hear it, so the SL won't say it. This is the classic argument for opportunism: tailing after the existing consciousness of the workers, which is bourgeois consciousness. In this case, it's even worse, because the SL is tailing its own defeatist caricature of that consciousness. It's not true that American workers in 1998 were all for bombing Iraq. In fact, the Clinton administration was having a hard time convincing anyone, from imperialist allies to the U.S. population, to back its plans to bomb Iraq.

Today, poll after poll shows that three-quarters of the American population doesn't trust "their" government. It's called the "Vietnam syndrome," and more than 20 years after the end of that losing imperialist war, U.S. rulers still haven't been able to kick it. As Clinton's threats to unleash massive bombing against Iraq escalated, there was rapidly mounting opposition in the United States. And elsewhere in the world the U.S. threats to rain death on Iraq were hardly popular.

It is also not true that calls early on for labor political strikes against the Vietnam War would not have found "resonance" in sections of the working class. Already by late 1965, there was considerable sentiment against the war in the United Auto Workers; in Chicago, protests against the war were organized out of

Back in the Day...

SPARTACIST

Number 19 Nov.-Dec. 1970

For Anti-War Strike Action

While the activity of the anti-war wing of the union bureaucracy poses the danger of strengthening bourgeois control of the anti-war movement, it also creates an opportunity to turn the movement in a genuine working-class direction. The Spartacist League has continually maintained that the felt need for more powerful anti-war tactics should take the form, not of futile attacks by isolated radicals against the cops, but of *working-class* action. Now that a number of important unions, for the bureaucrats' self-serving reasons, have taken verbal anti-war positions, the need for such a strategy is even more obvious. Anti-war union activists should launch agitational campaigns to have their union call a one-day strike in conjunction with the next national protest. The inevitable opposition from even the most "progressive" bureaucrats to mobilizing the real power of the working class against the war will expose them and convince many workers that *all* sections of the existing labor bureaucracy must be thrown out.

the union hall of the Meat Cutters and Butcher Workmen; and on the West Coast, a delegation from the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union (ILWU) Local 34 participated in the 20 October 1965 Vietnam Day march in Oakland.

Nor is it true, as *WV* No. 687 claims, that "In fact, the SWP was not able to consummate a popular front with bourgeois politicians like [Indiana senator Vance] Hartke in 1965, because at that point no significant bourgeois politician opposed the war." In fact, already by that time significant sectors of the U.S. ruling class were worried about getting "bogged down" in Vietnam. Following the February 1965 U.S. bombing of North Vietnam, Oregon Senator Wayne Morse came out against the war, as was noted in 17 April 1965 Spartacist "Statement on Vietnam" (included in the first bound volume of *Spartacist*). Shortly after, Alaska senator Ernest Gruening began speaking at anti-war protests.

No SWP-brokered popular front in 1965, says the Spartacist League in 1998? Here's what the SL wrote three decades ago: "The first major test of how far the SWP-YSA was willing to go to implement their 'pop-front' strategy came during the NYC preparations for the October 1965 International Days of Protest.... To further strengthen its 'pop front,' the SWP began wooing the Stalinists in debates across the country" (see "Anti-War Sellout" in *Spartacist* No. 10, May-June 1967). But this is not an arcane debate about dates, it is about *program*. *WV*'s ham-handed attempts at historical falsification are intended to justify the SL's new line of abstaining from the struggle to mobilize the workers in action against the war moves of "its own" bourgeoisie.

As Trotsky noted in discussions on the 1938 Transitional Program, "The program must express the objective tasks of the working class rather than the backwardness of the workers." When Karl Liebknecht voted against war credits to the Kaiser's government in December 1914 and the Gruppe Internationale was founded by only four leaders of German social democracy—Liebknecht, Rosa Luxemburg, Franz Mehring and Clara Zetkin—their call did not immediately find "resonance" among the German workers, who were caught up in the war hysteria. The first antiwar demonstrations in Germany, in April 1915, consisted of a few hundred women gathered in front of the Reichstag. Yet workers' consciousness can develop rapidly under the impact of historic events.

When Liebknecht was tried before a court martial for his revolutionary opposition to the imperialist war on 28 June 1916, some 55,000 Berlin workers went out on strike. A second strike against the war took place in April 1917, influenced by the February Revolution in Russia, again drawing about 50,000 workers in the German capital. In February 1918, a mass anti-war strike broke out involving more than half a million workers in Berlin, lasting for an entire week, leaving six workers dead and thousands of

strikers drafted. This did not end the war, but it was hardly “piddling.” In fact, it set off mounting opposition to the imperialist war and their example sparked growing anti-war sentiment among the troops and sailors, leading nine months later to the fall of the monarchy.

What is most significant about the SL’s new line against calling for workers action against the war build-up in the Persian Gulf until the workers are ready to hear it is how it dovetails with their increasing abstentionism and their open revision of the fundamental thesis of the Transitional Program, that the crisis of humanity comes down to the crisis of revolutionary leadership. This is no longer “adequate,” says the SL today, because of a supposed retrogression in the consciousness of the workers movement that is described as “qualitative,” “historical” and “deep” (see “In Defense of the Transitional Program,” *The Internationalist* No. 5, April-May 1998).

Now the SL argues that because the workers don’t yet “resonate” to calls for labor action against imperialist war moves, *revolutionaries should not call for it*. This makes clear the profoundly rightist logic of the SL/ICL’s new abstentionist course. *The abstentionism and revisionism of the SL/ICL lead straight to capitulation before “their own” bourgeoisie.*

Spartacist CC members argue in Boston against calling for labor strikes because you have to be “serious” about it. The ICL international secretary asks where the Brazilian CLC resolution was actually *passed*. And in a letter (7 November 1997) attacking the comrades who formed the Permanent Revolution Faction in France, Parks wrote: “When we do propose tactics we are *serious* about proposing things that actually have a possibility of winning, and not posturing as the most militant windbags on the left” (see *Internationalist* special supplement, “Crisis in the ICL” [March 1998]).

In France, this argument was raised in rejecting a call to put out propaganda calling for extending the French truckers strike, for the formation of workers defense guards, for turning the strike into an open fight against the popular front Jospin government. Now the same argument is used to oppose calls for workers strikes against imperialist war moves. Add it up, and in the guise of “seriousness” you have a capitulation by the SL/ICL to the bourgeoisie and its labor lieutenants, from France to the U.S.

So for all the ICL’s talk of “economism” in attacking the PRF, the IG and the Brazilian LQB, redefining this concept to mean any active participation to fight for a revolutionary program in economic struggles of the working class, this latest capitulation by the ICL leadership is the real thing. Its new line opposed to calling for labor strikes against war moves is a genuine application of economism, which determines tasks by measuring the workers’ “moods” with the thermometer of tailism.

This worship of the accomplished (or invented) fact is then covered over with leftist verbiage, separating the fight to mobilize the proletariat against the imperialist war build-up today from the struggle for socialist revolution in the distant future. Lenin and Trotsky noted that for the pre-World War I Second International, socialist revolution (its “maximum program”) had been reduced to a subject for empty “Sunday speechifying.” For the SL/ICL today, on the road to “maximalist” social democracy, every day is Sunday. ■

Resolution for Workers Action Against Imperialist Aggression Against Iraq!

The following resolution was presented to workers organizations in Brazil by the Class-Struggle Caucus, initiated by our comrades of the Liga Quarta-Internacionalista do Brasil.

WHEREAS, the workers of the entire world must unite their actions and class struggles against the exploiters under the great principle of proletarian internationalism; and

WHEREAS, imperialism and the bourgeoisie of the entire world, including Brazil and its partners in the Mercosul [South American common market], are trying to destroy all gains of the working class and the oppressed following capitalist restoration in the Soviet Union and in the context of growing inter-imperialist rivalries; and

WHEREAS, imperialism carried out an enormous massacre against the Iraqi people in 1991, followed up by a blockade which has killed hundreds of thousands of men, women and especially children in Iraq; and now the Yankee imperialists in particular are preparing another attack and another massacre in order to assert their control of oil, to demonstrate their power against their imperialist rivals and in order to save Clinton from his political crisis;

WHEREAS, the [Brazilian] government of Fernando Henrique Cardoso has instituted the starvation plans of the imperialist IMF [International Monetary Fund], carrying out “privatizations” in order to hand over industries and resources to the big national businessmen and their partners, the imperialist banks, attacking public-sector workers, sending in the army to smash the oil workers strike, sending the police – the armed fist of the bosses – against port workers in Santos to destroy their rights and unions, massacring landless peasants, gouging wages and carrying out mass layoffs against the metal workers of Volkswagen, increasing racism and all forms of oppression together with the other regional bourgeoisies of the Mercosul; and

WHEREAS, it is a duty and life-or-death question for the working class to oppose imperialism and defend the semi-colonial victims of imperialist oppression and aggression; and only the working class can carry out a genuine struggle against imperialism and all capitalist exploitation in total independence from the bourgeoisie and the oppressors (whether Fernando Henrique Cardoso or Saddam Hussein); and therefore the working class has the duty to **DEFEND IRAQ AGAINST IMPERIALIST ATTACK;**

WE RESOLVE, that Brazilian workers must organize workers actions against any imperialist attack on Iraq: protests, strikes and labor boycotts of any war matériel for the imperialist army; and we call on our class brothers and sisters in Argentina to carry out a labor boycott against the scandalous material support by the Menem government to imperialist aggression; and we call on our brothers and sisters, the workers of the United States, to use their class power against imperialist aggression. This position must not only be taken by the CUT [labor federation] and all the unions, but must be carried out in concrete form in the different sectors.



Laura A. Oda/Oakland Tribune

ILWU longshoremen march in Oakland to protest union-busting witchhunt, 26 February 1998.

Liverpool Dockers: “Never Cross a Picket Line!”

ILWU: Defense Victory in *Neptune Jade* Picket Case

—reprinted from *The Internationalist* No. 7, April-May 1999

Defenders of labor rights won a victory late last year when the West Coast longshore bosses of the Pacific Maritime Association (PMA) abandoned their vindictive prosecution of Bay Area labor activists and members of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) for picketing the scab *Neptune Jade* in the fall of 1997. The picket was part of international protests in solidarity with the embattled dockers in Liverpool, England.

The shipping magnates had demanded that unionists “name names” of fellow picketers and asked for huge fines in their effort to intimidate and bankrupt anyone who dared to fight for international labor solidarity (see “McCarthyite Witchhunt Against Bay Area Labor Activists,” *The Internationalist* No. 4, January-February 1998). Faced with ongoing protests – including an ILWU shutdown of the port of Oakland last July during a court hearing on the case – the PMA and its co-conspirators of Yusen Terminals and Centennial Stevedoring finally dropped their suits and charges against all the defendants.

This important labor defense case grew out of the wave of union-busting on the docks which has spread around the world, from Australia to Mexico and Brazil, finding a focus in the battle of Merseyside dock workers in Liverpool (England’s last unionized port), all 500 of whom were sacked in the fall of 1995 for respecting a picket line. The Liverpool dockers fought hard to defend their jobs and the principle that picket lines mean don’t

cross, while being stabbed in the back by the leaders of their own union, the Transport and General Workers Union, and the International Transport Workers Federation. For its part, Tony Blair’s “New Labour” Party – which owns 14 percent of the company that fired them – did its best to see them defeated.

The *Neptune Jade* sailed into Oakland harbor on 28 September 1997 with cargo loaded in a port controlled by the union-busting Mersey Dock and Harbour Company. It was met with a picket line set up by members of the ILWU as well as other unionists and local activists. Members of ILWU Local 10 refused to cross the line, and the *Jade* sat idle for three days.

The ship set sail from Oakland with its cargo still aboard, but met with the same reception in Vancouver, Canada, where ILWU members refused to cross a picket line of 30 activists: and again in Yokohama, Japan, where longshoremen considered its scab cargo too hot to handle. The ship was later sold (and renamed) in Taiwan with the cargo still on board.

The employers screamed over the hundreds of thousands of dollars they lost. As a subsequent PMA press release (10 July 1998) put it: “With ‘just-in-time’ manufacturing and distribution controlling retailers’ inventories, any interruption – even a few hours – in the flow of merchandise drastically affects sales revenue and forecasting.” Thus even this limited and largely symbolic protest was viewed by the bosses as a threat to “labor peace” that had to be put down, and hard – continuing their vendetta even after the Liverpool dockers, stabbed in the back by

traitorous labor “leaders” who let them twist in the wind, ended their 28-month fight in defeat in January 1998. Non-union “replacements” now do the work for half the pay and no benefits.

The PMA targeted ILWU Locals 10 and 34, as well as ILWU member and picket captain Robert Irminger of the Inlandboatmen’s Union, ILWU Local 10 executive board member Jack Heyman, along with the Laney College Labor Studies Club, the Golden Gate chapter of the Labor Party, the Peace and Freedom Party and others for the “crime” of picketing. Blatantly taking a page from the witchhunt manual of the infamous Senator Joseph McCarthy, they demanded that defendants turn over the names of everyone even remotely involved in planning and carrying out the picket, as well as their own past and present organizational and political affiliations and to turn over their correspondence, e-mail, faxes, etc. When witnesses testified on Irminger’s behalf, the PMA added their names to the list of defendants.

Nevertheless, continuing protests, as well as the ILWU’s shutdown of the Oakland port on the morning of 22 July 1998 in support of the *Neptune Jade* defendants, proved an expensive thorn in the companies’ side. ILWU international president Brian McWilliams called the dropping of charges “a gesture of conciliation that will go a long way towards making the upcoming [contract] negotiations fruitful.” On the contrary, the longshore and shipping bosses are still out for blood. They are going after the hiring hall, product of the 1934 SF dock strike, and the union had better be prepared to fight them tooth and nail. .

The entire course of events underscores the need to oust the labor bureaucracy, whose entire policy is that of *class collaboration*, and to forge in its stead a revolutionary-internationalist leadership of the working class to bring all of labor’s muscle to bear in *class struggle* to bust the union-busters and defeat the capitalist class once and for all.

“Never Cross a Picket Line”

One of the key lessons highlighted by the *Neptune Jade* case and the Liverpool dockers’ struggle is the need to defend, reaffirm and enforce the fundamental labor principle expressed in the Liverpool dockers’ central slogan: “Never Cross a Picket Line!” This principle is a living expression that the workers are a single *class* with common interests, across lines of different crafts and trades, and across national boundaries. Generations of unionists were raised to view the very idea of crossing a picket line – the battle line in the class war – as abhorrent and unthinkable.

This tradition is echoed even in an editorial on the Liverpool struggle in the ILWU’s official paper *The Dispatcher* (January 1998), which stressed that what was at stake was “the international workers’ right to withhold their labor, to picket and to express solidarity by honoring a picket line.” The editorial continued:

“The ILWU officially recognized and codified that right when the union’s 1953 Convention adopted ‘The Ten Guiding Principles of the ILWU.’ Among them was this admonition: ‘Every picket line must be respected as though it were our own.’

“The kind of solidarity the picket line represents, the flexing of collective muscle it demonstrates and the profound

recognition and understanding of our power...it can bring, makes it a potent weapon.”

Yet while tipping their hat to *honoring* picket lines, the ILWU tops have repeatedly refused to *call official pickets* for fear of an all-out battle with the maritime bosses.

In fact, the elementary principle of the picket line has been watered down, trampled on and betrayed by the labor bureaucracy. Nor is the West Coast dock union with its “progressive” reputation an exception – don’t forget how ILWU founder Harry Bridges cheerily crossed the union’s own employees’ picket lines in the early ‘70s and gave away vital union gains in the infamous M&M (modernization and mechanization) contracts. In 1981 the AFL-CIO tops let the PATCO air traffic controllers be fired en masse by Reagan without lifting a finger to shut down the airports.

Over the years, the labor misleaders have sacrificed one hard-fought strike after another while allowing the racist rulers to throw a generation of black youth on the scrap heap and carry out a vicious offensive against all the oppressed. They undermine the principle that *picket lines mean don’t cross* by setting up “informational picket lines” and substituting consumer boycotts, “corporate campaigns” and other losing strategies. Union tops connive with management to divide the workers by such schemes as “two-gate entrances,” to herd one category of workers into buildings being picketed by another trade or union.

Tailing the labor bureaucrats and reflecting their outlook, a broad range of left organizations—from the Socialist Workers Party (which in the late ‘70s ran a presidential candidate, Andrew Pulley, who waltzed across rail strikers’ picket lines at a Midwest U.S. Steel plant) to the now-invisible Revolutionary Workers League and the misnamed Bolshevik Tendency – scoff at the principle that picket lines mean don’t cross. They work behind picket lines in struck buildings (even organizing others to do so), and in the case of the RWL and BT, print many-paged documents “justifying” this despicable *scabbing*. Similarly, a host of opportunists such as the social-democratic International Socialist Organization run to the capitalist government to “reform” the unions (like the Teamsters), haul the unions into the bosses’ courts and support cops and prison guards—the armed fist of the class enemy – in the unions! We say: *Cops, feds, courts, out of the unions – and build militant mass picket lines that no one dares cross!*

A sharp contrast to the picket-line crossers is provided by the courageous stand by Mumia Abu-Jamal, the radical black journalist on Pennsylvania’s death row. During the recent [1999] lockout of workers by ABC-TV, Jamal refused to be interviewed by scabs for the “20/20” news program on his case. In an interview with the ILWU’s newspaper, Jamal said: “Would I cross a picket line if I were living in quasi-freedom, and walking to the studio? The answer was an irrevocable ‘no.’ How could I do less, even under these circumstances?” This should shame the “left” picket-line crossers who, while claiming to stand in the vanguard of the working class, complain they could “lose their jobs” if they respected the principle of the picket line. But these outfits are far beyond shame.

The bureaucrats and their “left” tails trample on the most basic principles of union solidarity while chaining the workers

politically to capitalism through the bosses' Democratic Party. The present labor bureaucracy goes back to the post-WWII anti-Communist purge in the unions, in which the labor fakers enlisted in the Cold War to "get the reds" (and feather their own nests). To defeat the attacks of the shipping magnates around the world, and the rapacious capitalist ruling class as a

whole, we must build a revolutionary workers party that fights for the political independence of the working class from the bourgeoisie, bringing the Leninist program of international socialist revolution into the class struggle. For such a party, deeds must accord with words; it will put into victorious practice the slogan: Workers of the world, unite!

WV Blames Victims, Distorts 24 April 1999 Shutdown for Mumia

Yet, as we also noted, the ILWU *members* did honor the picket line, even after an arbitrator and a judge ordered them to cross. The fact that union activists refused to collapse in the face of the bureaucrats' capitulation was a valiant act; and the fact that the scab ship was unable to unload its cargo struck a blow for the Liverpool dockers, even if it was not sufficient to beat back the Liverpool bosses. In the aftermath, it was crucial to defend the ILWU and the union activists and labor supporters under attack.

While purporting to do this, an article in the Spartacist League's *Workers Vanguard* (No. 681, 2 January 1998) contained a vile attack *on the picketers*:

"Covering for the bureaucracy's capitulation to the bosses' rules, the protest organizers substituted a demonstration organized by leftists for a real picket line. Sensing weakness, the PMA then launched a truly sinister witchhunt aimed at the union and its officers. So who is fooling whom?"

The union bureaucrats, labor lieutenants of capital who sabotage workers' struggles, deserve to be pilloried. They must be recognized as the foremost obstacle to victorious workers' struggle. But here we have the spectacle of self-proclaimed Trotskyists denouncing *those who dared to put up pickets after the officials backed down*, and blaming *them* for the repression the bosses unleashed against them and the union.

WV says a "demonstration organized by leftists" was "substituted" for a "real picket line." Yet its account does not mention that the picket was thrown up by, among others, activists from ILWU Locals 6 and 10, the Inlandboatmen's Union, Sailors Union of the Pacific, Operating Engineers Local 3, the IBEW, Berkeley and San Francisco IWW, in response to a request from the Liverpool dockers themselves.

It wasn't an officially sanctioned picket line (nor were the Liverpool dockers' own pickets!), but it was a *legitimate action of labor solidarity*. No self-respecting longshoreman would cross it, and in fact none did. In the past, not only did the SL itself organize "non-sanctioned" picket lines against Chilean ships in solidarity with the victims of the Pinochet dictatorship, it pointed to the example of Appalachian coal miners where a single "wildcat" picket would shut down an entire mine.

If such pickets were sparked by "leftists" (as in fact many were during the wave of wildcats in the 1970s), did that make them not a "real picket line"? And since picket lines mean don't cross, as the SL rightly upheld for years, if the *Neptune Jade* picket wasn't a "real picket line," then what does one say of someone who crossed it? We say anyone who did not respect the picket of the *Neptune Jade* was scabbing. WV's line is in fact deeply *rightist*, and in a whole range of situa-



On 24 April 1999, the ILWU shut down West Coast ports demanding freedom for Mumia Abu-Jamal.

tions could only mean *opposing* sharp but "unauthorized" class struggle. The SL's whole argument is shot through with the mentality of the bureaucracy, for whom if it's not officially approved it's not legitimate.

The SL is in fact pursuing a completely unprincipled vendetta. This is underscored by its response to the ILWU's decision to shut down all West Coast ports on April 24 [1999] to demand freedom for Mumia Abu-Jamal—the first such *political work stoppage* in the U.S. in defense of Jamal (see *The Internationalist* No. 7, April-May 1999). In a long back-page article titled "Mobilize the Power of Labor! Free Mumia Now!" *Workers Vanguard* No. 711 (16 April 1999) makes a passing reference to the work stoppage, grudgingly admitting that "to pull the thousands of longshoremen coastwide off the job, even if only for a few hours, would be a powerful statement of the social power that can and must be mobilized in broader actions – from mass labor-centered protests to political strikes – for Jamal's freedom." We would be pleased to learn of SL supporters fighting in their unions to *organize* such work stoppages and strikes for this crucial cause, as well as for the expulsion of police from the unions. But WV has not reported any such concrete efforts in the past period.

Meanwhile, the WV article willfully misrepresents the ILWU action. It focuses on denouncing calls by Workers World, Socialist Action and others for a "new trial." There can be no "fair trial" for Mumia in the racist capitalist courts that have relentlessly hounded black radicals and him in particular. We demand that Mumia be freed, now! In the middle of its article, WV charges the initiators of the ILWU work stoppage with "concealing the true nature of the capitalist state." An unaware reader would deduce that the action or its initiators are calling for a new trial. Not so. WV deliberately omits the fact that the motion voted by the delegates to the union's Longshore Caucus on March 26 does *not* call for a new trial – in fact it states that "the organized

labor movement has the power through action to ensure justice for this principled and courageous freedom fighter, which he can't get in the courts." And the ILWU work stoppage is explicitly to demand "Stop the Execution! Free Mumia!"

The *WV* article never cites that motion and never explains how the ILWU work stoppage came about. Moreover, it misinforms its readers that the action consists of "two-hour stop work meetings," when the union has officially called for shutting down work on all ships "from 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. from Bellingham, Wash. to San Diego, Calif." as spelled out in the ILWU newspaper (*The Dispatcher*, March 1999). So *WV* cynically misrepresents both the *demands* and the *nature* of the union action for Mumia, and it uses the classic technique of the *amalgam* to carry out this lying sleight-of-hand. The SL has repeatedly resorted to such smears against the Internationalist Group and League for the Fourth International (IG/LFI), trumpeting the lies of pro-police elements who have unleashed endless repression against our Brazilian comrades. But now they are using the same slimy methods to undercut this groundbreaking labor action.

The *WV* article goes so far as to charge ILWU Local 10 executive board member Jack Heyman, who presented the motion for the stoppage which was approved by the local and the Coast Caucus, with seeking to "go after the reds"! What is the evidence for this outrageous charge of witchhunting? That Heyman asked the Partisan Defense Committee (the defense organization associated with the Spartacist League, which has played a very important role in Mumia's defense for over 12 years) for help in putting together a list of unions and labor officials who have publicly come out in Mumia's defense. This is supposed to be "going after the reds"?!

WV's smear is the exact opposite of the truth. The SL knows full well (although they don't breathe a word of this to *WV* readers) that Heyman made his request in the course of preparing and fighting for the ILWU work stoppage. In fact, such a list could be of help precisely in combatting attempts by red-baiting bureaucrats to scuttle or sabotage the action. Besides, in the very same paragraph *WV* states that the information Heyman sought was "readily available" in "the pages of *Workers Vanguard*" itself! So how does requesting such information constitute "going after the reds"?

WV's logic is so contorted that even readers who know nothing of the facts can figure out that something is seriously amiss here. Certainly no ILWUer will be convinced: longshoremen know who has fought to mobilize union action for Mumia. The *WV* "polemic" is mainly directed at the members and supporters of SL who might wonder why the organization they have loyally supported has adopted this stance toward the first attempt in the U.S. to mobilize union power on behalf of Mumia Abu-Jamal, something the SL always said it was for but lately has done nothing to bring about. They might also wonder why *WV* is notably silent about the work stoppage demanding Mumia's freedom called by the state teachers union of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, as a result of the work of our comrades of the Liga Quarta-Internacionalista do Brasil (LQB).

There is a connection here. The SL and International Communist League (ICL) have regularly solicited Heyman in the past for endorsement of various demonstrations. But while not a sup-

porter of the IG/LFI, Heyman won union support (from the ILWU and International Dockers' Conference) for the Brazilian Trotskyist workers facing bourgeois state repression. And he had the gumption to speak out against the ICL's betrayal of the struggle by the LQB to expel cops from the unions in Brazil, and to criticize the ICL's attempts to sabotage defense of our Brazilian comrades as the state was demanding "search and seizure" of their leaflets. The vicious mudslinging against Heyman is most likely intended to go after him for this. In venomously attacking the defendants in the *Neptune Jade* case and now spewing lies against the organizers of the longshore shutdown for Mumia, the SL is displaying increasing symptoms of its political degeneration.

For any SLer who takes seriously their own profession of communism, this latest outburst should be a wake-up call. You can't defeat the reformists and centrists and make a revolution with such deliberate distortions. They only serve those who in fact seek to conceal the true nature of the capitalist state, and who would use any stick or smear to undercut powerful labor action for Mumia. ■

SL Zigzags on Port Shutdown for Mumia's Freedom

—reprinted from *The Internationalist* No. 10, June 2001

More than a few readers of the Spartacist League's *Workers Vanguard* (25 May 2001) did a double-take on reading a front-page article on important developments in the case of Mumia Abu-Jamal. The article states, "The April 1999 stopwork by the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) did point to the sort of powerful labor action needed to strike a giant blow against the capitalist frame-up system." Quite true, but quite a change of tune for the paper that spent the last two years deriding the ILWU action that shut down all West Coast ports for ten hours explicitly demanding freedom for Jamal. Before the action *WV* claimed it was nothing more than a "two-hour" union meeting; later it pretended the stoppage was merely "regular monthly union meetings" and denounced those who "tout[ed] these as 'work stoppages'."

While the SL has been all over the map on the longshoremen's action, they have never said a word about the work stoppages for Mumia's freedom by the Brazilian teachers union in the state of Rio de Janeiro the day before the ILWU port shutdown. Six months later the Rio CUT labor federation, bank workers and teachers made freedom for Jamal an official demand in demonstrations, work actions and a state-wide strike. This is still a taboo topic in *WV*, since it was sparked by our comrades of the Liga Quarta-Internacionalista do Brasil. Whether talking out of both sides of its mouth or clamming up, in the course of its recent centrist zigzags the SL has done next to nothing to organize labor action for Mumia, including where they have supporters in the unions. *WV* can talk the talk of workers mobilization, but for them this is just words. Such unserious posturing is an obstacle to a struggle to bring out the power of the working class to free this heroic class war prisoner on death row.

As “Homeland Security” Czar Tries to Strong-Arm Longshoremens, Labor Tops Bow to Washington’s Threats

Strike Now to Defend ILWU Union Gains Under Government/Employer Attack!

Maritime Security Act – Witchhunting on the Waterfront

Months before George W. Bush used Taft-Hartley against West Coast longshore workers, the White House was already intervening in the name of “national security.” This statement by the Internationalist Group was issued on 7 July 2002.

As West Coast port and shipping tycoons push to take away union gains – including the union hiring hall won in the historic 1934 San Francisco general strike – the government is ominously threatening to stop a walkout. Leaders of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) were the recipients of a heavy-handed attempt at intervention from George W. Bush’s “Fatherland Security” chief, Tom Ridge. Former Pennsylvania governor Ridge, notorious for signing two death warrants against radical black journalist Mumia Abu-Jamal, recently called up union president Jim Spinosa to tell him a strike by the 10,500 West Coast longshore workers would not be in the “national interest.”

The message pushed by the bosses’ Pacific Maritime Association (PMA) is plain enough: the “war on terror” is good for profits, a strike is not good for “national security” (that is, profits). The threat is clear: strikers will be branded as “terrorists.” The response of the union tops has been to issue a gag order, keeping the membership in the dark about the negotiations and threatening sanctions against Local 10 business agent Jack Heyman for revealing and denouncing Ridge’s threatening call. Meanwhile, the ILWU misleaders disavow any talk of a strike or even a work-to-rule job action. ILWU militants must say: *The hell with that – strike to win!* As the PMA declares the negotiations a “watershed” for labor, it is necessary to mobilize union power in a *joint transport/waterfront strike*. Against threats to call out the National Guard, we say: bring out the Teamsters, the railroad unions and the International Longshoremen’s Association (ILA) on the East and Gulf Coasts to *shut down U.S. ports as tight as a drum*. There should be solidarity walkouts in ports around the world.

The longshore contract expired July 1st. But rather than “No contract, no work,” the union tops are saying, “No contract, so what?” They’re keeping the docks running as they extend the previous contract day by day. Union spokesman Steve Stallone told the *Journal of Commerce* (1 July) that a strike authorization vote has not even been held, there are no plans at this time to hold one, and “we haven’t even designed

the ballot.” This can only embolden the PMA, which is hard-lining its demands. Backed up by a coalition of corporate giants like Wal-Mart and Nike, the employers’ group has threatened a lockout in the event of labor slowdowns. Meanwhile, industry analysts predict that a walkout would be met with federal strikebreaking using the Taft-Hartley slave-labor law.

West Coast ports are expected to double the amount of cargo they handle over the next decade – but the maritime bosses want this work to be done by *less* longshoremens. They seek to update and push to the limit the job-slashing trend enshrined four decades ago in the “Modernization and Mechanization” (M&M) agreement worked out by longtime ILWU leader Harry Bridges. This new phase would place computers in cargo-moving equipment and scanners at the terminal gate. This attempt to impose speed-up, eliminate jobs and slash costs (including for medical coverage in this accident-rife industry) in the name of technological modernization must be fought with demands for a *six-hour day at no loss in pay*, which would require the addition of another shift of longshore workers.

Meanwhile, the bosses are about to impose government blacklisting in the form of a draconian “Maritime Security Act.” This McCarthyite legislation, co-sponsored by Democrats and Republicans, would gut the union hiring hall, fire militants and militarize the waterfront.

This is the culmination of the anti-labor crusade that has brought union-busting to the docks from Australia to Liverpool over the last decade. In 1997, the PMA attempted to railroad Oakland longshoremens who, in solidarity with the Liverpool dockers, refused to work the Neptune Jade after it was loaded by union-busters (see “McCarthyite Witchhunt Against Bay Area Labor Activists,” *The Internationalist* No. 4 [January-February 1998]). Earlier this year, employers and Confederate flag-waving state officials in South Carolina were defeated in their attempt to railroad Charleston ILA longshoremens to prison in a racist, union-busting frame-up (see “Defend the Charleston Five! Key Battle for Labor Rights and Black Freedom!” *The Internationalist* No. 10, June 2001). Smarting from this setback and using the imperialist “war on terrorism” as a ruse, the maritime bosses are out for blood. But they can be stopped.

The raw power of the longshore unions has the capitalists worried. The *New York Times* (21 June) published a major article (“Fear for Jobs Could Bring Shutdown of West Coast Ports”) reporting that a three-week strike would cost the U.S.

economy almost \$50 billion. Fear of a dock strike is being cited as a major reason for the current stock market jitters on Wall Street. The bourgeoisie has good reason to be nervous. The ILWU has historically been one of the most left-wing unions in the country. In April 1999, longshoremen shut down all West Coast docks for ten hours to demand freedom for Mumia Abu-Jamal (see “ILWU West Coast Port Shutdown Showed Labor’s Power in Fight to Free Mumia,” *The Internationalist* No. 8 [June 2000]). Dock workers know how to use their power: the key obstacle is the pro-capitalist union bureaucracy that hamstring their militancy and chains them to the bosses’ parties.

Today, the shipping bosses yell that “workplace disruptions” would interfere with “the nation’s defense efforts” (PMA statement, 11 March). The capitalist rulers of the United States see the Pacific Rim as increasingly important to the economic and military/strategic running of their empire. Pacific trade means mega-profits, and overthrowing “Red China” – which U.S. imperialism “lost” in the 1949 revolution that established a bureaucratically deformed workers state – is high on their global agenda. The drive for more labor “efficiency” (exploitation) also reflects competition with imperialist rivals, some of which have introduced wide-ranging computerization and robotization of their ports. The attack on longshore labor is inseparable from these broad political issues; defeating it requires intransigent opposition to the imperialist rulers and a fight to mobilize labor’s power on an international scale.

The answer to the global capitalist offensive against labor is not the protectionism (open or disguised) and defense of national sovereignty pushed by the “anti-globalization” movement – which at most seeks to “reform” capitalism – but a fight for world socialist revolution.

**“Maritime Security Act”:
Assault on Labor, Blacks, Immigrants –
Brought to You by the Democratic Party**

As the ILWU tops bow to national-unity “jawboning” from Tom Ridge, reportedly joined by war secretary Rumsfeld, dock workers are under the gun. Imperialist war abroad has heightened attacks on labor, minorities and democratic rights “at home.” With the drive for police-state repression embodied in the “USA Patriot Act,” last December the U.S. Senate unanimously passed the “Port and Maritime Security Act of 2001” (S. 1214). A similar bill has been passed by the House of Representatives and they only need to be harmonized before being enacted and signed by Bush.

While several dozen Democratic Senators and Congress-



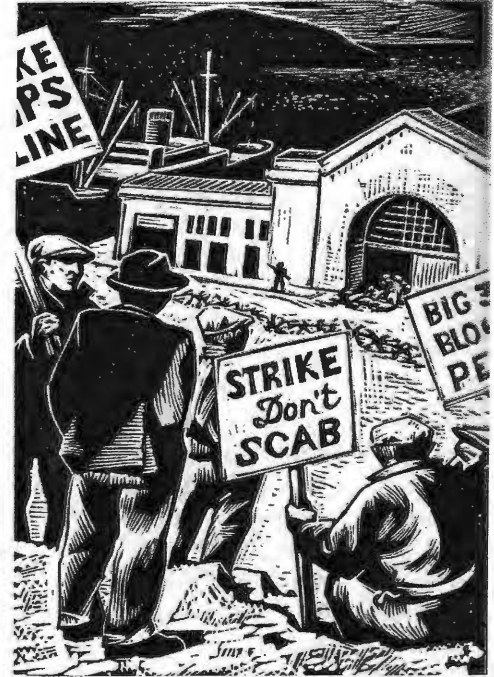
ILWU Solidarity rally in Oakland, 27 June 2002.

Ben Margot/AP

men led by Ted Kennedy recently issued a statement against White House interference in the ILWU talks, the Maritime Security Act is a *brainchild of the Democratic Party*. This union-busting legislation exposes one again the lie pushed by the labor tops that these capitalist politicians are some kind of “friends of labor.” The Democratic Policy Committee’s Web site includes S. 1214 in a list of “Senate Achievements Under Democratic Leadership,” together with the USA Patriot Act, approval of \$8.3 billion for “homeland defense,” and the approval of the Afghanistan war. Indeed, the Maritime Security Act stems from a seaport policy review ordered by the Clinton administration. A first version of the bill passed the Senate in August 2001 as an “anti-crime” measure. After the September 11 indiscriminate attack on the World Trade Center, the capitalist rulers used the patriotic war frenzy to repackage and give a new justification to their plans to militarize the docks.

The Act is a high-caliber weapon in the hands of the bosses, aimed at union militants and sectors of the working class which are the favored targets for racist repression. Declaring U.S. ports “particularly vulnerable” to “illegal alien smuggling,” drugs and contraband, it calls for screening and background checks to eliminate workers who have been convicted within the past seven years, or released from prison within the past five, for a list of 16 offenses including “willful destruction of property,” “a felony involving a threat,” drug felonies, “conspiracy” and “sedition.” It is no accident that the bill was introduced by South Carolina Democrat Fritz Hollings, as the Charleston Five longshoremen were accused precisely of threats, violence and conspiracy as they defended their union against an army of riot cops, armored cars, helicopters and police boats. And South Carolina attorney general Charles Condon compared the Five to the authors of the September 11 attack.

These are many of the frame-up charges traditionally used



Longshoremen surround scab produce truck during 1934 San Francisco general strike. Shut it down!

against labor activists. The IWW syndicalists were routinely framed up on sedition charges. ILWU members remember that Australian-born union founder Bridges was for years the target of McCarthyite witchhunting as a supposedly seditious, undesirable alien (despite the fact that he was a self-proclaimed champion of class collaboration). As for the “war on drugs” – which put dock workers in the government’s crosshairs back in the Reagan years – this is a centerpiece of the racist war on black ghettos and Latin barrios in which huge numbers of youth, poor and working people have been incarcerated and disenfranchised. As if this weren’t enough, the Act also says a worker can be excluded if “the individual does not meet other criteria established” by Bush’s Secretary of Transportation, Democrat Norman Mineta. This is a blatant recipe for racial profiling and union-busting on the docks. They want to bring back the “fink book,” with the government instead of the union controlling hiring.

Especially endangered are the port truckers who are hired by non-union contractors and are largely immigrants from Latin America, Asia and Arab countries. These truckers have repeatedly waged militant strikes and job actions, including for union recognition. Yet their struggle has been stabbed in the back by ILWU and Teamsters union bureaucrats, who not only would sell them down the river but seek to take their jobs. In a vicious attack, ILWU head Spinosa tried to turn the bosses’ “security” crusade against these workers, writing: “Why are hard-working, productive longshore workers being targeted for extensive security clearance when unknown truck drivers are being allowed free access to our work environment?” (*Dispatcher*, September 2001).

This rank chauvinism fits right in with the union leadership’s constant social-patriotic appeals to protect “American workers” against “foreign” companies and competition. Yet the fact that “the workers have no fatherland,” as Karl

Marx pointed out, is particularly clear in an international industry like shipping. The attack on immigrants is the cutting edge of the onslaught against all workers and against the most basic democratic rights. The ILWU grew strong in the first place by fighting favoritism and racist discrimination on the docks. The union hiring hall was particularly crucial in these fights. Yet the union leadership under Bridges eventually institutionalized a second-class category of “B-men” for workers who were deprived of many union rights, while “casuals” have none at all.

What’s needed is a fight for full citizenship rights for all immigrants, unionizing the port truckers with full rights, making “B-men” and casuals full members with full rights, forging a *single industrial union of waterfront and maritime workers*, and mobilizing the power of all transport workers – like UPS Teamsters whose contract expires soon – in common struggle against the bosses’ attacks. In the face of new technology there must be a fight to *shorten the workday with no loss in pay* (a sliding scale of hours), to divide up the work among all hands in a fight against unemployment, while aggressively recruiting minorities and women through the union hiring hall. These basic measures are fundamentally counterposed to the program of class collaboration of the union tops, whose decades of support to the Democratic Party are bringing bitter fruits for longshoremen and the working class as a whole. A new, class-struggle leadership must be built in the fight to forge an internationalist, revolutionary workers party.

For Internationalist Class Struggle, Not Flag-Waving Sellouts

Far from leading a struggle against the bosses’ flag-waving attack on all port workers, the ILWU tops figure if they

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As Part of Iraq War Build-Up Bush Uses Slave Labor Law Against West Coast Dock Workers

—reprinted from *The Internationalist No. 14, September-October 2002*

On 8 October 2002 President Bush declared war on the entire working class by using the Taft-Hartley “slave labor” law to order International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) members back to work at West Coast ports. This was just what the employers were angling for with the lockout they had imposed ten days before. Bush’s order said opening the docks was crucial for the war effort. The battle is far from over. ***The labor movement, both in the U.S. and internationally—particularly transport workers—must use its muscle in defense of the West Coast longshore workers, with work stoppages and strikes against this union-busting onslaught.*** Bowing to slave-labor decrees only paves the way for even more savage union-busting, as shown by the bitter experience of what happened after 1981 when the labor tops sat by as Reagan smashed the PATCO air traffic controllers.

Labor leaders, from AFL-CIO chief Richard Trumka on down, uttered words of criticism of Bush’s action while doing nothing. After already telling union members to load military cargo and goods to Hawaii and Alaska, the ILWU leaders bowed to Bush and ordered the workers back. Days before Bush’s *diktat*, an Oakland rally heard area union officialdom thunder about shutting San Francisco down for a few hours or closing the bridges in the face of Taft-Hartley. Workers chanted “Shut it down!” and “Picket lines mean don’t cross,” and many voiced opposition to the Iraq war. What the longshore battle requires is not hot air from pro-Democratic Party union bureaucrats but a class-struggle leadership to take on the war-crazed exploiters. Backed by the power of the whole working class, longshore workers can give the lead for defeating Taft-Hartley and opening the way for the class-struggle offensive that is key to defeating the bosses’ war on the working people abroad and “at home.”

Mobilize International Labor Action to Defend the ILWU!

Report from the Picket Lines

—reprinted from *The Internationalist No. 14, September-October 2002*

OAKLAND, 4 October 2002—As the threat of federal intervention looms, West Coast longshore workers are hanging tough against the lockout imposed last weekend by the employers’ Pacific Maritime Association. The urgent need of the hour is solidarity *action* by the rest of labor in the U.S. and internationally.

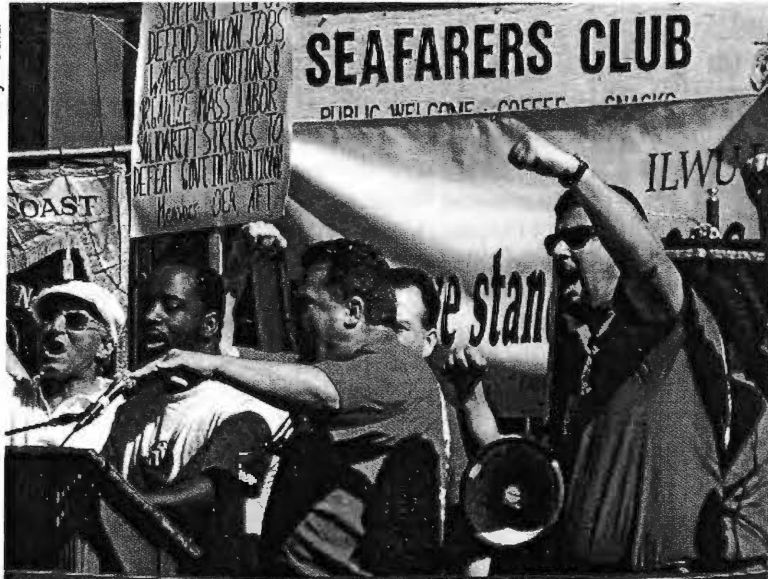
The longshore workers have called a labor solidarity rally on Saturday (October 5) in the Port of Oakland. Teamster truckers say they will bring their big rigs in a show of support to their brothers and sisters in the International Longshore and Warehouse Union, 10,500 of whose members are locked out in 29 ports from Seattle to San Diego. *But far more is needed.*



ILWU picketers block banana boat at Port Hueneme, outside L.A., October 2002.

Longshoremen from Liverpool to Australia to Charleston, South Carolina have also faced vicious government/employer union-busting. Where they have stood alone, the price has been bitter defeat. Brazilian dockers in the port of Santos in

Peter da Silva/New York Times



Labor solidarity with the ILWU against Taft-Hartley injunction, 5 October 2002. Unions should have shut down the Bay Bridge.

April 2001 fought bloody battles with the military police in defense of the union hiring hall, a key issue in the present West Coast lockout. But standing together as a class, the workers have the power to defeat the bosses' drive. Labor action by other transport workers is crucial, particularly the International Longshoremen's Association on the East Coast. The Internationalist Group has also urged maritime and waterfront unions internationally to carry out *walkouts in solidarity with their U.S. fellow workers*.

The ILWU is facing not only the union-bashing PMA bosses but a regime in Washington that is hell-bent on bombing the world into submission: yesterday Kabul, tomorrow Baghdad. The fact is, the new terror war on Iraq is also a capitalist war on working people and minorities in the U.S. And the attack on the ILWU is part and parcel of that war. What's needed above all is *powerful internationalist working-class action to defeat the bosses' war, "at home" and abroad!*

The importers are screaming for blood. By Thursday night, more than 150 ships were sitting at docks or anchored at sea up and down the West Coast. Fruit and vegetables are rotting; the New United Motor Manufacturing (NUMMI) plant in Fremont has shut down production; and numerous companies and trade associations are calling for President Bush to use the Taft-Hartley slave labor law to force longshore workers back to work under the government's iron heel.

The *San Francisco Chronicle* reports today that employers are undertaking a "frantic" search for alternative routes – from Mexico and Panama to the Suez Canal – for their imports and exports. *Transport workers everywhere must "hot cargo" (refuse to touch) diverted shipments*. Let them rot and rust in the harbors and on the high seas!

Yesterday close to a hundred ILWU members, joined by a hefty contingent from the Marine Engineers, massed at the APL (American President Lines) terminal here, determined to stop shameful scabbing by Machinists union members who have violated longshore picket lines. A union picket boat pa-

trolled the waters near the terminal. Mass pickets are key to drive home the lesson that *picket lines mean don't cross!*

Union bashers pushing to "Taft-Hartley" the ILWU say it would give Bush a "PATCO spike" in the opinion polls. They're referring to Reagan's crushing of the air controllers in 1981, who were left dangling by the AFL-CIO officialdom. We say, *labor must act as one solid fist to make sure there will be no more PATCOs!*

Everyone had better understand that this is a knock-down, drag-out fight. Labor-hating bigmouth Joseph Miniace, chief of the PMA, was brought in a few years back to spearhead a "severe and strategic" plan for what the *San Francisco Chronicle* (3 October 2002) describes as attacking "the cost of longshore labor...and what [the employers] see as the union's unreasonable control over the flow of work on the docks." Management's contempt for safety has led to the death of five workers in the last seven months alone.

Some of the loudest voices calling on Bush to carry out union-busting action come from Democratic Party politicians, headed up by California Senator Dianne Feinstein. "I believe the president should invoke Taft-Hartley to require an 80-day cooling-off period and a return to work" if the situation is not resolved by the end of this week, said Feinstein, adding that "our nation" cannot afford this dispute when it is "at the brink of war."

Oakland Democratic "dove" Congresswoman Barbara Lee, far from opposing government intervention outright, said only that "talk of Taft-Hartley is premature" (*Oakland Tribune*, 3 October 2002). Lee was officially congratulated last fall by ILWU Local 10, and hailed by virtually the entire American left, for dissenting from the vote of war powers for Bush. However, Lee then turned around and voted tens of billions for the U.S. terrorist "war on terrorism."

The *Wall Street Journal* today reported on its front page that "Use of Taft-Hartley Often Gives Poor Result." They're worried that out of the 35 times that the "emergency" provisions of this union-busting law have been invoked since it was enacted in 1947, in the ten cases where Taft-Hartley led to a bitter strike, "most involved longshore workers." The voice of the stock market cautioned that the ILWU "is no pushover."

Labor has the power to *bust the union-busters* and their anti-labor laws. Faced with repeated government strike-breaking during World War II, the coal miners said, "You can't mine coal with bayonets." The last time Taft-Hartley was invoked – when Democratic president Jimmy Carter tried to break the 110-day coal strike of 1977-78 – the miners burned the injunctions. Well, you can't load ships and operate those giant cranes with bayonets either.

Some of Bush's advisors fear that if he imposes Taft-Hartley it could backfire and "energize" the labor movement. This fear could be turned into reality – *if labor mobilizes now and meets government intervention with strike action by strategic sectors of organized labor*.



In 1978 coal miners defied Taft-Hartley injunction. You can't mine coal or load and unload ships with bayonets.

This perspective is counterposed to the absurd call for a consumer boycott being put forward by groups like the Workers World Party who are part of a Bay Area Port Solidarity Committee. Instead of a fight to mobilize workers power, these reformists have called for atomized consumers to stop buying Payless shoes and other products – goods which were already unloaded by the longshore workers!

Consumer boycotts are at best an impotent measure, often called by bureaucrats to cover up their sellout of a strike, and can even hurt the very workers they are supposed to be supporting. What's necessary is to mobilize *working-class power*, especially when employer associations willing to spend billions of dollars on union-busting are geared up for war on labor with the backing of the government.

If "patriotism is the last refuge of a scoundrel," as the old saying goes, it is a favorite weapon of labor-hating scoundrels. Up until now there have been strikingly few patriotic slogans on the picket lines in the Bay Area. However, official signs designed to chime in with the bosses' war fever and jingoism are now making their appearance, signs like "America Held Hostage by Corporate Greed," and "Fight Terrorists Not American Workers." This comes on the heels of union president Jim Spinosa's acceptance of federal "mediation," and is accompanied by attempts by a number of union leaders to red bait anyone who brings "outside causes, campaigns, or issues" to the picket lines (*ILWU Local 10 Longshore Bulletin*, 3 October).

An older ILWU member who spoke on the picket lines with a reporter for *The Internationalist* recalled how Tom Ridge used "national security" in an attempt to intimidate the union, calling Bush's "homeland security" czar "the head of our American Gestapo." For decades, the ILWU was accused of "anti-Americanism." Recall when the House Un-American Activities Committee came to SF in 1959-60, and longshoremen joined with students in driving the HUAC witchhunters out of town.

The fact is that a raft of "anti-terrorist" measures are aimed straight at destroying hard-won union gains, part of an assault on the most fundamental democratic rights and civil liberties. Particularly targeted are immigrant workers like the largely Latino independent port truckers, who have been the object of chauvinist attacks by the ILWU tops. The "Maritime Security Act" provides for a broad witchhunt against labor, blacks and immigrants.

As Bush prepares to rain death on the Iraqi people, the ILWU bureaucracy has agreed to load military cargo. Spinosa declared that the union has "told the military that our obligation to this country and to our military effort is one that we will not move away from." Incredibly, after quoting this, the response of the International Socialist Organization's *Socialist Worker* (4 October) is to claim, "In fact, the military isn't part of the PMA and is unaffected by the lockout." Oh really? In fact, the *Oakland Tribune* (3 October) reports, the PMA and the ILWU leaders "reached an agreement over allowing longshoremen into a terminal at the Port of Oakland to unload military cargo."

The Internationalist Group has called for international working-class action against the war on Iraq and in defense of the countries targeted by U.S. rulers' aggression, including strikes, labor boycotts and protests. Those who glory in being allowed to help the bosses' government prepare an imperialist war will never stand up to that same government when it uses the military or National Guard to enforce union-busting.

There is widespread opposition among working people to a war on Iraq. In the Bay Area, the San Francisco Labor Council passed a motion on August 26 accusing the Bush government of trying to use its "endless war" as a weapon against the ILWU and "as an opening wedge against the entire labor movement by threatening government intervention on the West Coast docks under the guise of 'Homeland Security'." The resolution ended: "No New War Against Iraq – Keep the Government Off the Docks!" But in complaining that the U.S. was "wasting billions of dollars on the Iraq war build-up" instead of social programs, the motion is at bottom social-chauvinist in character, reducing imperialist mass murder to a matter of budget priorities.

It is necessary to mobilize working-class opposition to the imperialist war on an internationalist basis of class struggle, rather than bourgeois liberal/reformist pressure politics. To fight against the war and keep the government off the docks, shut the ports down tight – *no exceptions* – and no military cargo moves.

That means fighting for a nationwide dock strike, for a political break with the capitalist parties, and for a class-struggle leadership of the workers movement. Bush and Ridge want workers to bow down to their "fatherland" of profits, racism and war. But Karl Marx had it right when he said "The workers have no fatherland... Workers of all countries, unite!" This is the program of international socialist revolution continued by Lenin and Trotsky.

Today genuine working-class internationalism is more crucial than ever in the defense of *all* the working people against the capitalist labor-haters who seek to bust unions and militarize the docks. This means breaking from the Democrats (and their shills like the Green Party), and forging a workers party to lead the working class in establishing a workers government that will take the docks, ships, factories and all the wealth created by labor away from the exploiters, and put them in the service of the workers and oppressed. Then we can *lock out the bosses* once and for all. ■

Strike to Smash Taft-Hartley Anti-Labor War Repression!

For Powerful Workers Action Against the Bosses' War!

The following leaflet was distributed at the National Labor Conference Against Taft-Hartley, held in San Francisco on 7 December 2002, and at the Coast Caucus of the ILWU.

The U.S. imperialist war on Iraq is also a capitalist war on the working class, blacks, Latinos and immigrants in the United States. While the Pentagon prepares to nuke civilian bomb shelters in Baghdad, American employers and their government are going after the unions, oppressed minorities and democratic rights with a vengeance. This is *class war*, and as the Harlan County miners declared in the bloody coalfield wars of the 1930s, *there are no neutrals here*.

But it's "one-sided class war," and it's been that way for a long time. The warmongers won't be stopped by UN debates, jawboning in Congress, peace parades around the White House, or two, three, many antiwar resolutions by labor bureaucrats. The bosses' war must be *defeated* – in Iraq and on the home front – by mobilizing the power of the working class, in the streets, on the docks and in the plants.

A National Labor Conference Against Taft-Hartley and Union-Busting has been called in San Francisco for December 7, by International Longshore and Warehouse Union Local 10, the ILWU International, San Francisco, Alameda and South Bay Labor Councils, and various Bay Area unions. Fighting the "slave labor law" used against West Coast longshore workers locked out by the Pacific Maritime Association bosses last September should be the cause of all labor. But *how* exactly should Taft-Hartley be fought? Here there is a sharp counterposition between those who pine for the "good old days" of class collaboration and those who stand for uncompromising class struggle.

At the October 5 labor solidarity rally in Oakland, "progressive" Bay Area labor leaders like SF labor council head Walter Johnson vowed to shut down San Francisco for a few hours if Taft-Hartley was used against longshore workers. Another top union official said labor should close the Golden Gate

and Bay Bridges. Demonstrators chanted, "Shut it down! Shut it down!" Back in August, the SF Labor Council issued a resolution against a war on Iraq and demanding the government stay off the docks. But this was just hot air. Taft-Hartley was imposed and nothing happened, not even symbolic actions. In many ways it was a replay of how the AFL-CIO tops bowed to Reagan's busting of the PATCO air controllers' strike in 1981, paving the way for wholesale union-busting around the country. The stakes today are no less.

The program of class struggle requires a class-struggle leadership to wield it, and that leadership must be forged in combat against the pro-capitalist bureaucracy. The present misleaders of labor, including the sponsors of this conference, have chained the workers and oppressed to the class enemy, in the form of the Democratic Party. Republican George Bush slapped a Taft-Hartley injunction on the ILWU, but Democrat Dianne Feinstein demanded he do so. And the ILWU and Bay Area labor council tops all backed Feinstein for senator, even if some did so claiming she was a "lesser evil." Lesser-evilism is a program for defeat.

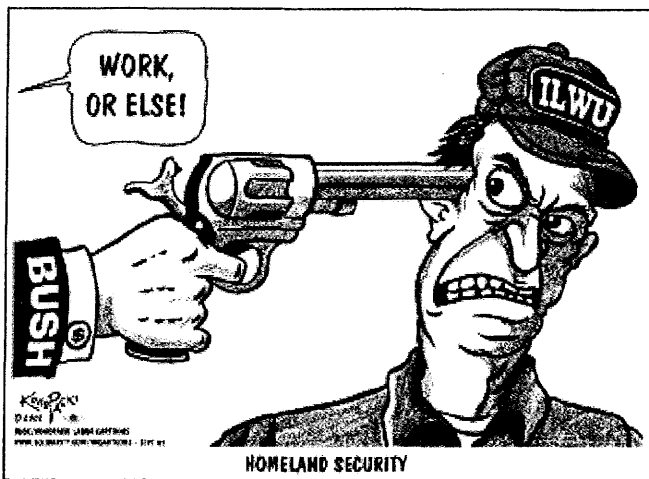
The characteristic Bay Area "popular front" stretches from Feinstein through the union bureaucracy to various left-wing groups. Feinstein (who flew the Confederate flag at SF city hall when she was mayor) was a little hard for many leftists to swallow, so instead they championed black Democrat Barbara Lee. The Workers World Party (WWP), Communist Party (CP) and even the erstwhile Trotskyists of the Spartacist League (SL) all hailed Lee for refusing to vote for Bush's war powers resolution last year. For weeks on end, they all kept silent about the fact that Lee voted for the \$40 billion war budget. (This past fall, Lee said talk of Taft-Hartley was "premature" – that is, Bush used it too early.)

The Iraq war cannot be separated from the assault against longshore workers, although many desperately try to do so. During the PMA lockout, none of the ISO/WWP/CP reformists, not even the



Internationalist photo

ILWU dock workers and supporters at October 5 solidarity rally. The organized workers movement should have mobilized its power to defy the Taft-Hartley "slave labor law."



left-centrists of the SL, called on the ILWU to “hot-cargo” war materiel, as the Internationalist Group did. Everyone at the conference will declare their opposition to Taft-Hartley union-busting; many will recall how in 1978 the coal miners ripped up Jimmy Carter’s Taft-Hartley injunctions. But the reformists and centrists did not call for dock workers to *defy Taft-Hartley and refuse to work under slave labor conditions*. No doubt there will be a lot of criticism at the conference of the sellout contract negotiated by the ILWU leadership under Jim Spinosa, which the Coast Caucus is set to vote on Monday, December 9. But the opportunists have avoided the “s-word” (strike) like the plague. We say today, as *The Internationalist* has said since last summer, that it is necessary to *organize a coastwise strike to defeat the union-busting offensive*.

So what about the ILWU contract? Bush says it’s a good deal, PMA boss Miniace praises it, Spinosa hails it, but many longshore and warehouse workers aren’t buying it. The terms are still being kept secret from the membership, but any class-conscious union militant knows that a “settlement” announced by the White House is bad news for the workers. From the information that has leaked out so far, it’s clear that the ILWU leaders sacrificed thousands of future union jobs in the name of “modernization.” This recalls the “modernization and mechanization” (M&M) contracts negotiated by ILWU founder Harry Bridges in the 1960s which drastically cut the union ranks. The *union hiring hall*, a key gain of the 1934 strike, is threatened by the growth of “steady men” jobs. And a sweetheart deal has reportedly been negotiated for higher wages in Spinosa’s home port of Los Angeles-San Pedro. ILWU workers should vote the sellout down and shut down the coast tighter than a drum.

Many “progressives” argue the war is a “union issue.” ILWU Local 10 had speakers at both the Washington and San Francisco antiwar protests on October 26. But the war is more than another “issue,” and labor is more than another “constituency” to be appealed to. *The workers movement has the power to cripple Washington’s drive for war on Iraq*, and U.S. rulers are acutely aware of this. The Bush Administration demanded the injunction against the West Coast port shutdown saying that a work stoppage “may degrade military readiness” and hinder the U.S.’ “ability to prosecute the Global War on Terrorism.” War secretary Rumsfeld argued that a port stop-

page “disrupts the flow of essential military cargo... during this time of war.” A solid West Coast dock strike would be a powerful blow against warmongers who are hell-bent on staging a new “Desert Slaughter” in the Persian Gulf.

This is the kind of sharp class struggle against imperialist war that Lenin and Trotsky stood for. Following the 1919 Seattle general strike, dock workers there and in San Francisco refused to load shipments of guns being sent to the White (counterrevolutionary) armies besieging Red Russia. In 1920, British dock workers refused to load war materiel bound for the imperialist siege of the Soviet republic. Today, supporters of the League for the Fourth International in Europe have appealed to dockers in the Netherlands and Belgium to refuse to handle war cargo or to load and unload U.S. Military Sealift Command ships. The policy of the ILWU leadership is the opposite: during the lockout they got the PMA to let longshoremen load war materiel; a Local 10 press release declared, “The ILWU is committed to shipping all military cargo.” Left groups that dodge the question of war cargo (the ISO even pretended the stoppage this fall didn’t affect military shipments) are bowing to the pro-capitalist union bureaucracy and the Pentagon.

Yet there is no ducking the Iraq war in this battle: the government already had talks with the PMA about putting docks under military control in a strike, and there will be sure to be attempts to organize star-spangled scabbing. Jingoistic flag-waving is bowing to the enemy and will only weaken dock workers’ resolve in this hard class battle against wartime anti-labor repression, while “fair trade” protectionism sets U.S. workers against their class brothers and sisters around the world. Each year the ILWU commemorates the workers killed in the 1934 San Francisco port strike. But this is not just ancient history. A dock strike under present wartime conditions would be a bitter battle on the order of the ’34 Frisco strike. Such a showdown requires serious preparations by a class-conscious union leadership.

Some ILWU members fear that if they don’t agree to a concessionary contract, the government will put longshore under the Railway Labor Act and take away even more union gains. But the recent United Air Lines debacle shows the futility of trying to buy security by piecing off the bosses. The *Wall Street Journal* wrote that the settlement agreed to by the PMA and the ILWU tops was a victory for government union-busting, headlining “Taft-Hartley, Victorious.” Longshore workers have the power to make this voice for the bankers and speculators eat its words. There is a lot of anger across the country against the corporate criminals who bilked Enron workers of their pensions while shamelessly looting the company. If a fighting union had the determination and program to stand up to the exploiters and war criminals who run this country, it would send shock waves across the U.S.

The fight to defend the ILWU must take on anti-union strikebreaking measures like New York’s Taylor Law, now being held as a sword over the head of the Transport Workers Union in NYC. It must be a fight for the rights of blacks and immigrants. Importantly, in 1999 the ILWU stopped work up and down the coast for ten hours to demand freedom for former Black Panther Mumia Abu-Jamal on Pennsylvania’s death row.



Fight to organize the unorganized, including non-unionized immigrant truckers (above), and for full union rights to “B-men” and casuals, is key to defending ILWU hiring hall and defeating union-busting offensive.

Many longshore workers are denied full union rights as “B-men” and casuals, while immigrant truckers are the targets of the bureaucrats’ chauvinism. It must be a fight to organize the unorganized, particularly in the racist “open shop” South, as the K-T Clay miners in South Carolina have been courageously waging. Above all, it must be an international fight, and not just with empty solidarity motions. Dock workers’ unions from around the world represented at the conference have seen

few resolutions, forming one more “coalition” or launching another campaign. What is required is a real fight for a victorious class war of the workers and oppressed against imperialist war, union-busting and racist repression. Only a leadership fighting to build revolutionary workers parties internationally, in the struggle to reforge Trotsky’s Fourth International, can lead the working class in the kind of head-on class struggle so urgently required today. ■

ILWU Local 10 Motion Against Taft-Hartley

In a significant reflection of longshore workers’ anger at Taft-Hartley and widespread opposition to war on Iraq, on 23 November 2002 a membership meeting of ILWU Local 10 in the San Francisco Bay Area passed a motion (printed below) against the slave labor law. The motion was sent to the ILWU Coast Caucus, where the bureaucrats buried it – predictably, in particular because a solid dock shutdown would require stopping the flow of materiel for the imperialist war. A real fight on these issues means following the example of British train drivers who on January 8 refused to move a munitions train bound for a NATO base (see article on page 6).

DUMP TAFT-HARTLEY

WHEREAS, from the outset the employers in the Pacific Maritime Association have sought to provoke government intervention in hopes of breaking our union; and

WHEREAS, their lockout provocation has succeeded in getting President Bush to impose the Taft-Hartley slave labor act; and

WHEREAS, Washington wants the ports open not only to guarantee the flow of megaprofits to CEOs who rake in billions but also so that they can rain death and destruction on the Iraqi people while sending soldiers to the Persian Gulf for the profits of Enron and Exxon; and

WHEREAS, slavery, which held generations of African Americans, was abolished in this country through the Civil War; and WHEREAS wide sections of the labor movement have expressed at Taft-Hartley being used against our union; and WHEREAS, the coal miners defied Taft-Hartley in 1978; and WHEREAS, being forced to work is a threat to the health and safety of longshore/warehouse workers and all workers, and the imposition of Taft-Hartley is an attack on the democratic rights of all;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the members of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union have determined that slave labor will not be tolerated on West Coast docks, which are [sic] hereby refuse to work under such inhumane and deplorable conditions.

Continuing the proud tradition of those who fought for freedom from the slave masters, this union calls on working people, minorities and defenders of democratic rights to mobilize to repudiate the government-employer union-busting attack.

The membership instructs the officers of the local to forward this resolution to the Caucus in order to undertake united action in defense of our union in all ports.

Source: LabourNet UK

IG at Bay Area Labor Conference: Strike Against Taft-Hartley! Hot-Cargo War Materiel!

—reprinted from *The Internationalist No. 15, January-February 2003*

Internationalist Group supporters intervened with a program for sharp class struggle at a “National Labor Conference Against Taft-Hartley and Union-Busting” held December 7 in San Francisco. The event was called in response to President Bush’s use of the slave-labor law to order 10,500 members of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union back to work in October, after they had been locked out by the employers’ Pacific Maritime Association.

The conference was held immediately before the week-long Coast Caucus of the ILWU, which on December 12 voted in favor of the contract proposal promoted by the ILWU leadership and the PMA – and openly pushed by the Bush government. This contract would mean the loss of 400–600 jobs in the short term as well as undercutting the union hiring hall won in the historic 1934 SF maritime strike. (The contract will now be sent to the union membership for approval or rejection.)

Called under the auspices of the ILWU, the AFL-CIO labor councils of the Bay Area, several local unions and various “solidarity” groups, the December 7 conference was attended by some 200 unionists. Many came hoping for a real strategy for labor action against Taft-Hartley and the U.S. rulers’ drive for war on Iraq. Representatives of the Liverpool dockers brought news of the British fire fighters’ strike and denounced “Labour” Party prime minister Tony Blair’s strikebreaking and plans to send troops to Iraq. Myron Renew, union organizer of the Kentucky-Tennessee Clay miners in Langley, South Carolina, addressed the conference on the fight to unionize the South in the aftermath of the successful defense of the Charleston Five longshoremen. A spokesman for the Tate Lyle workers in the Decatur, Illinois “war zone” eloquently warned against illusions in the “labor hacks” of the AFL-CIO leadership who stabbed their struggle in the back.

Yet overall the conference was a talk shop for union bureaucrats who wanted to blow off steam but opposed any real mobilization of the power of labor against Taft-Hartley and imperialist war. This was made clear in the opening session when ILWU press spokesman Steve Stallone said that while the PMA told the public the lockout was the union’s fault, “the ILWU made news and scored a lot of PR points by continuing to do a certain amount of the work,” including shipping “critical cargo” to Alaska and Hawaii and “continu[ing] to work the military cargo so that the government couldn’t get on our case about that.” In fact, workers picketed the docks during the lockout, and a union leadership worth its salt would have seen to it that nothing moved and that the docks were shut down tight.

In the perfunctory plenary discussion at the end of the con-

ference, an Internationalist Group speaker (the only person to speak from the audience in opposition to the bureaucrats), said that “a love-in where everyone says a lot of hot air about solidarity” would accomplish nothing. What’s needed, he said, is to organize class-struggle action like “ripping up this contract promoted by Bush and the Pentagon, striking against Taft-Hartley, backed by a mobilization of all labor, and hot-cargoing war goods instead of boasting about loading them like Steve Stallone did in the opening session” – whereupon this spokesman for the ILWU International burst into enraged heckling. (Earlier, Stallone stormed off the stage when the Tate Lyle worker criticized the sellout ILWU contract proposal.)

Our speaker was met with loud applause from part of the audience, booing from others, and an “answer” from ILWU Local 10 Secretary-Treasurer Clarence Thomas, who said hot-cargoing war goods is not possible because “we live in the real world.” At an earlier workshop on “Labor and the War,” Thomas spoke at length against the IG’s call, saying “the reality of the situation is that we have to do it,” i.e., load war materiel. This is the same kind of logic as the ILWU International’s bowing down to Taft-Hartley with only pro forma verbal protest.

Thomas was echoed by a spokeswoman for the International Socialist Organization, who after lauding Thomas for speaking “passionately and eloquently” said, “I don’t think it’s a question right now of stopping the military cargo.” At another workshop, the ISO responded to an IG comrade’s call for strike action and hot-cargoing by saying, “You have to learn to walk before you can run.” While presenting this patronizing view of the organized working class as toddlers, social democrats like the ISO sure know how to crawl before the bourgeoisie.

We print below the intervention by an IG comrade at the “Labor and the War” workshop:

My name is Abram, from the Internationalist Group. The war against the working class and minorities is part of this imperialist war which the American ruling class is unleashing against Iraq. Our organization raises the call for the defeat of U.S. imperialism and the defense of Iraq.

Now, coalitions and resolutions, conferences and peace marches are not going to defeat the war. But I will tell you something which could take a real step towards defeating this imperialist war, and that is for the longshore workers to refuse to handle war materiel. During the lockout, the ILWU bureaucracy of [union president] Jim Spinosa et al. not only shipped the war materiel but boasted about it. Today, a representative for them repeated this, and the union leadership has promised to continue to do so, in other words to show the American ruling class its loyalty to this war in raining death and destruction on the people of Iraq. And that has to stop!

The war materiel must be stopped, and it is the working class that has the power to do it, not just here but internationally. In Holland, for example, and other parts of Europe, supporters of our international organization, the League for the Fourth International, have called on dock workers to hot-cargo, or as they call it in some parts of Europe to “black” the cargo of U.S. warships, for example in the Dutch harbors.

In Brazil, our organization spoke to port workers in the port of Santos and in Rio de Janeiro. In Santos the workers are very familiar with what the destruction of the union hiring hall means: the union hiring hall was taken away by the bosses and there was a big protest against that by the workers, which was put down by the Military Police.

Just so you know, there is actually a current from Brazil represented here, O Trabalho [followers of French pseudo-Trotskyist Pierre Lambert in the Workers Party], which the plenary speaker from the Brazilian CUT labor federation belongs to, that actually “unionizes” Military Police, the most violent enemies of black people and the working class in Brazil.

In Santos there was a lot of sentiment in favor of a work

stoppage in solidarity with the longshore workers in the United States, but the word came down from the entourage of Lula, the guy who was just elected president of Brazil, and from the union bureaucracy of the CUT, that to take this elementary act of solidarity with the U.S. longshore workers would endanger the election prospects of Lula and his right-wing vice-presidential candidate.

One final point: the Democratic Party is represented in the antiwar coalitions as the instrumentality for keeping the working-class power chained, and even the most obvious things, like to strike against Taft-Hartley, to rip up this contract – which is a contract that comes from the White House and the Pentagon – even these things are being suppressed by the “alliance” with the Democratic Party.

In New York City the transit workers are on the receiving end of a New York State parallel to Taft-Hartley, which is the Taylor Law [prohibiting strikes by public employees], and are on the receiving end of the war against the working class. We call for uniting a strike by the transit workers in New York with a strike by the ILWU.

SL: Hard to Starboard

—reprinted from *The Internationalist* No. 15, January-February 2003

The Spartacist League, which has its second-largest local in the San Francisco Bay Area, did not intervene in the December 7 SF labor conference. Was this abstention some kind of “ultraleft sectarianism”? Far from it. In fact, the SL’s line on the longshore conflict is a telling example of its rapid motion to the right.

As we noted in the Internationalist Group statement “Defeat U.S. Imperialism! Defend Iraq!” (17 October 2002), on the longshore workers’ picket lines during the lockout, the Spartacist League “failed to mention the issue of war materiel, much less call to boycott it.... Nor did the front-page article in *Workers Vanguard* (4 October 2002) utter a word of criticism of union leader Jim Spinosa, who tried to introduce flag-waving ‘anti-terrorist’ slogans...; nor, for that matter, did it call on dock workers to defy the Taft-Hartley injunction which was clearly in the works, or urge that the rest of the working class undertake strike action against the slave labor law.” The subsequent longshore article in *WV* (18 October 2002) continued to quote Spinosa favorably without criticism, and did not call to defy Taft-Hartley or to refuse to handle war cargo.

This silence is all the more striking because only a month beforehand, the Spartacist League had highlighted the issue of war materiel, criticizing the ILWU tops for “cynical empty words” about the war on Iraq, because they “have sworn in advance that they will continue to load military shipments in the event of a strike” (*WV*, 6 September). Talk about cynical empty words – when the showdown actually came, the SL dropped this subject like a hot potato.

For that matter, nowhere have they called for U.S. workers to strike against the Iraq war – they already dropped that call in polemicizing against the Internationalist Group back in 1998 (see “SL Rejects Calls for Labor Strikes Against Imperialist War Moves,” *The Internationalist* No. 5, April-May 1998).

One year ago, *Workers Vanguard* (7 December 2001) headlined “Japanese Longshoremen Refuse to Load Warships,” reporting the courageous action of workers at the Sasebo port in Nagasaki Prefecture who “have been refusing to load armaments and military supplies onto Japanese navy ships headed to assist the U.S.-led war of terror on Afghanistan.” Currently, the SL is trying to justify its refusal to call for the defeat of its “own” imperialist bourgeoisie in the war on Iraq by chanting “class struggle at home.” What this nationally centered slogan translates into in practice was shown in the West Coast longshore lockout, where the SL pointedly dropped any call on U.S. workers to carry out the kind of internationalist action undertaken by Japanese dockers.

This was no oversight. Challenged as to why they have not called for hot-cargoing war supplies or for strike action against Taft-Hartley, SLers mouth the same verbiage used by ILWU bureaucrats at the SF conference. At a December 14 antiwar march in New York, for example, SLers justified not calling for hot-cargoing war materiel due to “tactical considerations,” because “the union has to keep its head above water,” and the classic, all-purpose excuse for opportunism, “you have to approach people where they’re at”! At a rally in support of NYC transit workers two days later, in a discussion between several SLers and IG supporters, the SL’s main spokesman on trade-union issues justified not calling for defiance of Taft-Hartley, and even criticized the Internationalist Group for calling for opposition to the sellout deal negotiated by the ILWU tops, saying “no one’s seen it.”

In contrast to this demoralized outlook, the Internationalist Group pointed out in leaflets distributed on the ILWU picket lines that “standing together as a class, the workers have the power to defeat the bosses’ drive.” We noted, “Some of Bush’s advisors fear that if he imposes Taft-Hartley it could backfire and ‘energize’ the labor movement. This fear could be turned into reality – if labor mobilizes now and meets government interven-

tion with strike action by strategic sectors of organized labor.” And as we pointed out in *The Internationalist* No. 14 (September-October 2002), “Bowling to slave-labor decrees only paves the way for even more savage union-busting, as shown by the bitter experience of what happened after 1981 when the labor tops sat by as Reagan smashed the PATCO air traffic controllers.”

Back in 1971, when a national longshore walkout was ended when President Richard Nixon issued a Taft-Hartley injunction, *WV* denounced ILWU leader Harry Bridges for “whip[ping] the men back to work under the excuse of the Taft-Hartley injunction” and urged “defiance of Taft-Hartley.” A five-point program for longshore prominently highlighted the demands: “For labor strikes against the war: Halt the flow of all war goods” (*Workers Vanguard* No. 3, November 1971). That was then, this is now, we can already hear the SL say.

We’ve pointed out how in recent years the Spartacist League has progressively abandoned one central Trotskyist programmatic position after another. This has occurred piecemeal, but what is most notable is that these capitulations occur every time the SL faces a test by the class struggle. The war repression of the ILWU workers is the latest.

Postscript: At a January 10 New York demonstration, leading SL spokesperson Alison Spencer put the official imprimatur on this latest rightist capitulation. She first claimed to an Internationalist Group member, “It’s hard to hot-cargo things when you’re locked out.” Our comrade replied that the ILWU leadership publicly boasted of getting an agreement with the PMA bosses to ship war materiel during the lockout. Spencer then tried another tack, saying of stopping war materiel: “It wasn’t the main issue.” ILWU president Jim Spinosa couldn’t have said it better. ■

Strike to Defend ILWU...

continued from page 23

salute vigorously enough a few crumbs will come their way. The Maritime Security Act calls for including “labor organizations” together with the “private sector,” “law enforcement” and federal, state and local governments in new Local Port Security Committees. Defense of longshoremen against the “security” witchhunt demands a categorical refusal by all union representatives to participate in these committees and a head-on fight against this anti-labor, racist attack. Yet when Local 10 brought a motion to the ILWU’s January Caucus to “Oppose the Port Security Act,” the International tops changed it to say “*Improve*” the Act!

On June 27 [2002], a “Port Workers’ Solidarity Rally” was held near the Oakland docks, organized by Local 10, a largely black local whose leadership includes many dissidents, “progressives” and supporters of social-democratic former ILWU president Brian McWilliams. Among the speakers was California Lieutenant Governor Cruz Bustamante (another Democrat), who is notorious for having used a racist slur in a speech to a labor group celebrating Black History Month last year! He used the June 27 rally as an opportunity to join the “pledge of allegiance” hysteria being whipped up by bourgeois politicians across the country, telling workers to stand up and pledge allegiance to the same government that uses

“national unity” propaganda for union-busting and racist repression. (Some Local 10 officers reportedly walked off the stage at this point, but the fact that Bustamante was allowed on in the first place is a scandal.)

Current ILWU president Spinosa hails from San Pedro, and stands in the tradition of local bureaucrats there who refused to unload a Soviet ship in 1983 at the time Ronald Reagan and the South Korean government staged their Korean Air Lines Flight 007 provocation. (Historically, the ILWU refused to join Cold War anti-Soviet stunts like the 1980 boycott of grain shipments staged by the I.L.A.) Spinosa’s predecessor McWilliams authorized union protests such as the Liverpool solidarity boycott. But calling for “fair trade” lent the ILWU’s “progressive” image to the AFL-CIO’s demands for protectionism – including counterrevolutionary agitation against China – at the April 2000 Seattle protests against the World Trade Organization. Both wings of the ILWU bureaucracy have proven time and again that their fundamental loyalty lies with the American capitalists, not the world’s workers.

Against the flag-waving bureaucrats, longshore workers should take inspiration from the tradition of longshoremen who fought for revolutionary working-class internationalism in October 1919. Shortly after a general strike shut Seattle down for five days, that city’s longshoremen discovered that crates marked “sewing machines” were actually filled with Remington rifles headed for Vladivostok to arm White Guards in the Russian Civil War. With direct backing from “expeditionary” forces sent by the U.S., Britain and other capitalist powers, the counterrevolutionary army sought to strangle the new Soviet republic of Lenin and Trotsky. Longshoremen in Seattle and San Francisco refused to load the shipment; scabs recruited to replace them got a well-deserved thrashing instead. The ships were eventually loaded, but by the time they reached the Russian Pacific port of Vladivostok it was in the hands of the Red Army, and the arms ironically aided the workers revolution.

Union “leaders” who go along with government attempts to intimidate the ranks, who help the capitalists set one group of workers against another, who keep unionists working after contracts expire so as to avoid “disrupting” profits – these labor fakers chain the workers’ enormous potential power. Unchaining this power and wielding it in defense of the vital interests of labor and all the oppressed, on an international scale, is the task of a leadership committed to doing away with the capitalist system of exploitation, racism and war.

A real fight by West Coast longshore workers could evoke widespread support from workers everywhere – including dockers around the world – and serve as a rallying point for the struggle against the repressive onslaught pushed by the war-crazed ruling class. *Longshoremen: strike to win! Down with the Maritime Security Act, mobilize labor and the oppressed against government strikebreaking! Not flag-waving class collaboration but internationalist class struggle! Break with the Democrats, dump the sellout bureaucrats – Forge a revolutionary workers party!* ■

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Imperialist War on the Home Front

Oakland Cops Shoot at Longshore Workers And Antiwar Protesters

—reprinted from *The Internationalist*
No. 16, May-June 2003

7 APRIL 2003 – This morning, police launched a brutal assault against antiwar demonstrators and dock workers in the port of Oakland, California, firing on the crowd of more than 500 with shotguns and wounding a number of those present. Six longshore workers were treated by paramedics. The cops were shooting rubber bullets, wooden dowels and bean bag rounds, tossing concussion grenades and using “sting balls” which spray BB-size pellets and a cloud of tear gas. But while police spokesmen insist these are “non-lethal,” dramatic pictures of injured protesters show they can cause great damage. A business agent for the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU), Trent Willis, said enraged workers walked out after the attack: “They shot my guys. We’re not going to work today.” ILWU Local 10 business agent Jack Heyman was arrested along with 35 protesters and port workers.

This shows starkly what imperialist war means on the home front: increasing police-state repression. The Oakland cop attack underlines that Washington’s invasion of Iraq is also a war on U.S. workers, minorities, immigrants, leftists and supporters of democratic rights. According to an AP dispatch, “Police were trying to clear protesters from an entrance to the docks when they opened fire and the longshoremen apparently were caught in the line of fire.” Longshore unionists told *The Internationalist* that, on the contrary, the police aimed directly at the dock workers. And this is no isolated incident. San Francisco cops arrested more than 2,400 protesters during antiwar marches from March 19 to 22. Moreover, today’s attack was defended by liberal Oakland mayor Jerry Brown, just as liberal SF mayor Willie Brown has backed his cossacks.

This is reportedly the first time police guns have been fired at protesters during recent demonstrations against the Iraq war, and the first time in a while that cops have shot at workers in the United States. But historical precedents come quickly to mind: the National Guard killing of four students at Kent State in Ohio in May 1970 as they protested the bombing of Cambodia, and the police murder of two striking longshoremen in San Francisco on “Bloody Thursday” in July 1934 that touched off a citywide general strike and was the key event in the founding of the ILWU. In fact, the use of murderous state repression against militant workers and opponents of imperialist war is standard operating procedure for the capitalist ruling class, and we will see more of it as the slaughter of the Iraqi people by the U.S. invaders intensifies. At the same time, brutal cop repression against a

**“Hot Cargo” War Materiel!
For Workers Strikes Against the War!**



Tim Wimbome/Reuters

Cop fires shotgun at antiwar protesters and longshoremen at the port of Oakland, 7 April 2003.



Paul Sakuma/AP

Demonstrator hit by police munitions during cop attack on antiwar protest at the Oakland docks, April 7.



Motorcycle cops confront demonstrators at April 7 antiwar protest on Oakland docks. Mobilize workers' power against U.S. imperialist invasion of Iraq. Hot-cargo war materiel!

key sector of the working class could touch off some serious class struggle, including dock shutdowns against the racist police and the imperialist war.

The Oakland police have always acted like an occupying army in this predominantly black and Hispanic city. It was in response to routine racist police brutality that Oakland became the birthplace of the Black Panther Party in the 1960s. Earlier this year, the city agreed to pay \$10 million in a suit against Oakland cops who beat suspects and planted drugs on innocent people. The Oakland port has long surpassed San Francisco's in economic importance, giving black, white, Latino and Asian longshore workers tremendous potential power, which under class-struggle leadership can put them at the head of the region's workers as well as the impoverished ghetto and barrio population. Today dock workers can play a leading role in sparking genuine struggle against imperialist war and racist repression, with reverberations around the globe.

While liberal Democrats wring their hands and beseech the government, this dramatic clash on the Oakland docks should drive home some hard truths about imperialist war. First, that there is no point in begging for "peace" from a government of war criminals who are turning Baghdad into a killing field in their drive to nail down U.S. imperialist hegemony. Appealing to the "conscience" and "morality" of the warmongers who run the United

States is worse than futile. The second lesson is that these mass murderers must be *defeated*, by the only force that has the strength to bring the war machine to a halt, the international proletariat. The capitalist rulers in Washington understand this well. The very brutality of the crackdown on the Oakland docks shows how much they fear the power of the working class.

Yet the power of the working class requires revolutionary leadership to be effectively mobilized. The Internationalist Group has been calling, even before last fall, for workers action against the war on Iraq, which has never stopped since George Bush Sr.'s Gulf War of 1990-91. In particular, we have called on dock workers and rail workers to "hot cargo" (refuse to handle) war materiel, and for strikes against the war. While there have been some instances of this in Europe, notably in Italy (and by British train drivers), this has not yet taken place in the United States. The ILWU has been on record against the Iraq war for some time now, as have the various Bay Area labor councils. What's needed now is not more paper motions but class-struggle action on the docks in solidarity with the victims of U.S. aggression. Bring out the power of the working class to defeat the bosses' war, in Iraq and "at home."

Today's demonstration on the Bay Area docks was called by the SF-based group, Direct Action to Stop the War, which focuses on various forms of civil disobedience. They called for a "community picket" of American President Lines (APL), headquartered in Oakland, which is a major carrier of war cargo to Iraq; and of Stevedoring Services of America (SSA), an outfit of professional strikebreakers, which has been awarded a \$4.8 million contract to operate the port of Umm Qasr in occupied Iraq. (SSA's big problem right now, according to the *Wall Street Journal*, 1 April 2003, is that "there are almost no workers to unload ships.") While Oakland dock workers were being attacked by police, a score of antiwar activists sat down outside the New York headquarters of the Carlyle Group, a major war profiteer, whose board until recently included George Bush, Sr. and whose major investors included the bin Laden family of Saudi Arabia. NYPD riot cops



Tim Wimborne/Reuters

Antiwar protester hit by police projectiles at port of Oakland, April 7.

arrested roughly 100 protesters and bystanders.

Direct Action demonstrators in Oakland carried signs declaring, "Shut down the War Makers!" But how? Sit-ins are impotent against the armed fist of the capitalist state. Longshore workers, in contrast, have the power: send your cops against us, many said today, and we'll shut the port down! Yet the pro-capitalist bureaucracy that sits atop the unions does not want to take on the war makers and strike-breakers in Washington and Wall Street. The very reason for the existence of this privileged layer of labor misleaders is to conciliate exploited workers with their capitalist exploiters. While the ILWU votes antiwar resolutions, union tops under president Jim Spinoso have blocked efforts to stop the flow of war cargo, going out of their way to move military shipments during the bosses' lockout last October.

In the face of today's police attack, while seething longshoremen left the docks, ILWU spokesman Steve Stallone declared, "Our contract is that we are supposed to load those ships – and we have every intention of abiding by our contract." At a labor conference against union-busting last December, called in response to the government's use of a Taft-Hartley injunction ordering ILWU longshoremen back to work in October, Stallone blew up when an Internationalist Group speaker criticized him for boasting of loading war materiel during the lockout (see "Strike Against Taft-Hartley! Hot-Cargo War Materiel!" in *The Internationalist* No. 15, January-February 2003). A couple of days later, the Spinoso leadership rammed a sellout contract through a Coast Caucus of the ILWU longshore division. In contrast, many Bay Area dock workers sympathize with protesters against the war on Iraq. The ILWU drill team was prominent in a peace march of 10,000 in Oakland two days beforehand. But such peace parades, no matter how large, are politically bound to sectors of the capitalist (bourgeois) parties. Last Saturday, Democratic Congresswoman Barbara Lee was a featured speaker at the Oakland rally, sounding the "peace is patriotic" theme: "Jobs and housing are the real national security the United States needs, Lee said," reported the *Daily Californian* (7 April 2003). Yet Congressional Democrats joined their Republican colleagues in voting massively for the war, for the \$78 billion supplementary war budget, for the U.S.A. Patriot Act intensifying internal repression. Democrat Bill Clinton bombed Baghdad in 1998. This is a bipartisan war of imperialist aggression: to defeat the war and the warmongers, it is necessary to break from the twin parties of American capitalism and build a revolutionary workers party.

In fact, the Democrats have been the main party pushing the Maritime Security Act (MSA), a draconian piece of legislation designed to militarize the docks and in the process gut the powerful longshore unions. Hard-won union gains that are key to the strength and very existence of the ILWU, like the union hiring hall, are targeted by the maritime bosses. While outfits like SSA set up their lucrative operations in U.S.-occupied Iraq, as the Nazis' Todt Organization did in German-occupied Europe in World War II, they offer their scab-herding services to U.S. bosses. But a determined class-struggle offensive by West Coast longshoremen could bust

these union-busters, turn anti-labor laws like Taft-Hartley and the MSA into dead letters, and strike a damaging blow against the imperialist war machine.

In recent weeks, after the dramatic actions by British and Italian railroad workers in January and February, various reformists and centrists have made limp calls for stopping (or more frequently, protesting) the transport of war materiel. But these calls lead nowhere: they only want to add a militant-sounding "labor" component to the "popular-front" peace coalitions and have no intention of challenging the capitalist system. In contrast to the empty calls of these class-collaborators and conciliators, the Internationalist Group and the League for the Fourth International, have sought to implement our calls for mobilizing working-class power against the war. The 21 February 2003 worker/immigrant demonstration initiated by the LFI at the Rotterdam docks in the Netherlands is a modest example.

In Mexico, our comrades of the Grupo Internacionalista have fought for strike action against the war, holding a protest rally March 27 with unionists of the Metropolitan University (UAM) in Mexico City on the slogans "Defeat the Imperialists! Defend Iraq! For Workers Actions Against the Imperialist War!" They GI also led the shutdown of a secondary school connected to the National University (UNAM), and led delegations of 30 students each from the UNAM which visited electrical and oil workers' job sites to talk about the need for strike action against the war.

In Brazil, the Liga Quarta-Internacionalista do Brasil is agitating to include the call to defeat the imperialist war among demands of a public workers strike in the state of Rio de Janeiro, and in a national work stoppage against the anti-worker "pension reform" ordered by the popular-front government of Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva at the insistence of the International Monetary Fund. At the initiative of the LQB, the Rio teachers union, SEPE, has called a statewide work stoppage for April 23 demanding freedom for Mumia Abu-Jamal, the radical black journalist and class-war prisoner, who has raised his powerful voice from death row against the war on Iraq.

In the U.S., the IG has intervened on ILWU picket lines (during last October's lockout) and in meetings against the Taft-Hartley slave labor law and the war, insisting on the need to break with the capitalist parties, ditch class collaboration and forge an internationalist workers party that can lead the class struggle to victory. At this moment, building active solidarity with the West Coast longshoremen, once again in the crosshairs of the war makers and strike-breakers, and fighting for workers' action to stop the war cargo on the docks, is a key step in waging class war against the imperialist war.

Drop all charges against the Oakland longshore and antiwar protesters!

*Rip up anti-union laws and fight war repression through workers action! For workers defense against anti-labor attacks!
"Hot cargo" all war materiel! Strike against the imperialist war!*

Break with the Democrats, dump the bureaucrats, forge a class-struggle workers party! ■

Rotterdam Worker/Immigrant Protest: Don't Move Weapons, Strike Against War!

—reprinted from *The Internationalist No. 16, May-June 2003*

On 15 February 2003, more than 80,000 opponents of war on Iraq marched in Amsterdam, Netherlands, part of a worldwide series of antiwar marches. It was the biggest protest against a foreign war in Dutch history, bigger even than the largest peace demonstration during the Vietnam War (January 1973 in Utrecht). Yet simultaneous with this outpouring of antiwar sentiment, the cabinet of Christian Democratic prime minister Jan-Peter Balkenende secretly gave the green light to U.S. transport of war materiel across the Netherlands to Atlantic ports for transshipment to the Near East. Some two dozen trains were scheduled to make the trek to the sea, while roll-on roll-off ships headed down the Rhine River. As the military trains with their death cargos appeared in the Dutch countryside there was an immediate outcry. A Greenpeace team on a rubber boat tried to block a U.S. military ship in Rotterdam harbor. The government mobilized the Marechaussee (the Military Police) to guard the ports and railheads.

As the American/British expeditionary force builds up for the invasion of Iraq, the Pentagon has been moving vast quantities of war materiel to the eastern Mediterranean and Persian Gulf regions. Tanks, helicopters, trucks, jeeps, armored cars and ammunition are stored at U.S. military bases in Germany, remnants of the anti-Soviet Cold War. Initially, much of the war cargo was shipped from the V Army Corps and 1st Armored Division through Belgium, but protests at the port of Antwerp were increasing. On February 16, direct action pacifists outside the town of Melsele brought a war train to a stop and chained themselves to the engine. Eleven protesters were arrested and the train went on its way, but U.S. authorities were looking for a more “secure” route. With the Austrian government nixing war transport because of the neutrality clause of its constitution and the French government balking in the UN over voting for war, they chose the Netherlands with its pliant “center-right” government.

The umbrella “peace” coalition, the Platform Against the “New War,” called a national day of action against war transport for 25 February 2003. This was the anniversary of the 1941 February Strike against the Nazi deportation of Jews from the German-occupied Netherlands, traditionally a day for pious speeches by politicians. For the most part, the national “action” day against war transport consisted of pacifist gestures denouncing the im-



Protest initiated by the League for the Fourth International in Rotterdam, 25 February 2003, calling for labor boycott of war materiel, strikes against the war.

pending war and leafleting. In Groningen, some 300 people gathered for a torch-light vigil at the railway station, while the NCPN (New Communist Party) presented a resolution to the provincial assembly. At Schipol Airport, where charter planes with U.S. troops heading for the Near East have made stopovers, about 40 people participated in a symbolic “citizens’ inspection” and sit-in. The Socialist Party (which boasts of having 40,000 members) asked questions in parliament and called vigils. Seeking a more militant form of protest, an Action Group Against Military Transport went to the headquarters of the MTMC (Military Traffic Management Command) at Capelle aan den IJssel, near Rotterdam, and chained themselves to the gates.

In contrast to the classless appeals to “citizens” and civil disobedience, the Verbond voor de Vierde Internationale (VVI—League for the Fourth International) has been calling since last fall to mobilize workers action to stop the war cargos. A leaflet put out by the VVI in October 2002 appealed to dock workers to boycott U.S. and Dutch warships, and to refuse to handle military goods. It also emphasized that the war preparations were linked to racist harassment and repression directed against immigrants in the Netherlands, calling on the workers movement to demand full citizenship rights for immigrants, and that the bosses were taking aim at the right to strike. In response to the news of trains with U.S. military equipment heading to Rotterdam, the VVI issued an appeal for a mobilization on February 25 that would march to the docks of the company shipping war goods to the Gulf. Leaflets of the VVI and a united-front flyer calling for the action were distributed in largely immigrant and working-class areas of South Rotterdam and the protest was announced on

Radio Rijnmond (in Rotterdam).

A report on the action by the VVI and pictures of the demonstration appeared on the Indymedia.nl Internet site:

"Today, February 25, instead of passively commemorating the February Strike, a first step was undertaken to carry out in practice the principle of workers solidarity with the oppressed. At 3 p.m. in Rotterdam-Zuid, a demonstration was held against the planned war of mass murder and pillage against Iraq, aimed at mobilizing dock and rail workers in the port of Rotterdam, with its history of wildcat strikes, to defend Iraq.

"Behind a banner with the slogans, 'Boycott Weapons Transport!' and 'Workers Strikes Against the War!' some 50 participants, including Dutch, Turks, Moroccans and other immigrants, marched through the Tarwewijk area toward the port area of Waalhaven, four kilometers away. Our loud chants of 'Defend Iraq' and 'Boycott the weapons' echoed through the streets and attracted attention. This highly necessary step toward mobilizing the workers movement, immigrants and youth against the war on Iraq was undertaken by the Arbeiders Initiatief 'Stop Wapen Transporten' (Workers Initiative to Stop Weapons Transport), a united front initiated on a few days' notice by the Verbond voor de Vierde Internationale.

"Upon arriving at the pier, where a production facility of the Steinweg Handelsveem (which loads and unloads U.S. war materiel) is situated, we marched toward its gate. Our way was barred by a security guard with a watchdog and three police cars. An attempt was made to speak with the Steinweg workers, but this was refused, and with our loud voices we sought to send the message of international workers solidarity over the huge green gate.

"A speech by a representative of the VVI explained the need to defend Iraq through the call for workers action against the war, including trade-union boycotts and strikes. He also emphasized defense of the immigrant population, which is under constant racist attack as imperialist war in Afghanistan and elsewhere is brought home. Our call for 'Full citizenship for all immigrants and their families' received loud applause. Plans were announced to get together in the near future to go beyond this initial act toward a boycott of arms transport and workers strikes against the war."

Recent events have underscored the very real possibility of mobilizing workers action against the imperialist war. But to achieve this, it is necessary to combat the betrayals of the pro-capitalist union misleaders and the pacifist illusions spread by the "antiwar" popular front. A February 28 VVI leaflet reporting on the Rotterdam worker/immigrant demonstration stated:

"Train cars carrying an arsenal of jeeps, heavy trucks and tanks for NATO arrive daily in Rotterdam, bloody cargos of death and destruction aimed at the Iraqi people.

"This must be stopped! The working class has the power to make this happen. In Scotland, railway engineers stopped a munitions train in January. This last weekend, Italian rail workers and antiwar activists blocked a train with war materiel. There are numerous reports of significant opposition among workers of the Raillion freight company to transporting war goods. But the FNV (Netherlands Labor Federation) has declared that ... it has no position on the massacre of thousands upon thousands of Iraqis.

"Here the union bureaucrats are following the leadership of the Labor Party (PvdA) which junked its so-called 'opposition' to the war in order to jump into bed with the Christian Democrats (CDA) in a rerun of the 'Purple' cabinets [of the 'red' social democrats and 'blue' liberals which governed the Netherlands for most of the last decade]. Down with class collaboration! While Stalinist and social-democratic reformists call to 'Stop USA' and look to the European imperialists, the League for the Fourth International instead calls for the defeat of all the imperialists, not only the blood-soaked U.S. and British but also the Dutch imperialists who bomb the Afghan population with their F-16s and occupy former Yugoslavia in the name of NATO. "Imperialist war at home means racist raids and police surveillance everywhere, an assault on the entire multi-national, multi-ethnic working class. Dockers and railway workers are under attack by decaying Dutch capitalism. 'Liberalization' of the ports and more layoffs on the railways and at the ECT container terminals are threatened. The profit motive has meant that at the ECT Maasvlakte oil terminal in Rotterdam, six workers were recently injured because of a chemical leak. Unemployment and repression are hitting all workers.

"The war on Iraq is also a war on workers 'at home.' We must defeat the bosses' war in order to end the endless wars. We must crush the capitalist system that breeds death and poverty, by fighting for international socialist revolution. What's needed to turn things around is not a call on the good will of mankind, such as the Socialist Party does, but on the workers against this bloody war, to win our fellow workers to carry out genuine workers actions against the war. Instead of parading with candles, the League for the Fourth International has from the outset called for mobilizing workers power against the war."

—Verbond voor de Vierde Internationale (League for the Fourth International), 28 February 2003

Verbond voor de Vierde Internationale

Oproep: Boycott de wapentransporten!
Arbeidersstaking tegen de oorlog!
Voer de nederlaag van de imperialisten!

De wereld staat op het punt van oorlog. Miljoenen zijn veroorzaagd en woedend over het voorzicht van nieuwe imperialistische massa moord, nu weer in Irak. Deze bloedige plannen moeten verslagen worden door de gemiddelde arbeidersklasse en de onderdrukten, zonder ook maar enig vertrouwen te hebben in de Europese en Amerikaanse troepen en wapen transporten. Het is Nederlanders aansluiting op de Amerikaanse troepen en wapen transporten. Het is Nederlanders aansluiting op de Amerikaanse troepen en wapen transporten.

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het Arbeiders Initiatief 'Stop Wapen Transporten' tel: 010-222-2222

Geurst door vakbonden

Spectre of Shachtman as SL/LRP Centrists Debate *Revolutionaries and the Test of War*

The following leaflet was distributed at a 10 May 2003 debate between the Spartacist League and the League for the Revolutionary Party in New York City. It is reprinted from *The Internationalist* No. 16, May-June 2003.

The invasion and colonial occupation of Iraq by U.S. imperialism and its British junior partner spells untold misery for the Iraqi masses, who have gone through two wars and a decade of murderous United Nations sanctions. Meanwhile, the maneuvering among the erstwhile imperialist allies, now rivals, over the seizure of this oil-rich Near Eastern country has moved the world a giant step in the direction of a thermonuclear third world war. Wars and revolutions are the acid test for parties and leaderships, for as Trotsky wrote in *My Life*, “in history war has often been the mother of revolution.” More specifically, in our epoch *imperialist war is the mother of socialist revolution*.

The utterly reformist politics of the bulk of “the left” in the United States were laid bare. Once again, various social democratic, Stalinist and Stalinoid outfits devoted themselves to building an “antiwar movement” bringing together “everyone who wants to say no to Bush’s war,” as the International Socialist Organization put it. What that comes down to is offering Democratic politicians a podium and a “peace” program that the most mealy-mouthed liberal could support, while policing the “movement” to keep “militants” in line. This is an example of what Trotskyists refer to as a “popular front,” whose purpose is to chain the workers, minorities, students and leftists to one or another section of the bourgeoisie. Such class-collaborationist alliances are directly counterposed to sharp class struggle, and serve as a roadblock to revolution.

The pseudo-socialists who run the various competing coalitions try to lay low so as not to scare off the liberals. The Workers World Party, a Stalinoid group currently doing business as ANSWER (also via the International Action Center), organizes the more traditional liberal-left lash-ups, featuring former Attorney General Ramsey Clark and black Democrat Jesse Jackson. The Maoists of the Revolutionary Communist Party set up Not In Our Name (NION), a “peace movement” for the “me generation.” The social-democratic ISO specializes in campus peace groups. Despite the organizational wrangling, the coalitions are barely distinguishable politically with their social-patriotic slogans – jobs not war, books not bombs, no (American) blood for (Iraqi) oil. Yet they have often been out-



Antiwar protesters at 5 March 2003 rally at Hunter College in New York. IG called to defeat U.S. imperialism, defend Iraq and for workers strikes against the war.

flanked on the right by the flag-waving “peace is patriotic” crowd, such as United for Peace (UFP) and Win Without War (WWW), who call for “UN inspections” of Iraq, “support our troops,” etc.

All of these coalitions (ANSWER, NION, UFP, WWW) pose as peace doves opposing the war hawks *on the bourgeois political terrain*. A headline in the ISO’s *Socialist Worker* (11 April) sums it up: “A look at the twisted priorities of Washington’s war machine: Guns vs. butter.” They say of Bush ignoring antiwar protests, “And he calls this a democracy?” (*SW*, 28 February) and wonder “What happened to the ‘liberation’?” (*SW*, 4 April). In the face of the relentless U.S. war drive, they lamely chant, “Stop the War.” But the liberals who talk of “our government” only worry about a *losing* colonial war. So once Baghdad was taken and it appeared that Bush could get away with it, the “movement” disappeared. The same happened in Vietnam as soon as U.S. troops were withdrawn, though the war lasted two more years. Sow bourgeois “peace” politics and this is what you reap. Their answer to the endless wars of U.S. imperialism is “2, 3, many antiwar movements.” They quibble about policy and priorities instead of a revolutionary fight to bring down the capitalist system that generates the wars.

To the left of the reformists and liberals there are a number of groups which criticize the politics of the leaders of the “antiwar” movement. Two of them are debating in New York City on May 10, the Spartacist League (SL) and the League for the Revolutionary Party (LRP). Both say they defend Iraq against the U.S. invasion, they talk of socialism and workers revolution, and claim to be Trotskyists. However, in both cases they are centrists whose

words do not match their deeds, and who do not present a revolutionary class opposition to the imperialist war. In important ways, they conciliate “their own” capitalist rulers. Although the SL and LRP have disputes, one standing to the left of the other on different issues, they also have an increasing number of common elements, which may help explain why this debate is taking place. Interestingly, behind the opportunist stances taken by one and the other one can discern the ghost of the anti-Trotskyist renegade Max Shachtman.

LRP: Shachtmanism and Tailism

To begin with the smaller of the two, the LRP’s Trotskyist pretenses are downright ludicrous. Here is an organization that declares that the Soviet Union ceased to be any kind of a workers state by 1939, just as Shachtman and his followers ran out of the Trotskyist movement screaming the same thing. The LRP holds that Trotsky’s analysis in *The Revolution Betrayed* (1936) of the dual character of the bureaucratically degenerated workers state under Stalin was flawed by “errors” and a “central theoretical weakness.” While the LRP makes mild criticisms of Shachtman’s rightward evolution, they gloss over the fact that he was accompanied much of the way by LRP founder Sy Landy. That the LRP today prefers the term “statified capitalism” to Shachtman’s “bureaucratic collectivism” and Tony Cliff’s “state capitalism” makes little difference, for these anti-Marxist “theories” are merely the excuse for abandoning Soviet defensism. Marx taught that history progresses through class struggles, and in a strike, war or revolution the bottom line, as the miners’ song says, is *which side are you on*.

The LRP’s lineage, methodology and politics place it squarely in the Shachtman/Cliff “Third Camp” of those who refused to defend the Soviet Union against imperialist attack when the chips were down: Shachtman in WWII, Cliff in the Korean War, and the LRP at the onset of the second anti-Soviet Cold War. Today the LRP strikes a militant pose, proclaiming in a March 21 leaflet “Defend Iraq – Defeat U.S. Imperialism!” But in Afghanistan in 1980, where Trotskyists *hailed* the Soviet military intervention there against the counterrevolutionary onslaught of Islamic fundamentalist *mujahedin* (holy warriors) financed, armed and led by the CIA, the Shachtmanite LRP *condemned* Soviet intervention and refused to defend the Soviet army and the weak Afghan reform regime in what it pretended was a fight between “two imperialist superpowers” (see the LRP’s “Afghanistan and Pseudo-Trotskyism,” *Socialist Voice*, Summer 1980).

The May 10 LRP-SL debate has been preceded by some polemics, in which the SL newspaper *Workers Vanguard* (17 January) takes the LRP to task for tailing after imperialist liberals in the “peace” movement and apologizing for Arab nationalism over the Palestinian struggle. The LRP responds with its usual classless paeans to “mass struggle.” To be sure, it criticizes Democrats like Jesse Jackson and Al Sharpton who appear on the podiums of “antiwar” demonstrations. But the LRP just wants to be up there on the platform with Jackson and Sharpton, giving a *left cover to this class collaboration*. Thus the LRP calls for building antiwar protests “to be built as genuine united fronts, where all voices are heard, including that of revolutionaries – not just those who support the Democrats

and other pro-imperialist liberals. We also fight within the movement for proletarian leadership” (*Proletarian Revolution*, Spring 2003). In other words, the LRP declares that it helps build “united fronts” with pro-imperialist liberals who simply have tactical differences on the particulars of the war.

Where Trotskyists call to drive the bourgeois politicians out of protests against imperialist war, counterposing *class war* to their coalitions for class peace, these latter-day Shachtmanite worshippers of the mass movement want to get in on the action, “fighting” for “proletarian leadership” of these *bourgeois* “peace” coalitions. The LRP’s fundamental objection to the ISO/RCP/WWP crowd is that they’ve been left out in the cold. Not to worry, if the LRP behaves and doesn’t cause too many waves, the demo organizers will occasionally let them up there to spout off a little empty leftist rhetoric. The LRP, which was willfully blind to the class line dividing the Soviet Union from imperialism, doesn’t see it anywhere else either. It’s in the nature of Shachtmanism, and it would get in the way of their opportunist sidling up to the leaders of “mass struggle.” Their line on the antiwar pop front is the same as their line everywhere else. In New York City, the LRP has repeatedly called on Sharpton to organize protests against this and that, chanting his trademark slogan, “No justice, no peace” while occasionally adding “no profits” and tacking on a few criticisms of the Democrats as a fig leaf.

It’s all *bourgeois pressure politics*, and it’s the same program the LRP pursues in its work in the unions. Responding to the SL’s polemics, the LRP boasts of “our well-known leadership in struggles within trade unions,” which is a lot of baloney. What is true is that, in contrast to the SL, which hasn’t undertaken struggle inside the mass organizations of the working class in years, the LRP does do some. But their work in the New York City subways is essentially that of left-talking bureaucrats. In February 2000, the LRP gave “critical support” to the New Directions slate in Transport Workers Union Local 100, a bunch of out-bureaucrats who got into office by suing the union in court, and got its supporter elected as a mid-level bureaucrat as a *quid pro quo*. The LRP made some pro forma criticisms of the ND suit, but it doesn’t oppose dragging the unions into the bosses’ courts *on principle*. Both in 1999 and against last year, the LRP called for a transit strike. But when two track workers were killed on the job in one week, the “Revolutionary Transit Worker” did *not* call for union safety committees to close down unsafe areas, and did *not* fight for immediate strike action to shut the system down – a glaring failure considering that their main supporter in the NYC subways is a vice-chairman of the Local 100 Track Division. Our criticism seems to have struck a nerve, since they responded with a frenzy of silly name calling.

As for tailing after Arab nationalism, the LRP has been doing this for years. The LRP does in fact call for “united Arab struggle,” and even though it makes some criticism of Arafat & Co. (like it does of the leaders of the antiwar movement and the unions), this is a formula for “unity” with bourgeois Arab leaders – it can’t mean anything else. The particular bone of contention in its polemic with the SL was the LRP’s call on Arab governments to “put up or shut up – *send arms to the Palestinians!*” It argues that this was a “tactical exposure slogan,”

to expose the refusal of Egypt or Iraq to send guns to the *intifada*. But if the Arab bourgeoisies did send arms to the Palestinians, as they have in the past and Israel claims Iran recently attempted to do, how does that expose them? As opposed to the bourgeois politics of pan-Arabism pushed historically by former Egyptian leaders Gamal Abdel Nasser et al., the working masses of the Arab countries can assist the embattled Palestinians only if they wage revolutionary class struggle against their own bloody bourgeois rulers.

Particularly interesting in all this is the LRP's explanation that it had previously *opposed* the call on Arab capitalist governments to arm the Palestinians, but that it dropped its opposition because the "mass protests in solidarity with the Palestinians that swept the Arab states, burdened by illusions in their rulers' potential opposition to imperialism, showed us that we were mistaken"! So if nationalist and Islamic fundamentalist-led protests lead Arab masses to pressure their bourgeoisies, the LRP goes right along! This is a chemically pure expression of the tailism that is the lodestar of the LRP's politics: the masses' illusions spoke, and the opportunists answered. The LRP talk of "united Arab struggle" is a call to return to the more militant posturing of the Arab nationalists of yesteryear. It also consciously excludes the Hebrew-speaking workers of Israel; and the LRP's line that they have no national rights can only assist the Zionist rulers. The revolutionary *proletarian* program in this pivotal region is to defend the Palestinian people and fight for Arab-Hebrew workers revolution, for a common workers state in a socialist federation of the Near East. This is the program of the Internationalist Group and League for the Fourth International.

Where Is the ICL Going?

The Spartacist League is a different kettle of fish. For almost three decades, the SL and its international tendency (the International Communist League) represented the revolutionary continuity of Trotskyism. But in the wake of the counter-revolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union and the East European deformed workers states in 1989-92, the SL/ICL made a sharp turn to the right in the direction of abstract propagandism and desertion from the class struggle. The turn to defeatist abstentionism was accompanied by a purge in the leadership and the expulsion of long-time leading cadres who went on to found the IG. In the ensuing years, the SL has followed a revisionist course into left centrism, abandoning key programmatic tenets of Trotskyism and Leninism one after the other. This was driven home during the U.S. invasion of Iraq as the SL press *refused to raise the Leninist call for defeat of "its own" imperialist bourgeoisie*. This is no abstract question for simultaneously, it *dropped the demand for "hot-cargoing" war materiel* in the one place in the U.S. where the issue was concretely posed, the West Coast docks.

In fact, since the 11 September 2001 indiscriminate attack on the World Trade Center, the SL/ICL has not raised the slogan for the *defeat U.S. imperialism* in its war on Afghanistan and now Iraq. This places the SL *to the right of the LRP on the Iraq war*. It is also in direct contradiction with the SL's position on the Gulf War of 1990-91, when *Workers Vanguard* ran numerous head-

lines calling to "Defeat U.S. Imperialism, Defend Iraq!" (*WV* Nos. 516, 517, 518, 519). Before that it called to "Break the Blockade of Iraq! Defeat U.S. Imperialism!" (*WV* Nos. 512, 513). No more. To be sure the SL/ICL are still centrists and they call to defend Iraq, and after several weeks of hesitation in the fall of 2001 they called to defend Afghanistan against the imperialist attack. But what does defense of Iraq mean if it is not connected to a conscious struggle for the defeat of the imperialists, in Iraq and "at home"? The SL's paper "defense" of Iraq is essentially empty of content: *WV* neither called on Iraqis to resist (and barely mentioned it when they did) nor did it call for workers boycotts of war materiel and workers strikes against the war until *after* they had already occurred.

In 2001 and 2002, *WV* positively frothed at the mouth in attacking the Internationalist Group and League for the Fourth International for calling for defeat of U.S. imperialism. First they claimed that our call "partakes of the view" that "imperialism is a 'policy' which can be altered by means of pressure, presumably by some 'movement' on the streets," such as the antiwar parades. Simultaneously, it accused us of "Playing the Counterfeit Card of Anti-Americanism" and pandering to "Third World" nationalists for whom the 'only good American is a dead American"! Accusing the IG of "anti-Americanism" in the middle of a war was a vicious smear that "partakes of" McCarthyite and Stalinist red-baiting of Trotskyists. Beyond that grotesque quality, it is quite remarkable that over the past two years, as the U.S. attacks and occupies first Afghanistan and now Iraq, the SL/ICL and the American bourgeois press have this obsession about combating "anti-Americanism." The LFI has fought politically against Third World nationalism while solidarizing with just outrage against Yankee imperialist oppression of semicolonial countries. We have polemicized against pseudo-leftists in Europe who denounce only U.S. imperialists, while exonerating and even appealing to the likes of Chirac in France and Schröder in Germany. But we do so in underlining our fight to *defeat* "our own" imperialist rulers and their war.

Not so the SL, which accuses the IG/LFI of "irrevolutionary phrasemongering." *WV* (17 January) sneers that over Afghanistan "the IG loudly and indignantly took us to task for supposedly 'flinching' in the face of jingoist war-mongering because we did not emblazon 'Defeat U.S. Imperialism!' across the front page of *Workers Vanguard*." Buried deep in the inside pages of the same issue, in a speech by *WV* editor Alan Wilde, we read: "Now, why do we fight for the defeat of U.S. imperialism in this and all its military adventures?" Oh, do they now? Much of the speech is devoted to explaining why it was okay for Lenin to call for a policy of revolutionary defeatism in World War I, but it's not for them today. "Revolutionary defeatism (that is, fighting for the defeat of all belligerent powers in a war through socialist revolution) and revolutionary defensism (standing for the military defense of a backward country against an imperialist or predatory power) are generalities that help to guide Marxists, but they are not dogmas," the speaker sagely observes.

Where have we heard that before? This is the classic subterfuge of those who would revise the revolutionary policy of

Marxism. And the SL is not alone in its aversion to forthrightly calling for defeat of its own imperialism. In a pamphlet on *Afghanistan, Islam and the Revolutionary Left* (February 2002) Peter Taaffe, the leader of Britain's Socialist Party, writes:

"To call baldly and crudely for the 'defeat of US imperialism' and its coalition allies as an agitational slogan is wrong. When Lenin used the term 'revolutionary defeatism', as Trotsky subsequently explained, it was in order to clearly delineate revolutionary Marxism from opportunism following the betrayal of the German social democracy and their opportunist international co-thinkers at the beginning of the First World War. It was primarily a policy for the cadres to draw a clear line of separation between the revolutionaries and the opportunists. It was not a policy that could have won the masses to the banner of Bolshevism or to the revolution...."

"Many ultra-left organisations are organically incapable of understanding the approach of Lenin, Trotsky and the Bolsheviks. They take what have been essentially formulations used within the Marxist movement to sum up, delineate and clearly differentiate one idea or conception from another as an expression of what should be stated publicly."

Not baldly or crudely but privately (or perhaps on the inside page of a newspaper somewhere) one can be for defeatism, says this arch-opportunist, but heaven forbid that it should be "stated publicly." Any readers of the SL press will be struck by the similarities here.

Taaffe's former comrade in the British Militant tendency, Alan Woods (now a leader of Ted Grant's Socialist Appeal group), in his book *Bolshevism: The Road to Revolution* (1999) likewise denounces "the caricature of 'revolutionary defeatism' that is so often presented by empty-headed ultra-lefts," claiming that Lenin considered it "a fatal error to confuse the way revolutionaries see things with the consciousness of the masses." We might add that not only does the SL/ICL agree with Taaffe and Woods on deep-sixing the Leninist call for

revolutionary defeatism, it also agrees with these out-and-out reformists in pooh-pooing any fascist danger in France or elsewhere (see "Pseudo-Trotskyist Lullabies," *The Internationalist* No. 14, September-October 2002).

To justify its blatant revision of the Leninist policy on fighting imperialist war, the SL argues that since "Iraq hasn't the military might to defeat an American invasion," the SL's call for "class struggle at home" is the "instrumentality" to achieve the defeat of imperialism, so it's okay not to call for its defeat. Where did Lenin or Trotsky *ever* say that the slogan of defeat of "one's own imperialism" depends on the military strength of the other side? In fact, they raised this call in innumerable cases (including impoverished Morocco vs. imperialist France, Ethiopia vs. Italy, etc.). As we have pointed out, when it comes to actual class struggle in the imperialist countries, the ICL has *not* fought to mobilize workers action against the war. We documented how the SL dropped the call for "hot cargoing" war materiel during the West Coast dock workers lockout last fall. *WV* responded with a lot of flim-flam about how they did too call for it (earlier), but finally admitted that they dropped it, blaming the workers' backward consciousness. In Scotland, train drivers refused to move munitions trains with cargo bound for Iraq in January, and the next month Italian unionists and antiwar activists blocked "trains of death" bound for NATO bases. The line of the ICL was not to fight for such actions beforehand but, as good tailists, to hail them after the fact.

The SL/ICL line on defeatism is not about "instrumentality" but about worship of the accomplished fact and bowing down before supposedly all-powerful imperialism, which are everywhere and always hallmarks of opportunism. And their tailism is not limited to the issue of the war, but now characterizes the SL's approach overall. In the New York subways, while the LRP called for a strike in 2002 (as did the IG), *WV* did not call for a strike until *after* the workers voted for it. Moreover, with its new policy of

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“passive radicalism” (as Karl Kautsky characterized his own centrist politics), the SL has dutifully followed the dictates of the bourgeois courts. Thus when a New York judge in December 1999 issued an edict banning anyone from calling for a subway strike, the SL *dropped* its earlier strike call and put out a special leaflet calling to “Defend Labor’s Right to Strike” (see “The Fight for a Class-Struggle Leadership in NYC Transit,” *The Internationalist* No. 15, January-February 2003).

The Spectre of Shachtman

We have shown how in parallel (but not identical) ways on a series of issues, the SL and LRP combine leftist rhetoric with opportunist practice. On Iraq, the SL/ICL drops the call for defeat of U.S. imperialism it had raised a decade ago in Gulf War I, and drops the call for labor boycott of war goods on the West Coast docks, while the LRP calls on paper for defeatism but does not fight for concrete proletarian action against the war. In NYC transit, the SL in 1999 drops its earlier call for a strike under pressure from the bourgeoisie and in 2002 does not call for a walkout until after the workers vote for it. The LRP, in turn, calls for a strike (on a purely economist platform) but “critically” supports out-bureaucrats who sued the unions to get into office. On Palestine, the SL criticizes the LRP’s chasing after Arab nationalism; yet the SL/ICL also capitulates before the present consciousness of the masses by dropping its earlier call for an Arab/Hebrew workers state.

But beyond their differences, there are a growing number of similarities between the Spartacist League and the League for the Revolutionary Party. Behind this commonality stands the spectre of Shachtman. Recently, as the SL/ICL drops its longstanding programmatic positions on one issue after another, we have noticed that it has taken up in their stead a number of characteristic Shachtmanite positions. Thus in refusing to call for revolutionary defeatism in the present imperialist war against Afghanistan and now Iraq, it has taken over the arguments against this Leninist position put forward by the editor of the ISL’s newspaper in the ’50s, Hal Draper, in a three-part article on “The Myth of Lenin’s Defeatism” published in Shachtman’s *New Internationalist* between September-October 1953 and January-February 1954.

Draper’s long and convoluted piece (used as internal education material by the ICL recently) argues that Lenin’s call for defeatism was a conjunctural slogan inapplicable today. As the editors of *WV* borrow lines from Draper, they must know what they are doing. Shachtman’s sidekick argued that defeatism was turned into a dogma as part of the anti-Trotsky campaign in 1924 and “canonized” by Stalin in 1928, and that in the 1930s Trotsky, who had opposed Lenin’s line in World War I, now wishing to appear orthodox, tried to sidestep this by “bowdlerizing” Lenin and “juggling words” to redefine defeatism to mean not “wishing defeat” for “one’s own country” in imperialist war (as Lenin argued) but instead referring to “military defeat resulting from the growth of the revolutionary movement.” And Draper ends his article saying:

“Bury the dead. The tradition of Lenin’s defeatism was born in a political mistake in 1904-5; it was revived in confusion in 1914, to be shelved without stock-taking in 1917;

it was revived in malice and reaction in 1924; it was turned into a hollow phrase by ‘explaining away’ in the ’30s; it was ignored in the ’40s; and now in the ’50s any war policy based on it can only be disorienting – or worse. It can only stand in the way of a clear, ‘full,’ uncompromising Marxist anti-war position, the position of the Third Camp.”

The Shachtmanite “Third Camp,” as we have written, was only a way station on the road to the “first camp” of support for imperialism.

Discussing the ICL’s post-1995 discovery that the Stalinists supposedly “led” the counterrevolution in East Germany and the Soviet Union during 1989-92, and were allegedly poised to do so again in China, we noted that this was fundamentally counterposed to the Trotskyist analysis of the Stalinist bureaucracy as an unstable layer that capitulates to the pressure of imperialism, preparing the way for and opening the door to capitalist restoration. The SL’s new line effectively wiped out the contradictory dual character of the bureaucracy, turning it into a purely counterrevolutionary force, we wrote, and pointed to the parallel to Shachtman’s 1940 discovery of a “Stalinist counterrevolution” that destroyed the workers state through “the seizure of power by a counterrevolutionary bureaucracy.” We headlined our article, “ICL Still Caught Between Shachtman and Trotsky” (*The Internationalist* No. 11, Summer 2001). First over Stalinism and counterrevolution, now over Leninism and defeatism: but these are not the only instances in which the SL has taken over elements from Shachtmanism.

At the core of Shachtman’s break from Trotskyism was his capitulation before American imperialism as it became the strongest imperialist power in the world before and after WWII. Similar pressures are at work today in the U.S.-dominated New World Order. In the 1950s, another example of the Shachtmanites’ progressive evolution toward outright embrace of U.S. imperialism was their line on Puerto Rico. We have written about how the SL abandoned its longstanding demand for unconditional independence for the U.S.’ Caribbean colony, which until the recent invasion of Iraq was the largest remaining colony in the world (see “ICL Renounces Fight for Puerto Rican Independence,” *The Internationalist* No. 6, November-December 1998). Basing themselves on the results of colonial plebiscites in which pro-independence forces received few votes, the SL now argues that it is only for the “right” of Puerto Rico to self-determination and no longer “advocates” independence. It turns out that the very same line was taken by Hal Draper in an article on “A Socialist Policy on Puerto Rico” (*Labor Action*, 29 March 1954), from which the “new” *Workers Vanguard* takes key arguments. Draper writes:

“The fundamental demand on behalf of the Puerto Rican people which cannot be argued away by any genuine democrat or liberal (not to speak of socialist) is the continuing right to self-determination. A U.S. socialist organization cannot put independence for Puerto Rico in its *own* platform.... An American socialist government’s duty would be to make it possible for the Puerto Rican people to express their desires in a free and unfettered vote on

continued on page 56

CUNY Internationalist Clubs Call for United-Front Action **Drive Military Recruiters Off Campus!**

—reprinted from *Revolution* (No. 3, November 2005), the newspaper of the Internationalist Clubs at the City University of New York (CUNY).

While the United States of American Imperialism continues its occupation of Iraq and Afghanistan, the manpower for its colonial “crusade” is being stretched to the limit. Because of the mounting opposition to the slaughter the U.S. is carrying out in Iraq, the volunteer army is running short of volunteers. For four months in a row this spring, the Army failed to meet its recruiting quota. In May, even after lowering the quota by 17 percent, it still missed its reduced goal by 25 percent. The Army Reserve, meanwhile, has been missing its monthly quota since last October of 2004.

To get around the trouble it is having getting its targets (mainly minorities and working-class youth) to sign up for the slaughter in Iraq, the military has raised the age limit (to 39) and lowered educational requirements (10 percent of recruits have dropped out of high school). Meanwhile, recruiters are adopting desperate tactics, even more deceitful than their usual pitch (“we’ll pay for your college education”). Potential recruits are shown how to mask drug tests and fake a high school diploma; according to CBS News, one recruiter threatened a young man with arrest if he didn’t show up at the induction center.

It got to the point that the Army held a “values stand-down” for a day of lectures about ethics May 20, which many dismissed as a public relations stunt. But even so, the “hard sell” is reportedly taking a “hard toll” on the pitchmen themselves. Since October 2002, at least 37 members of the Army Recruiting Command have gone AWOL. A recruiter in New York said he was having “stomach problems and searing back pain,” in addition to “bouts of depression” and had even “considered suicide” (*New York Times*, March 27). Raking in cannon fodder for the imperialist war machine just ain’t what it used to be, it seems.

The government is making up for the shortfall with even more aggressive measures spying on high school and college students. It turns out that the Pentagon’s “Joint Advertising Market Research Studies” division and a private contractor have secretly established a data base of 30 million 16-to-25-



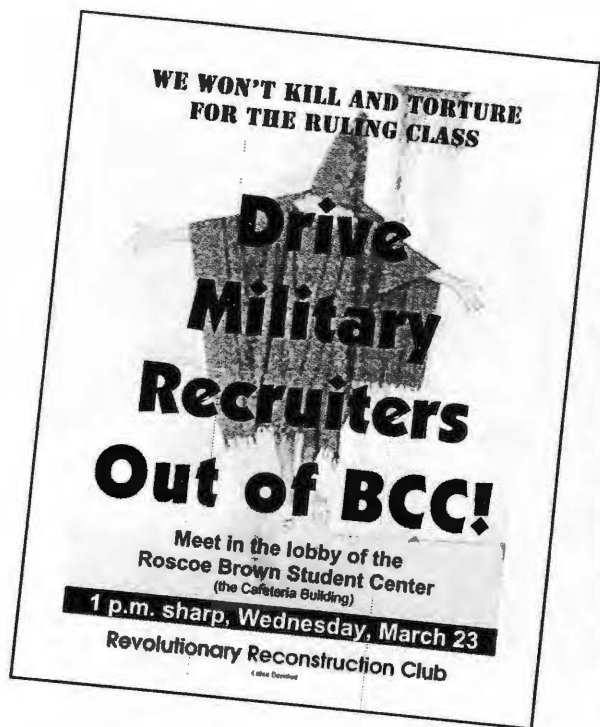
Internationalist photo

Revolutionary Reconstruction Club sparked protests that ran military recruiters out of Bronx Community College every week for more than a month. Above, 17 March 2005 demonstration.

year-olds, including height, weight, Social Security numbers, grade-point averages, e-mail addresses and phone numbers! This is a blatant violation of the federal Privacy Act. In addition to such illegal tactics, the No Child Left Behind “educational reform” law orders schools to turn over information on all high school students, unless their parents sign a waiver.

The main problem the military faces in filling its quotas is that the brutal reality of the Iraq war is sinking in. With the death toll of U.S. soldiers now over 1,700 (compared to *tens of thousands of Iraqis* killed during the invasion and two years of colonial occupation), it’s becoming clear that instead of “see the world” and “be all that you can be,” enlisting means “go to Iraq and die.” On top of this, mounting opposition to the war is being expressed in protests against military recruiters in schools and on campuses around the country.

On January 20, Inauguration Day, while George Bush was being coronated with imperial trappings in Washington, there were protests ranging from a “jazz funeral for democracy” in New Orleans’ French Quarter (with a coffin bearing the Constitution and the USA



Internationalist photo

Left: RRC poster took a class position rather than the pacifism of the reformists. Above: 21 April 2005 rally at BCC.

Patriot Act) to a walkout by over 1,000 students at the University of Washington and Seattle Central Community College. At SCC, protesters chased military recruiters off campus. Calling them a “mob,” the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* (4 February) reported: “The students hurled insults and water bottles, according to witnesses, forcing the recruiters to flee under the protection of campus security officers.”

As the protests spread, college authorities began responding with repression of the protesters. On March 9 and 10, students at San Francisco State University and City College of New York protested the presence of military recruiters at campus job fairs. At SFSU over 100 people surrounded the Army and Air Force tables and after 90 minutes drove them out. This led to the arrest and suspension of three students and a staff worker at CCNY, and the suspension of several students at SFSU as well as sanctions against the International Socialist Organization and Students Against the War, affiliated with the ISO-led Campus Antiwar Network.

Despite the arrests and threats, protests have continued to mount. In Seattle, a walkout by 150 students on May 23 shut down three recruiting centers, while high school parent-teacher-student associations voted to ban military recruiters in the schools (*Seattle Weekly*, 15 June). Many of the protests have been at community colleges and state universities, as the Pentagon seeks to recruit its officer corps from the elite private universities. But at Columbia University in New York, the university senate voted overwhelmingly against reinstating the Reserve Officers Training Corps (ROTC), which was terminated during the anti-Vietnam War protests three decades ago.

At the City University of New York, student clubs which publish *Revolution* newspaper (in accordance with the Internationalist Group) have been organizing to drive the military recruiters off campus. The same day antiwar protesters were arrested at CCNY, the Revolutionary Reconstruction Club at Bronx Community College held the first of several protests

that ran the recruiters off campus every week for more than a month. A May 5 leaflet by the Internationalist Club at Hostos Community College reported:

“When the Army showed up in camouflage fatigues at BCC on March 17, students in the cafeteria took up the chant, ‘Military recruiters off campus now!’ One called out, ‘I’m not going to die for their army.’ As students yelled, ‘Out, out, out!’ the recruiters disappeared. On March 23, the Army showed up again, did an about face and headed for the door. On April 7, the Air Force exited as students chanted, ‘Bye, bye, bye, military off campus.’ On April 14, the Marines came and went, and when a united-front protest was called on April 21, the military didn’t even try to show their faces.”

Most left groups protesting the Iraq war and military recruiters carefully tailor their appeals to “democratic” demands that are acceptable to liberals, seeking to build a “broad” (class-collaborationist) antiwar movement. The Campus Antiwar Network, for example, says “Only the immediate withdrawal of US troops can bring any real possibility of democracy in the Middle East.” CAN and other groups such as the “Troops Out Coalition” led by the Workers World Party call to “bring the troops home,” and for different “priorities” (“education, not occupation,” “books, not bombs”).

In contrast to this fundamentally social-patriotic and pacifist appeal, the RRC and CUNY Internationalist Clubs took a revolutionary *class* position, calling to *defeat* the imperialist war and to break with all the capitalist parties (Democrats, Republicans, Greens, Nader). We point out how the colonial occupation is linked to racist repression in the U.S., and call for working-class action against the bosses’ war, “at home” and abroad. Our flyers proclaimed, loud and clear, “We Won’t Kill and Torture for the Ruling Class.” A March 23 leaflet by the Revolutionary Reconstruction Club at BCC described the successful protest the week before when recruiters showed up in the campus cafeteria:

“The recruiters were unable to go about their deadly ‘business’ of preying on students there. They kept making calls on their cell phones, evidently seeking orders. At one point they were escorted down the hall by campus cops. FINALLY, OUR PROTEST DROVE THE RECRUITERS OUT OF THE BUILDING. As students yelled ‘Out, out, out!’ they disappeared.

“Club members and others marched across campus chanting ‘Military recruiters off campus now,’ ‘Defeat U.S. imperialism!’ and ‘Workers strikes against the war!’ We gathered in front of the Career Development building. One young woman spoke about how the military convinced her 17-year-old brother to sign up; he will be sent to Iraq in August. Her cousin is already in Iraq, and her godsister has also been sent to Iraq.

“Another young woman who joined the protest spoke about a co-worker who was killed in Iraq, leaving six brothers and sisters. She told how the military recruiters descend on Lehman High School, in her neighborhood, ‘every time there’s a graduation.’ A young man active in the RRC told how his stepsister in the National Guard had to drop out of school. After coming back from one stint in Iraq, she was sent back again.

“During the protest, speakers from the RRC and CUNY Internationalist Clubs stressed that the real interest of working-class, poor and minority people in the U.S. is to side with the Iraqi people’s struggle to drive out the colonial occupation. We linked the torture and occupation in Iraq to racist killings by cops in the Bronx, like that of Amadou Diallo. The Democrats and Republicans are responsible for the war and the cops, we explained – we need a workers party! Speakers pointed out how tuition hikes and TAP [financial aid] cuts drive poor students into the arms of the military. One poster demanded: No Tuition - Open Admissions.

“A speaker compared the military recruiters to the slave catchers who before Abolition made money by seizing escaped slaves and returning them to their masters. Frederick Douglass and other radical abolitionists organized mass mobilizations to drive the slave catchers and bounty hunters out.”

The BCC protests demanded that all charges against the CCNY Four be dropped, and the Internationalist Group distributed a leaflet (see below) at several CUNY campuses calling to shut down CCNY over the arrests and for united-front action by students, faculty and campus workers to drive all military and cop recruiters out of City University.



Internationalist photo

RRC and CUNY Internationalist Clubs kept up agitation for six weeks building support for protests that drove military out of the heavily black and Latino Bronx Community College. Above: March 23 march through campus. Below: March 17 speak-out in the cafeteria. Speakers compared recruiters to slave catchers, denouncing both capitalist war parties, Democrats and Republicans.



Revolution

Newspaper of City University of New York (CUNY) students from the Revolutionary Reconstruction Club and Internationalist Clubs, published in accord with the Internationalist Group, U.S. section of the League for the Fourth International. To order a copy send \$1 to: Mundial Publications, Box 3321, Church Street Station, New York, NY 10008, U.S.A.

Militant Protest Sinks BMCC “Homeland Security” Program

—reprinted from *The Internationalist*
No. 21, Summer 2005

At “CUNY Day” on March 23, Borough of Manhattan Community College students and faculty celebrated the demise of the “Homeland Security” program planned by the downtown Manhattan campus of the City University of New York. The sinister program was dropped because of the campaign of protest and exposure initiated by the CUNY Internationalist Clubs last fall.

To the strains of a trumpet playing a funeral dirge, members of the BMCC Student Government Association and the faculty union, the Professional Staff Congress, kicked off the CUNY Day events by marching into the campus cafeteria with a coffin bearing a sign saying: “SGA - PSC Say: R.I.P. Homeland Security Program.” SGA president Jason Negron noted, “Normally a funeral is a sad event. This is a happy occasion. We killed the Homeland Security program, and now we’re burying it. We’re proud of that.”

Following the revelations published last October in *Revolution*, the newspaper of the CUNY Internationalist Clubs, students and professors angrily reacted to the attempt by the school administration to sneak in this program.* Planned courses included “interrogation techniques” and “technology for surveillance.” On December 9, a spirited protest marched through BMCC chanting “No ‘Homeland Security’ at BMCC.” Posters of the infamous photo of an Iraqi torture victim of U.S. “interrogation” at the Abu Ghraib prison asked, “Interrogation 101, Coming Soon to BMCC?” Two weeks later, a meeting of the BMCC Faculty Council erupted in what the right-wing *New York Sun* called a “firestorm” of protest, in which 15 students and professors indignantly denounced the program.

“‘Homeland Security’ Certificate Plan Is Dropped,” reported the *Clarion* (February 2005), newspaper of the CUNY faculty union, the Professional Staff Congress. This victory was also featured on the front page of the CUNY Graduate Center *Advocate*, which reported that BMCC President Anthony Perez told the paper “the college is no longer moving forward with the proposed certificate program” while extensively quoting the Internationalist Group on the fight against it.

* See “‘Fatherland Security’ Hits CUNY,” *The Internationalist* No. 20, January-February 2005



Internationalist photo

A memo by CUNY University Student Senate chair Lauren Fasano reported that Perez had formally told her the “BMCC administration would not be moving forward with the implementation of this program” and that reconsideration of the program “was very unlikely.” As Fasano notes, “both students and faculty were adamantly against the program being implemented.”

Perez’ slippery phrase about “not moving forward” with the program is certainly deliberate, leaving the door open to trying to resuscitate it later when no one is looking. So BMCC students and faculty held a funeral ceremony to drive the last nails into the coffin of the “Fatherland Security” program and to make sure it stays dead and buried.

Vigilance and energetic protest were able to defeat this brazen attempt to draft CUNY into the U.S.’ imperialist “war on terror,” which is really an attempt to terrorize the world’s population into submission. Students and faculty at the BMCC campus of 19,000 students, located less than a mile from the World Trade Center, were not intimidated by the government-sponsored war hysteria. As speakers at the March 23 event noted, the war on Iraq is also a war on working people, students, minorities and immigrants here.

After the victory of shutting down the “Homeland Security” program, the CUNY Internationalist Clubs call on opponents of imperialism and the militarization of the universities to redouble efforts and mount a university-wide action to drive military recruiters off campus!

LRP Social Democrats Who “Prefer” the Draft
PLP “Communists” Who Won’t Defend Iraq

Which Side Are They On?

Opportunists Straddle the Class Line



Shawn Baldwin/New York Times

Iraqis face off with U.S. soldiers in Baghdad market, May 2004.

—reprinted from *The Internationalist No. 21, Summer 2005*

With the U.S. occupation army bogged down in Iraq and Pentagon planners desperate for young men and women to feed the voracious imperialist war machine, they have run into deepening resistance on the “home front.” In recent months, as opposition to military recruiters has spread on campuses across the country, a number of left groups have gotten in on the act. But they do so from differing political standpoints. The Internationalist Group has campaigned against military recruiters in the schools and universities since the onset of the Afghanistan war. We call for workers strikes against the war, and for workers to refuse to handle military cargo. Standing on the program of Lenin and Trotsky, we *defend* the Iraqi and Afghan peoples under attack and fight to *defeat* the imperialists through proletarian action pointing the way to socialist revolution.

In contrast, various opportunists, avowed socialists and communists, deliberately pitch their appeals in terms acceptable to *supporters* of imperialism, whose concern is that the war is bad for the system. Reformist outfits like the International Socialists (ISO) and Workers World Party (WWP) typically work through front groups who appeal to bourgeois liberals with talk of “peace and democracy,” calling for alternate

“priorities” (“education not occupation”), while studiously avoiding any mention of a fight against capitalism or for socialist revolution (see article, page 3).

Two groups which strike a more leftist posture are the League for the Revolutionary Party (LRP) and the Progressive Labor Party (PLP). While mouthing Marxist phrases, the LRP and PLP, with their respective social-democratic and Stalinist politics, end up on the wrong side of the class line. Each has its particular quirks, but during the second Cold War they chimed in on the imperialists’ anti-Soviet chorus. Labeling the USSR “state capitalism” (ISO), “statified capitalism” (LRP) or “imperialism” (PLP), they all *refused to defend the homeland of the October Revolution, despite its bureaucratic degeneration under Stalin and his heirs, against the imperialist onslaught.*

LRP for a Draft Imperialist Army

Following the brutal arrest of three students and a campus staff worker for protesting military recruiters at New York’s City College in March, the LRP issued a leaflet calling vaguely for the “broadest possible campaign for the dropping of all charges.” (The IG put out a leaflet calling for shutting down CCNY over this outrageous campus repression, see page 21.) While patting itself



Scene from Michael Moore film, *Fahrenheit 911*. Military recruiters “trolling” for prospects in parking lot of Flint, Michigan mall.

on the back, saying that it was “proud to have taken part in all the anti-imperialist, anti-racist and working-class actions at City College for the past twenty years,” the LRP judiciously neglected to mention in its flyer, coming in the midst of a struggle against recruiters on several City University (CUNY) campuses, that it **favors a military draft** (conscription). When black Democrats Charles Rangel and John Conyers came out for a draft on the eve of the invasion of Iraq, the LRP wrote:

“Since our ruling class must have an army, we prefer that it be drafted – not, like Rangel, because an all-out mobilization is necessary to fulfill imperialist goals, but because a ‘professional’ army is more easily disciplined and more loyal to its bourgeois paymasters.”

–“No Draft’ Is No Answer,” *Proletarian Revolution* No. 66, Winter 2003

What grotesque concern for the needs of the ruling class! The LRP can claim to be for the defeat of U.S. imperialism in Iraq, but by **opposing struggle against the introduction of military conscription in wartime**, the LRP is adding its grain of sand to **promoting imperialist militarism**. All the more so when it repeats its pseudo-Marxist arguments today as mounting U.S. casualties in Iraq have put the Pentagon in a bind. The Joint Chiefs of Staff need more troops to kill and die in enforcing their murderous occupation of Iraq? The LRP declares its “preference” on how to supply the “cannon fodder.” Trotskyists say instead that since the ruling class must have an army, **in fighting for socialist revolution we fight against every means by which the imperialist war machine gets its manpower**, whether by recruiters trying to hoodwink poor and minority students, or by a draft.

Going back to the 1950s, the political resumé of LRP founder Sy Landy is marked by the program of Max Shachtman, the renegade who broke with Trotskyism on the eve of World War II. Capitulating to the bourgeois liberal outcry over the Hitler-Stalin pact, Shachtman refused to defend the Soviet Union, homeland of the 1917 October Revolution, against imperialism, calling for a mythical “Third Camp” supposedly located somewhere between imperialism and the USSR. Trotsky insisted that despite the crimes of Stalin, the colossal conquest of a collectivized economy must

be defended against capitalist restoration. Trotsky stood for military defense of the Soviet degenerated workers state while calling for the workers to carry out a political revolution to oust the Stalinist bureaucracy, whose search for “peaceful coexistence” with imperialism endangered the existence of the USSR. “Those who cannot defend old positions will never conquer new ones,” he wrote. Shachtman, following the logic of his counterrevolutionary line, ended up openly embracing U.S. imperialism in the Korean and Vietnam wars.

Significantly, the latter-day Schachtmanites of the LRP came up with their pro-draft line right at the onset of Cold War II, when Democratic U.S. president Jimmy Carter wanted to bring back

the draft in order to fight the USSR in Afghanistan. The Soviet Union intervened in December 1979 to defend a wobbly secular regime in Kabul against a U.S.-orchestrated Islamic fundamentalist onslaught. When the liberal-nationalist Afghan government enacted a limited land reform and universal coeducation, reactionary landlords and mullahs rose up in opposition. But these “holy warriors” (*mujahedin*) soon became deadly pawns in the imperialists’ “great game.” The CIA mounted the largest operation in its history, recruiting, financing and heavily arming an army of tens of thousands of mercenary cutthroats to wage “*jihad*” against “godless communism.” The Stalinist bureaucrats in the Kremlin reacted purely defensively and eventually Gorbachev ordered a treacherous withdrawal.

The viscerally anti-Soviet LRP called Afghanistan an “inter-imperialist war” and attacked anti-draft protests from the right. “The liberal imperialist wing of the anti-draft ‘movement’ is suspicious of Carter’s Cold War moves and prefers a more cautious approach to save the inter-imperialist deal (detente) with the USSR,” wrote the LRP, trying to dismiss all opposition to the draft as a liberal plot (“Marxism and the Draft,” *Socialist Voice* No. 9, Summer 1980). In contrast, revolutionary Trotskyists (then organized in the Spartacist tendency) emphatically called to “Hail Red Army in Afghanistan!” and to extend the gains of the October Revolution to the Afghan peoples. We also called to “Stop Solidarność Counterrevolution!” in Poland, while most of the left in the West joined the imperialists in calling for “solidarity with Solidarity.” The LRP had its own peculiar twist, criticizing Solidarność leader Lech Walesa and Pope Wojtyła (John Paul II) for supposedly pushing the Polish workers onto their knees before the Stalinists, and claiming the Catholic Church was “a bastion of the ruling Stalinist power” (*Socialist Voice* No. 12, February-March 1981).

In justifying their “preference” for a military draft, the LRP argued that this was “an application, under different circumstances” of Leon Trotsky’s call for a “proletarian military policy” (PMP) in 1940. It claims that “Trotsky maintained that revolutionaries had to favor conscription and universal military training,” as if he (like they) favored a conscripted *imperialist* army. In fact, Trotsky called



Claf Ihaui/Spiegel

Which Side Are They On?

When Carter called for military draft to fight Soviets in Afghanistan, LRP denounced Soviet intervention as “imperialist” and declared “preference” for a draft U.S. army. Trotskyists hailed Red Army fighting U.S. imperialists’ “holy warriors” in Afghanistan. Left: Carter adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski takes aim in Khyber Pass. Right: Afghan women’s militia in 1988.

for “military training under workers control,” and wrote: “Conscription? Yes. By the bourgeois state? No” (“On Conscription,” July 1940). While the LRP outrageously pretends that Trotsky was also for the PMP in Nazi Germany (workers control of training for Hitler’s army?!), the founder of the Red Army was in fact appealing, albeit in a mistaken manner, to the workers’ desire to fight fascism, as he explicitly said. Yet this call undercut the correct insistence by Trotsky and the Fourth International that World War II was *not* a fight against fascism but an inter-imperialist war over carving up the world in which the workers had no side except to defend the Soviet Union.

The LRP willfully distorts Trotsky, but in fact his call for a “PMP” was a misdirected attempt to apply the methodology of the Transitional Program to an issue affecting the backbone of the capitalist state, the armed forces. To be clear, calling for trade-union control of military recruitment and training in a situation of dual power or great revolutionary agitation, such as during the Spanish Civil War, which was very much on Trotsky’s mind at the time, would be a different matter. We ourselves, then in the Spartacist League, called for union control of military training in Nicaragua in the 1980s when the petty-bourgeois Sandinista government was facing a U.S.-sponsored *contra* army. We wrote then:

“While the Sandinistas appeal to patriotism, building a republican army as in the Spanish Civil War, Trotskyists insist that it is necessary to construct a proletarian army to defeat the counterrevolution. Communists and class-conscious worker militants must call for *military training under trade-union control*, for the formation of *workers militias* based on the factories, for *soldiers committees* in the army and the *election of officers*.”

—“Nicaraguan Elections and Yankee Blackmail,” *Workers Vanguard* No. 367, 23 November 1984

In Nicaragua, where the capitalist army of the previous Somoza dictatorship had been destroyed, popular militias had been established and there was a war against counterrevolutionary forces, this call was entirely feasible, as part of a struggle to build a workers army. But calling for union control of military training in the U.S., where capitalist rule remained solid, on the eve of the

Second World War, was a step toward social patriotism and a concession to Allied war propaganda.*

The LRP also seeks to put Lenin’s imprimatur on their policy, citing the Bolshevik leader’s article, “The Military Program of the Proletarian Revolution” (September 1916). They quote his statement that women of an oppressed revolutionary class will tell their sons facing conscription to “learn the military art properly,” not in order to shoot their class brothers of other countries but to fight against the bourgeoisie. But Lenin is talking here of the response to an existing draft in the midst of a war in which all the armies were conscript armies, not about the attitude of the proletariat toward the *introduction* of military conscription. What Lenin had to say on that, in the same article, was:

“We are not in favor of a bourgeois militia; we are in favor only of a proletarian militia. Therefore, ‘not a penny, not a man’ not only for a standing army, but even for a bourgeois militia, even in countries like the United States or Switzerland, Norway, etc.”

Was Lenin supporting conscription by the capitalist state to an imperialist standing army? Obviously not.

Lenin was quoting the German socialist Wilhelm Liebknecht’s famous phrase “Not a Penny, Not a Man for Militarism,” the title of his famous 1887 leaflet explaining why the Socialists had refused to vote for Chancellor Otto von Bismarck’s bill to finance a conscript imperial army for the purposes of colonial conquest. Against this, Liebknecht called for the general arming of the people and the formation of a “people’s army.” The LRP also tries to claim Friedrich Engels’ support for bourgeois conscription, quoting his article “The Prussian Military Question and the German Workers Party,” in which Engels writes: “Universal conscription is the necessary and natural extension of universal suffrage; it enables the electorate to carry out its resolutions arms in hand....” (What the LRP leaves out here are the words “against any attempt at a coup d’état.”) Yet Engels’ article was written *in 1865*, that is, in the pre-imperialist epoch when Germany was still divided into a plethora of semi-feudal principalities, and when the Marxists *supported a war for German unification*.

But this is not just about the LRP scavenging and abusing



Where call for trade-union control of military recruitment and training was correct: women soldiers of Nicaragua's Sandinista Army, 1985.

quotes from Engels, Lenin and Trotsky. Its sophistry is intended to justify an ostensibly socialist organization *shamefully declaring that it "favors" a conscript army over a volunteer army in the midst of an imperialist war.* When the Pentagon can't find volunteers to fill its enlistment quota to continue the colonial occupation of Iraq and Afghanistan, the LRP declares that "no draft" is no answer," and indeed, that "a drafted army allows the workers to receive essential military training." Its claim that "we oppose any and all bourgeois armies – drafted, mercenary or hybrid" is a fig-leaf. Since "the capitalist state must retain a military force," the LRP declares which kind of *capitalist* military force it "prefers." Pacifists may push the illusion of "disarming" the bourgeoisie, but revolutionaries seek through mass protest and working-class action to hinder the bourgeoisie's ability to raise an army for imperialist invasion and colonial occupation. The LRP's policy, on the other hand, would make them *facilitators of imperialist militarism.*

In fact, the LRP's line goes back, not to Trotsky, Lenin and Engels, but to the pre-World War I social democrats. Jean Juarès, leader of the "moderate" wing of the French Socialist party, wrote a whole book, *L'Armée nouvelle* (1910), in which he declared, "Everywhere it is the workmen and socialists who demand military service for all." In the same book, Juarès rejects the statement of the *Communist Manifesto* that the workers have no fatherland, and instead declares that "Never would a proletariat which had abandoned the defense of national independence ... find vigor enough to conquer capitalism." German socialist August Bebel, speaking at the 1907 International Socialist Congress, explicitly rejected the thesis of the Manifesto, declaring patriotically: "What we fight is not the fatherland as such, which belongs to the proletariat far more than to the ruling classes, but the conditions that exist in this fatherland in the interest of the ruling classes."

And in a speech the same year on the budget in the Reichstag (imperial parliament), the SPD deputy Gustav Noske declared:

"Our position on the military system flows from our conception of the principle of nationalism....Let our people have the

best education, and let our youth receive the best possible physical training. Then we in Germany will have the best soldiers...."

Noske's infamous 1907 "defense of the fatherland" speech, along with the similar expressions by Bebel and Juarès – this is the heritage the LRP embraces, these are the true progenitors of its social-democratic "preference" for a conscript army.

The LRP's ritualistic disclaimer about "opposing" all bourgeois armies is empty rhetoric. The fundamental fact is that *these neo-Shachtmanite social democrats oppose any efforts to block the introduction of military conscription and favor a conscript imperialist army over a "volunteer" army, at a time of imperialist war when the Pentagon is frantic to fill its pipeline with new recruits.* The LRP's claim to be for the "defeat" of U.S. imperialism in Iraq is essentially empty. It is not combined with fighting for concrete pro-

letarian action in the imperialist countries, such as workers strikes against the war, "hot cargoing" military goods, etc. But the LRP's denunciation of any and all opposition to the draft, if it had any effect, would amount to concrete aid to the imperialist war effort.

The LRP cynically equates all opposition to introduction of military conscription with calls for draft evasion. Groups such as "No Draft, No Way" do, in fact, call for "draft resistance" including individual draft evasion. In this they are supported by the ISO, WWP and Revolutionary Communist Party, through their respective antiwar fronts (Campus Antiwar Network, Troops Out Coalition, Not in Our Name). This "option" was fairly widespread during the Vietnam War, but was largely limited to the middle class. Young workers were generally not able to dodge the draft, having no "2-S" (student) deferments available to them. While opposing introduction of the draft, we stand with Lenin, who insisted in his January 1917 lecture on the 1905 Russian Revolution that:

"It is not sufficient simply to denounce, revile and 'repudiate' militarism, to criticize and prove that it is harmful; it is foolish peacefully to refuse to perform military service. The task is to keep the revolutionary consciousness of the proletariat tense and train its best elements, not only in a general way, but concretely, so that when popular ferment reaches the highest pitch, they will put themselves at the head of the revolutionary army."

Where there is an existing military draft, Trotskyists explain that individual 'resistance' is not only powerless but means radicals voluntarily separating themselves from the mass of working-class youth. If drafted, rather than proclaiming "we won't go," class-conscious workers encourage struggle against the war from within the ranks of the military, while gaining military training. Such struggle became quite widespread during the later years of the Vietnam War, with over a dozen national soldiers' antiwar organizations and newspapers, scores of coffee houses for antiwar soldiers, and hundreds of attacks annually on officers by draftees fed up with the slaughter.

(Already in Iraq, the first instances have been reported of “fragging” U.S. officers.) But using the opening to raise the revolutionary consciousness of workers in uniform and train the best elements is quite different from *favoring the introduction of a draft in an imperialist war*.

PLP Denies National Oppression

The Progressive Labor Party, for its part, purports not only to be communist, but uniquely communist because of its singular rejection of socialism, which Marxists from Marx on have insisted is the necessary initial stage of constructing a communist society. Dismissing the need for development of the productive forces to make possible the generalized abundance on which a classless society can be built, the PLP talked of the possibility of building communism “if a group of teenagers were dropped off on an uninhabited island with nothing but stone tools” (*Road to Revolution IV* [1982])! PL started out as Communist Party Stalinists who became Maoists, striking a militant, if muddle-headed stance. They still retain vestiges of their earlier line(s), claiming that fascism is here, for example, and are virulent Trotsky-haters. But lately, the PLP has been drifting back to “progressive” liberalism reflecting its CP origins.

If the LRP tries to cloak its opportunism with Marxist erudition, the PLP likes to pose as stereotypical American workers (proclaiming “don’t be a sucker for the bosses,” calling Soviet leaders “skunks” over Vietnam, etc.). One favorite PL chant from the ’60s, only intelligible with a heavy Brooklyn accent, was “Off the bosses’ armed forces!” On the question of the draft, the PLP’s newspaper *Challenge* has had a number of articles about struggles against the introduction of conscription, while advocating working within the capitalist army. But while the LRP yearns for the draft to send young workers into the army, PL encourages supporters to *volunteer* for the army and ship out to Iraq. “One of the hardest things to realize as a communist is that I’m actually going to war, for a cause with which I completely disagree,” writes “Red Soldier” in a gee-whiz account in *Challenge* (17 November 2004).

As discontent mounts within the colonial occupation forces in Iraq, one cannot categorically exclude work within the imperialist army, which has significant internal contradictions. The refusal of the heavily black, South Carolina-based 343rd Quartermaster Company to obey a direct order to deliver fuel to a base north of Baghdad last October is vivid evidence of spreading discontent. The fact that the 23 Army Reserve soldiers were disciplined but not court-martialed indicates that the Pentagon brass fears that the example of this clear *mutiny* could spread. To dismiss these soldiers as simply a “mercenary army,” as the LRP does, is to ignore these contradictions; to talk simply of an “economic draft,” as much of the “antiwar movement” does, glosses over the fact that these soldiers in fact volunteered.

But the PLP’s orientation of sending people into the professional army long predates the present situation. And it is part of a general policy: *Challenge* regularly runs letters from supporters who sign “Red Churchgoer” and the like, recounting PLPers’ interchanges with fellow (pro-Democratic Party) congregants. So much for Marxist atheist materialism! The fact that these supposed communists could even conceive of such “tactics” shows that they haven’t the slightest regard for (or even conception of)

the fundamental *class line* separating the bourgeoisie from the proletariat. Since its Maoist phase, PL has equated the Soviet degenerated workers state with imperialism, and for years it routinely referred to pro-capitalist union misleaders as “social-fascist” and even “fascist.” (Lately, the PLP has taken a softer line on the labor bureaucracy as it joins bureaucratic lash-ups to try to get into union office.)

PL’s claim that the Soviet Union (after Stalin) and China (even before Deng Xiaoping) had become capitalist – the flip side of the Stalinist dogma that under Stalin and Mao the USSR and China were “socialist” – is an idealist, anti-Marxist conception that the class character of the state changes depending on the presence of communist or capitalist *ideas*. Yet Progressive Labor has had to recognize, under the relentless pounding of material reality, that the actual counterrevolution that took place during 1989-92 and led to the destruction of the Soviet Union had “devastating consequences” on revolutionary struggle worldwide. Thus the latest issue of the PLP magazine *The Communist* (Spring 2005) states, in an article (“‘Dark Night Shall Have Its End’”) reeking of historical pessimism:

“The most significant error our Party made in the period following *Road to Revolution IV* [1982] was to underestimate the significance of the old movement’s collapse. We correctly identified the restoration of capitalism in the former Soviet Union and China. We failed, however, to understand the devastating consequences that this development would have on the revolutionary process world wide and the new life it would breathe into U.S. imperialism....

“In the decade and a half since the Soviet Union’s voluntary break-up [in 1992], U.S. rulers have received a blank check to wreak murder and mayhem in the former Yugoslavia, Afghanistan, Iraq, and elsewhere. The end of socialism, and the subsequent (though possibly temporary removal) of the USSR as a key rival imperialist superpower, also enabled the U.S. rulers to dodge many of capitalism’s inevitable contradictions. Even more critical, it has had a chilling effect on class struggle all over the world.”

Thinking PLers ought to be scratching their heads asking how all this could be the result of the restoration of capitalism in the Soviet Union, if that allegedly took place in 1956 when Khrushchev took power, as PLP claims.

Since these self-proclaimed “communists” refused to defend the bureaucratized post-Stalin Soviet Union against imperialism, it’s no surprise that PL doesn’t defend Iraq against imperialist war and colonial occupation. At the time of the U.S./UK invasion, in March-April 2003, *Challenge* regularly referred to the Saddam Hussein regime as “fascist,” and did not call to resist the invasion. Since then, PLP publications have frequently referred to the “the Jihadist war against US imperialism,” and to “Jihadists, nationalists, liberal Democrats” who “have no solutions for us.” Certainly, the Sunni Islamic fundamentalists, Shiite theocratic gangs and remnants of the brutal Baathist Iraqi nationalist dictatorship which today dominate resistance to the occupation are no friends of the Iraqi working people. But following Lenin, genuine communist opponents of imperialism greet all blows by the occupied against the colonial occupiers. We also call on Iraqi workers to organize resistance on a *class* basis, politically independent of and organizationally separate from the reactionary Islamists and bourgeois

nationalists, to mobilize mass class struggle against the imperialist occupation. And *that* PLP does *not* call for.

In discussions with supporters of the Internationalist Group at antiwar marches and conferences, PLers have argued that the Iraq war is a war between two bosses' governments, in which workers have no side. They refuse to recognize the existence of *national* oppression. We pointed to the example of the Italian invasion of Ethiopia in 1935, where the Italian imperialists subjugated a nation ruled by a theocratic regime headed by the emperor Haile Selassie, which rested on feudalistic serfdom (particularly of the subjugated majority Oromo people by Amhara masters and the Abyssinian Orthodox church) and maintained slavery of black Africans. This was recognized by no less than Marcus Garvey, and Mussolini's propagandists justified their invasion as abolishing slavery (just as Bush and liberal Democrats justified the invasion of Afghanistan as liberating Afghan women). What was the Marxist position in that conflict?

Communists were duty-bound to ***defend feudal Ethiopia, a country fighting for independence against Italian imperialism***. But just as PLers see the Iraq war and occupation today as a conflict between two groups of bosses, leaders of the British Independent Labour Party in the 1930s declared that the Italo-Ethiopian war was "a conflict between two rival dictators." Leon Trotsky wrote, in a letter to an English comrade:

"To these politicians [of the ILP] it appears that this fact relieves the proletariat of the duty of making a choice between two dictators. They thus define the character of the war by the political *form* of the state, in the course of which they themselves regard this political form in a quite superficial and purely descriptive manner, without taking into consideration the social foundations of both 'dictatorships.'... Should a dictator place himself at the head of the next uprising of the Indian people in order to smash the British yoke – would [ILP spokesman James] Maxton then refuse this dictator his support? Yes or no? If not, why does he refuse his support to the Ethiopian 'dictator' who is attempting to cast off the Italian yoke?"

"If Mussolini triumphs, it means the reinforcement of fascism, the strengthening of imperialism, and the discouragement of the colonial peoples in Africa and elsewhere. The victory of the Negus [Haile Selassie], however, would mean a mighty blow not only at Italian imperialism but at imperialism as a whole, and would lend a powerful impulsion to the rebellious forces of the oppressed peoples. One must really be completely blind not to see this."

–Leon Trotsky, "On Dictators and the Heights of Oslo" (April 1936)

Not only Trotsky called for defending colonial peoples even if they fought under reactionary leaders in battles against imperialism. During World War I, Lenin wrote that "if tomorrow, Morocco were to declare war on France, or India on Britain, or Persia or China on Russia, and so on, those would be 'just' and 'defensive' wars, *irrespective* of who attacked first; any socialist would wish the oppressed, dependent and unequal states victory over the oppressor, slave-holding and predatory 'great' powers" (*Socialism and War*, August 1915).

Lenin wrote powerfully in defense of the reactionary-led "Boxer Rebellion" (1898-1900) against European encroachment

in China, as Marx and Engels did of the "Sepoy Revolt" (1857-58) in India (see pp. 36-40). Even at a time when Marx held an erroneous view (later abandoned) of colonial rule bringing about economic progress, although entailing tremendous suffering of the colonized masses, he defended revolts by the colonial subjects without prettifying their reactionary leaderships. This flows from the recognition in the *Communist Manifesto* that for the proletariat to free itself it must free the vast majority of humanity from capitalist exploitation and the many-sided oppression it entails. Indeed, as the Second Congress of the Communist International insisted, in order to struggle against the clergy, Islamic and other reactionary and medieval elements, and to break the hold of the khans, landowners and mullahs, the communists must uphold the independence of the proletarian movement while being the most determined fighters for liberation from the national oppression of the colonies and semi-colonies.

Progressive Labor says the line of all Trotskyist groups includes "support for nationalism, whether 'progressive' or not, among 'oppressed nations'" (*The Communist*, Spring 2004). This is radically false. What is true is that the supposed "communists" of PL, in order to oppose nationalism, find it necessary to put the very existence of oppressed nations in ironic quotation marks. Authentic Trotskyists stand with Lenin in *opposing* the bourgeois ideology of nationalism while fighting all forms of national oppression. The Fourth International's program of *permanent revolution* calls on communists in the colonial and semi-colonial countries to fight for agrarian revolution and national liberation from the imperialist yoke through the *working-class conquest of power* at the head of the impoverished peasantry and oppressed peoples, undertaking socialist tasks and extension of the revolution internationally. As part of this struggle, Trotsky insisted "It will be the duty of the international proletariat to aid the oppressed countries in the war against oppressors. ... The defeat of *every* imperialist government in the struggle with the workers state or with a colonial country is the lesser evil" (*Transitional Program*).

A genuine struggle against imperialist war cannot be waged by means of popular-front pacifist coalitions in collaboration with bourgeois liberals, as the reformists are always cobbling together – usually with a new front for every war. To put an end to more than a century of endless imperialist wars requires waging class war against the capitalist system that spawns them. As part of this struggle, the treacherous role of groups such as the League for the Revolutionary Party and the Progressive Labor Party which use Marxist verbiage to hide their capitulation to the bourgeoisie on crucial issues (favoring conscription to the imperialist military and refusing to defend oppressed nations under attack by imperialism) must be firmly exposed. As Trotsky's 1934 theses "War and the Fourth International" underscored:

"The exposure of the thoroughly reactionary, putrified and robber nature of modern capitalism, the destruction of democracy, reformism and pacifism, the urgent and burning need of the proletariat to find a safe path away from the imminent disaster put the international revolution on the agenda with renewed force."

Behind the War in the Antiwar Movement

Opportunists Squabble Over How to Tail After Democrats

Mobilize Workers' Power to Defeat Imperialist War!

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MARCH 17 – On the third anniversary of the U.S. invasion of Iraq, the imperialist invaders are in deep trouble. With close to 200,000 “coalition” troops and mercenaries, plus an Iraqi puppet army, police and paramilitary forces of over 350,000, they have been unable to reduce the insurgency. Well over 100,000 Iraqis have

died as a result of the war and occupation, in addition to 3,000 deaths among the occupation forces (U.S., “allies” and “contractors”). After every bogus gunpoint election, the corrupt quisling politicians are at each others’ throats, dispelling any pretense of “democracy.” The Iraqi economy is a wreck, with oil production, electricity and water supplies still well below the levels achieved by Saddam Hussein, despite United Nations sanctions. The Iraqi strong man (and former CIA hit man) has made a mockery of the show trial against him, using it as a platform to denounce the “victors’ justice” and call for resistance to the occupation. And day by day, the country lurches toward full-scale civil war between Shiite, Kurdish and Sunni communalists.

Meanwhile on the home front, popular support for the war has gone up in smoke. The most recent polls show that 57 per-



Internationalist photo

Internationalist Group contingent in 19 March 2005 antiwar march in El Barrio, NYC.

cent of the American public think the Iraq war was a mistake, 60 percent say the war is going badly or very badly, two-thirds say George Bush doesn’t have a clear plan for dealing with Iraq. Last November, the first leading Democrat, Pennsylvania Congressman and longtime war hawk John Murtha, came out for pulling U.S. troops out of Iraq. Now even far right-wing Republicans like William F. Buckley are saying that the U.S. has “failed” in Iraq and that Bush’s problem is “acknowledgment of defeat.” Currently, the administration wants to deflect attention from its Iraqi debacle by rattling U.S. nukes at Iran.

Yet even though the U.S. war machine is mired in the quick sands of the Near East, the “antiwar movement” is in the doldrums. It has long been rent by squabbling that has now escalated to an internecine war that oscillates between cold and hot. This weekend each antiwar group is holding its own sepa-

Throw Military Recruiters Out of the Schools!

**For Workers Strikes Against the War – “Hot Cargo” Military Goods
Break with the Republicrats – For a Revolutionary Workers Party!**

rate protest. In New York, the *Troops Out Coalition* (TOC) and its parent, the International Action Center (IAC) led by the Workers World Party (WWP), will demonstrate on March 18 at the armed forces recruiting station in Times Square. Simultaneously, *Not in Our Name* (NION), led by the Revolutionary Communist Party, will be at the army recruiting station in the Bronx. International A.N.S.W.E.R., led by the Party for Socialism and Liberation (PSL – a 2004 split from the WWP) will go to the Bronx recruiting station the next day. The *Campus Antiwar Network* (CAN), led by the Internationalist Socialist Organization (ISO), is limiting itself to low-key campus actions. And the other major player, *United for Peace and Justice* (UFPJ), led by the Committees of Correspondence for Democracy and Socialism (CoC) along with the Communist Party (CP), is making its big push a month later, on April 29.

Yet in their demands, these outfits hardly differ at all. They all call for “stop the war,” “bring the troops home,” and some variant of “money for jobs, not for war” – as if the imperialist slaughter in Iraq was a matter of foreign policy, budget priorities and U.S. casualties. From the standpoint of Marxism, of the revolutionary internationalist program of V.I. Lenin and Leon Trotsky, these antiwar coalitions are all class-collaborationist “popular fronts.” They seek to “unite” reformist pseudo-socialists with bourgeois liberals on the basis of cleaning up the U.S.’ act, appealing to the “peace is patriotic” crowd with calls like “Support our troops, bring them home.”

The Internationalist Group and League for the Fourth International fight instead to *defeat* U.S. imperialism and *defend* the peoples and countries under U.S. attack. In contrast to the opportunists’ red-white-and-blue appeals to “bring the troops home,” we call to *drive the colonial occupiers out of Iraq and Afghanistan*. Rather than spreading pacifist illusions about “stopping” the war, we call for *class war against the imperialist war*. We defend the right of the theocratic Iranian regime and the North Korean deformed workers state to get any weapons necessary to defend against the imperialist warmongers. Instead of tailing after “antiwar” Democrats, we fight for *workers strikes against the war*, for transport workers to “hot cargo” military goods and for building a *revolutionary workers party*.

So what is behind all the sniping between the competing pop-front antiwar coalitions? In a statement last December 12, the UFPJ announced it “Rejects Future Work with ANSWER.” The stated grounds were complaints about organizational problems in the Washington, D.C. march last September 24 that was co-sponsored by the two groups. ANSWER responded on December 16 with its own complaints, but beyond disputes over who went over their allotted platform time or was responsible for the lead banner ending up in the middle of the march, it pointed to broader political reasons for the UFPJ’s decision to break off relations. These include the latter’s unwillingness to include slogans in defense of the Palestinians against Israeli occupation as central demands of antiwar demos; and “UFPJ’s increasing orientation toward and flirtation with the Democratic Party.”

ANSWER noted that “In the core of UFPJ’s leadership are political parties and organizations that worked tirelessly for John Kerry and the election of Democrats.” It accused the UFPJ, from

its inception, of being on a “relentless path of splitting the movement,” and traced the disputes back to the 1990-91 Gulf War, when the predecessors of the UFPJ called for U.N. sanctions instead of U.S. invasion. It pointed to the “great excitement about John Murtha’s disaffection with the war” in the UFPJ, which wrote that the Pennsylvania Democrat “deserves praise and support for his courageous leadership.” Murtha isn’t for withdrawal of U.S. troops from the Near East, ANSWER points out, only for their “redeployment” somewhere outside Iraq. But, it quickly adds, “fewer U.S. soldiers...in harm’s way” would be “a welcome development.”

It is certainly true that UFPJ tailors its politics to the measure of the Democratic Party and bourgeois liberals generally. Its political complaints against ANSWER (laid out in an article by Bill Weinberg of the War Resisters League, “The Question of International ANSWER”) echo the litany of right-wingers and professional red-baiters like Christopher Hitchens, pointing to the WWP/IAC’s adulation of Serbia’s Slobodan Milosevic, Iraq’s Saddam Hussein and the Kim dynasty in North Korea, and the WWP’s support for the crushing of the 1956 Hungarian Revolution. In fact, Workers World split from Trotskyism to embrace Stalinists from Mao Zedong to Fidel Castro and Kim Il Sung, as well as nationalist anti-communist butchers like Milosevic and Hussein. Yet the central leadership of UFPJ is chock full of Stalinists and ex-Stalinist social democrats who also supported the suppression of the Hungarian workers uprising, hailed Kim, etc. What hypocrisy!

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Seeking to cohabit with liberal Democrats is no preserve of the UFPJ. Workers World and its various offshoots have always done it. In the 1990s, they were the “best builders” of demonstrations for black Democrat Jesse Jackson. In fact, *all* the antiwar coalitions are desperately seeking Democrats to grace their speakers’ platforms – class collaboration is the name of their poplar-front game. The UFPJ is just cruder about it than the IAC/ANSWER/TONC. Thus in the run-up to the 2004 election, the UFPJ sponsored the huge march outside the Republican convention in NYC on the slogan, “No to the Bush Agenda” – not-so-veiled support for the “anybody but Bush” agenda of voting for Democrat John Kerry (who wanted more U.S. troops in Iraq) or at most for xenophobic populist Ralph Nader. Equally blatant is the RCP/NION whose latest campaign, “The World Can’t Wait – Drive Out the Bush Regime,” is endorsed by Democratic Congressmen John Conyers, Bobby Rush and Maxine Waters, Jesse Jackson Sr. and none other than Brig. General (retired) Janis Karpinski, the war criminal who commanded the Abu Ghraib torture prison in Iraq. Talk about shameless!

Under pressure from the right, ANSWER has lately been affecting an “anti-imperialist” stance. At a March 11 session of the annual Left Forum in New York, the UFPJ’s Leslie Cagan faced off with ANSWER’s Brian Becker, who declared that it was necessary to go back to the Bolsheviks in World War I, that the Democrats supported the war, etc. But as a spokesman for the Internationalist Group noted in the discussion, ANSWER has always sought Democrats as star speakers for their antiwar demos. If they can’t get Jesse Jackson they’ll go for Dennis Kucinich, Al Sharpton or Charles Rangel. And, the IG speaker pointed out, in claiming to be guided by the Bolsheviks, Becker leaves out a key point: Lenin’s call for the *defeat* of “one’s own” imperialism in an imperialist war.

Anyone serious about combating imperialist wars would demand *capitalist politicians out*, as they are *all* defenders of a system of war, poverty and racism (and this goes for minor bourgeois parties as well, like the Greens and New York’s Working Families Party, who seek to keep the discontent of those who can’t stomach voting for the Democrats safely within the bourgeois electoral system). It is necessary to fight for the revolutionary class independence of the workers from all wings of the capitalist ruling class.

We Trotskyists call to *mobilize working-class struggle against the war*. In New York City, where Transport Workers Union Local 100 gave a demonstration of workers’ power in a three-day transit strike in December, a refusal by dock workers to handle war cargo or any strike action against the war by the transit workers would be worth a thousand “peace crawls” dominated by bourgeois politics.

Unlike fake leftists who call for “unity of the antiwar movement,” we say the capitalist war machine cannot be stopped by voting out the current war party or having a bigger peace parade. It’s not just “Bush’s war,” it’s a bipartisan war drive. It’s not just “neo-liberalism,” it’s capitalism. It’s not just “globalization,” it’s imperialism. It’s not a policy, it’s a system that will keep producing war after war after war until it is *smashed* by *international socialist revolution*. ■

Test of War...

continued from page 43

their relationship to the mainland...

“Independence, many Puerto Ricans fear not without justice, would deprive it immediately of the benefits, which are now necessary to its distorted economy, of its present inclusion in the U.S. economic structure.”

What this comes down to is an acceptance, supposedly in the name of “democratic” respect for the will of the Puerto Rican people, of the continuation of colonial domination of the island. Such “socialist” colonialism as advocated by Shachtman/Draper’s ISL in the 1950s and now by the SL/ICL today is a pro-imperialist policy contrary to everything Lenin and Trotsky stood for. It is directly counterposed to the program of the Communist International, whose famous “21 conditions” included requiring of parties in countries that possess colonies that they demand “that their imperialist compatriots should be thrown out of the colonies.” With their new line, the SL/ICL would not have made it past the door of the Comintern. And it should by now come as no surprise that *the SL shares its social-colonialist line on Puerto Rico with the LRP*. Indeed, the LRP’s article “Self-Determination, Independence and Revolution” could have been ghost-written by *WV*, for it contains identical phrases, e.g.: “Today, while we defend the right of self-determination, we do not advocate secession” for Puerto Rico (*Proletarian Revolution*, Winter 2000). In reality, it all goes back to Shachtman.

This is underlined by the fact that the same position on Puerto Rico is taken by the ISO, the other group in the U.S. whose heritage goes back to Shachtman (via the International Socialists). While the LRP and the SL pose as “hards,” the mushy social democrats of the ISO show where such lines lead. While the SL and LRP criticize the Democrats on the “peace” rally platforms, the SL no longer characterizes them as popular fronts (having now decided that this is impossible in the absence of a mass workers party) and for weeks uncritically praised black Democratic Congresswoman Barbara Lee, the darling of the San Francisco Bay Area pop frontists, for voting against war on Afghanistan (*WV* failed to mention that Lee voted *for* the \$40 billion war budget).

We are reminded of Lenin’s remark in “The Tasks of the Proletariat in Our Revolution” (April 1917):

“Only lazy people do not swear by internationalism these days. Even the chauvinist defencists, even Plekhanov and Potresov, even Kerensky, call themselves internationalists. It becomes the duty of the proletarian party all the more urgently, therefore, to clearly, precisely and definitely counterpose internationalism in deed to internationalism in word.”

That is what the Internationalist Group and League for the Fourth International has sought to do in raising the Leninist program for defense of Afghanistan and Iraq and defeat of the imperialist invaders. We not only call for but also have sought to organize, within the limits of our forces, working-class action against the imperialist war. We seek to build a party that embodies the revolutionary program of Lenin and Trotsky and fights to reforge the Fourth International as the world party of socialist revolution. ■

