

**Break with the Democrats, the Other Party  
of War and Racism! For a Workers Party!**

## U.S. Occupation Forces Out of Iraq Now!

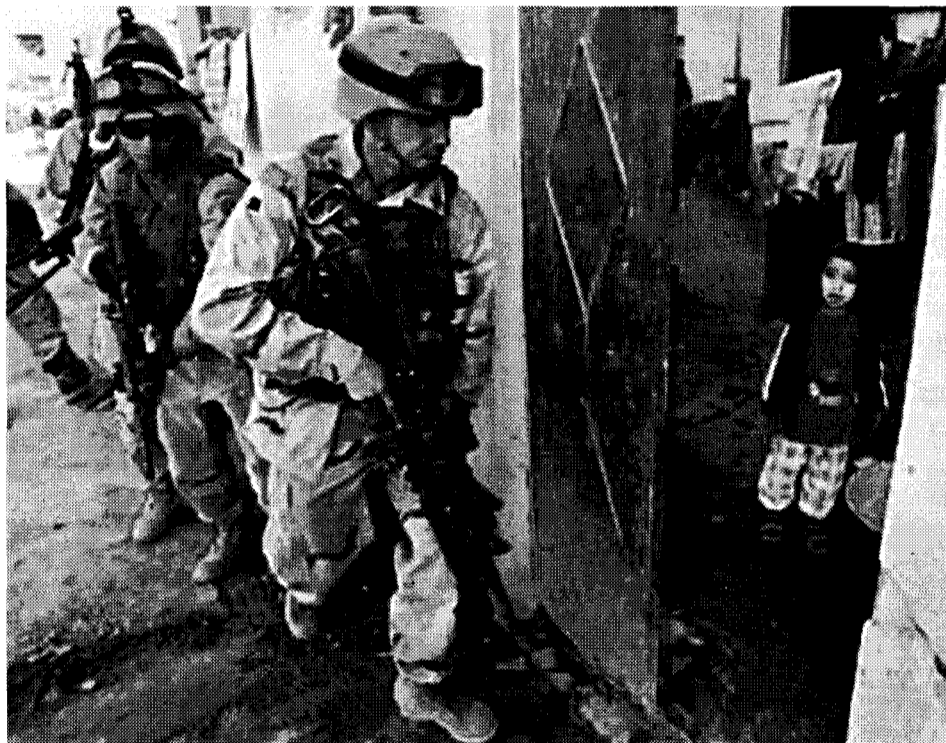
### No Illusions in the UN!

*We print below, edited for publication, a presentation by Spartacist League member Kathleen Harris given at an SL forum in New York City on November 13.*

On October 25, as probably most of you know, there was a pretty big demonstration in Washington, D.C. against the occupation of Iraq. We were there, of course. Comrades got into some interesting conversations, got names of people interested in learning more about socialism and sold a lot of our literature. In talking about it afterwards, though, one comrade remarked that people kept saying “we”—as in “We have to pull our troops out of Iraq,” or “Why did we oppose the United Nations in going to war?” The UN and the occupation troops are obviously political questions, which I’m going to try to address tonight. But I’m going to start with a Marxist grammar lesson and pick on this pronoun “we.” Because if you’re interested in changing this country and the world we’re living in, you have to start by recognizing that it can’t be done as long as you buy into the idea embodied in “we the people.”

That phrase—or the version of it that was rammed down all our throats especially after September 11, “United we stand”—is a myth. It’s designed and utilized to obscure the huge and growing divide between the oppressed who make up the vast majority of the world, and the arrogant and powerful capitalist class seeking to dominate and exploit them for its own interests.

The idea that there is one American people, or one German people, or one Iraqi people, all of whom are responsible for the actions of their respective ruling classes, is accepted among all sorts of political tendencies. It’s one thing shared by the Bush administration and the criminals who rammed passenger jets into the World Trade Center. In perpetuating the idea that American dishwashers and secretaries share responsibility for the crimes of U.S. imperialism, these murderers did a real service to the world’s biggest terrorists, the U.S. imperialists, who seized the opportunity they’d been waiting for to



Reuters photos

**Above: U.S. occupation troops terrorize Baghdad neighborhood, October 27. Below: U.S. Army vehicle destroyed by anti-occupation insurgents in Falluja, October 22.**



whip up patriotism here and slam U.S. troops into the Near East.

The obvious question, of course, is why? What makes Iraq, or a vastly more backward, tribal country like Afghanistan, such a prize to the Bush administration that it’s obviously staked so much on trying to control them? The way it’s described by liberals, Greens and some so-called Marxists can be boiled down to this: Iraq has oil, yuppies need it to drive their SUVs. Therefore, the U.S. is grabbing it so Americans can continue in their selfish, petroleum-burning, ozone-destroying lifestyles. But this really doesn’t cut it. If you took that kind of argument to its logical conclusion, you would have to conclude that the reason for the Reagan administration’s invasion of the tiny black Caribbean island of

Grenada in the early ’80s was because they absolutely had to have *its* key export, nutmeg.

There are various reasons imperialism breeds war—not as a consciously chosen policy (which would mean that the imperialists can also choose *not* to pursue it) but, inevitably, as a product of the capitalist system. With Iraq, the U.S. imperialists

wanted to show that defying them isn’t going to be tolerated. A woman named Ellen Meiksins Wood, who’s obviously some kind of Marxist, made this point in a really effective, clear speech at “Marxism 2003,” a conference in London, this past summer. In the speech, which was reprinted in *Against the Current* (No. 106, September-October 2003), Wood underlined a point we’ve made in *WV* from the beginning:

“Sure, in Iraq there’s the question of oil, and also the consolidation of the U.S. military presence in the region, while getting out of Saudi Arabia. But I think it’s safe to say that, whatever other objectives the United States may have had, one of their main objectives was, in their own words, ‘shock and awe’—not just to shock and awe Saddam Hussein or even other recalcitrant regimes in the region, though that was certainly a major factor, especially in relation to Iran, but also to shock and awe the whole world, not least its own allies.”

In another part of the speech addressing the massive strength of the U.S. military, she commented, “This force is not just bigger and more powerful than any single conceivable enemy, or even all enemies combined, but—and this may be even more important—bigger and more powerful than all its friendly competitors, singly or together.” In his 1916 work *Imperialism: the Highest Stage of Capitalism*, Lenin defined imperialism as “a struggle of the great powers for the economic and political division of the world,” characterized by the quest for spheres of influence, for the control of markets, raw materials and cheap labor.

We insisted it was urgently necessary to **take the side of Iraq** against the vastly more powerful forces of U.S. imperialism. Leninists have long argued that in a war between an oppressed semicolonial country and an imperialist power like the U.S., a defeat of the imperialists represents a victory for the oppressed all over the world. There’s a qualitative difference between bloody U.S. imperialism, the pre-eminent imperialist power of the world that has slaughtered and will continue to slaughter millions upon millions of people, and a tinpot dictatorship such as Hussein’s Iraq.

Hussein was a bloody dictator. This fact didn’t bother the U.S. when he was useful to them. The U.S. helped install his party, the Ba’ath Party, in power, first

*continued on page 8*

### China

**Defeat Imperialist Drive  
for Counterrevolution!...4**



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# End the Receivership of Local 241! Prepare for Strike Action of All Transit Workers!

## Chicago Transit Workers Under the Gun

CHICAGO, December 1—In a clear confirmation of the anti-union, pro-capitalist nature of “binding arbitration,” a labor arbitrator has handed the Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) a victory over the drivers, mechanics and other bus division workers of Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU) Local 241. On November 21, after working without a contract for four years, ATU members had a rotten contract rammed down their throats that attacks the jobs, working conditions and incomes of the members of this predominantly black workforce.

Local 241's contract expires on December 31, the same day as the sellout deal thrust upon the rail division workers of ATU Local 308. In May 2001, Local 308 president Jerry Williams broke with the tradition of joint bargaining by Locals 241 and 308, negotiating a separate contract with the CTA. After the Local 308 membership became aware of the consequences of Williams' shameless give-backs and concessions, he was voted out of office—and was then quickly rewarded by the company with a management job.

Workers should reject any attempts by the ATU bureaucrats to once again extend the existing contract, which can only lead to a rerun—getting screwed via arbitration or a sweetheart deal for the company. The upcoming contract expirations should be the occasion for a powerful joint fight by the transit unions against the CTA, which is essential to stopping the company assault on union jobs.

But earlier this year, the ATU International placed Local 241 in receivership, paving the way for the arbitrator's ruling. The International bureaucracy's receivership (“trusteeship”) of Local 241 ties the union's hands behind its back. It's a vital task for all Chicago ATU members to break the no-struggle, anti-democratic “trusteeship” that deprives members of the right to elect their representatives and even the right to vote on issues at a union meeting.

**Bus division transit workers must take back their local and elect a leadership based on a program of class struggle. Militants in both ATU locals should fight to build a joint mass meeting to prepare a**

**strike, including all 17 unions representing CTA workers. Transit workers have the power to slow the nation's third-largest city to a crawl and turn the Loop (downtown Chicago) into a parking lot. No contract, no work! One out, all out! This would pave the way for a single industrial union representing all Chicago transit workers.**

Conscious militants know that in today's climate, many workers feel real apprehension about going out in the face of a sagging economy and actively hostile governments in the White House and City Hall. But the hard fact is that anything the labor movement has ever won is the result of union organization and determination on the picket lines. Look at the recent strike by Chicago sanitation



WV Photo  
ATU Local 241 members at downtown Chicago contract rally, January 24.

workers, who told the bosses to shove their “last best offer,” stood firm on the picket lines for nine days and won a pay hike with no cuts in their health benefits.

The Local 241 arbitration settlement must have filled nearly every item on the company's Christmas list. ATU members are justly angry at being cheated of back pay, and now face attacks on work schedules (“rostering”) and the

*continued on page 11*

### Free Palestinian Activist Farouk Abdel-Muhti!

The following protest letter was issued by the Partisan Defense Committee, a legal and social defense organization associated with the Spartacist League, on December 1. Farouk Abdel-Muhti is currently in solitary confinement. Protest letters should be sent to David J. Venturella, Assistant Commissioner for Detention and Removal, Headquarters Post Detention Unit, Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement, 801 I Street, NW, Suite 900, Washington, D.C. 20536.

We write in outrage over the brutal beating of immigrant detainee and Palestinian activist Farouk Abdel-Muhti. On November 19, 2003, two Bergen County Jail prison guards punched and kicked Mr. Abdel-Muhti to the ground for the supposed crime of having literature critical of the government, including that published by the Partisan Defense Committee. Just who are these armed thugs to censor what Mr. Abdel-Muhti or any other prisoner reads? To call this a grotesque violation of First Amendment rights would seem an understatement. We have also been told Mr. Abdel-Muhti's medicine for high blood pressure and a thyroid condition has been confiscated. We demand a stop to the brutalization of this political prisoner.

Farouk Abdel-Muhti was abducted from his Queens apartment in the aftermath of September 11, 2001 and has been

unjustly incarcerated for 583 days! He should not have spent even a second in your facilities. He was arrested in April 2002 only because he was an outspoken activist for the besieged Palestinian people. For more than a year and a half Mr. Abdel-Muhti has been shunted from prison to prison and singled out for special punishment because of his political beliefs. You are surely aware that Mr. Abdel-Muhti's continued imprisonment comes in violation of your own repressive standards. In the 2001 case *Zadvydas v. Davis*, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that immigrants facing deportation could only be detained for a maximum of six months. As we have from the onset of his abduction and detention, the Partisan Defense Committee once again demands that Farouk Abdel-Muhti be released immediately!

The despicable treatment of Farouk Abdel-Muhti is representative of the fate of unknown hundreds of immigrant detainees facing wholesale violations of civil liberties, not to mention norms of human decency. This is part of a systematic campaign representing a qualitative diminution of rights for workers and the oppressed which goes along with the U.S. war against and occupation of Iraq. We continue to struggle for the freedom of all the detainees.

We say again: Free Farouk Abdel-Muhti now! ■

### Letter

### On ILWU Support for UFCW Strike

New York City  
21 November 2003

Dear *Workers Vanguard*,

The article “Bureaucrats, Democrats Knife L.A. Transit Workers” (WV No. 814, 21 November) refers to a November 10 rally of 4,000 trade unionists held in San Pedro in solidarity with the UFCW strike against three Southern California supermarket chains and notes the participation in the rally of longshoremen, Teamsters and teachers. In reporting on this, the article failed to mention an important aspect of the event: longshoremen organized in ILWU Local 13 called a stop work meeting (using a provision in their contract) in order to join this rally. Some 3,000 longshoremen joined a UFCW picket of locked-out UFCW members outside an Albertsons market, shutting it down for

an hour, and then marched on to the rally. The ILWU stop work meeting meant that the entire Port of Los Angeles/Long Beach was effectively shut down for the whole eight-hour swing shift and that longshoremen forfeited their pay. This act of labor solidarity with the UFCW strike by one of the most powerful unions in Los Angeles, interrupting the normal course of shipping at the port, was a good example of what WV has been arguing for since the inception of the strike—the need to broaden and extend class struggle actions and build mass pickets in defense of striking supermarket workers. It should be a starting point for wider and more militant labor actions in solidarity with the UFCW strikers.

Comradely,  
George Foster



TROTSKY

### Stalinist Bureaucratism and the Workers State

As was the case in the USSR and East Europe, the continued misrule of a nationalist Stalinist bureaucracy in China opens the door to the forces of capitalist counter-revolution. Writing of the Soviet degenerated workers state under Stalin in the 1930s, Bolshevik leader Leon Trotsky stressed that the alternative to capitalist restoration lay in a proletarian political revolution that installed



LENIN

a government based on workers democracy and revolutionary internationalism.

The further unhindered development of bureaucratism must lead inevitably to the cessation of economic and cultural growth, to a terrible social crisis and to the downward plunge of the entire society. But this would imply not only the collapse of the proletarian dictatorship but also the end of bureaucratic domination. In place of the workers' state would come not “social bureaucratic” but capitalist relations.

We trust that by thus posing the question in perspective we shall be able, once for all, to probe thoroughly into the controversy over the class nature of the USSR; whether we take the variant of further successes for the Soviet regime or, contrariwise, the variant of its collapse, the bureaucracy in either case turns out to be not an independent class but an excrescence upon the proletariat. A tumor can grow to tremendous size and even strangle the living organism, but a tumor can never become an independent organism.

Finally, we may add for the sake of complete clarity: if in the USSR today the Marxist party were in power, it would renovate the entire political regime; it would shuffle and purge the bureaucracy and place it under the control of the masses; it would transform all of the administrative practices and inaugurate a series of capital reforms in the management of economy; but in no case would it have to undertake an *overturn in the property relations, i.e., a new social revolution.*

—Leon Trotsky, “The Class Nature of the Soviet State” (October 1933)

## WORKERS VANGUARD

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

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

*Workers Vanguard* (ISSN 0276-0746) published biweekly, except skipping three alternate issues in June, July and August (beginning with omitting the second issue in June) and with a 3-week interval in December, by the Spartacist Publishing Co., 299 Broadway, Suite 318, New York, NY 10007. Telephone: (212) 732-7862 (Editorial), (212) 732-7861 (Business). Address all correspondence to: Box 1377, GPO, New York, NY 10116. E-mail address: [vanguard@tiac.net](mailto:vanguard@tiac.net). Domestic subscriptions: \$10.00/22 issues. Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *Workers Vanguard*, Box 1377, GPO, New York, NY 10116.

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

The closing date for news in this issue is 2 December.

No. 815

5 December 2003

# 75 Years Ago: American Trotskyist Press Founded

November 15 marked the 75th anniversary of the launching of the first Trotskyist newspaper in the U.S., the *Militant*, published by the Communist League of America (CLA) and, in later years, the Socialist Workers Party (SWP). Describing itself as the "Semi-Monthly Organ of the Opposition Group in the Workers (Communist) Party of America," the first issue carried on its front page a statement by James P. Cannon, Martin Abern and Max Shachtman titled "For the Russian Opposition!" Cannon was a leader of the early American Communist Party (CP); Shachtman and Abern began as leaders of its youth affiliate, and were also members of the CP's National Committee.

All three had been expelled from the CP on 27 October 1928 for their adherence to Leon Trotsky's International Left Opposition (ILO) and its political program. Cannon had gone to the 1928 Sixth Congress of the Communist International (CI) where, fortuitously, he was placed on the Program Commission and was able to read Trotsky's devastating critique of the policies and program of the CI under the leadership of Stalin and his then ally, Bukharin.

By early 1924, a nationalist bureaucratic caste led by Stalin had begun to consolidate control over the Bolshevik Party and the CI. This was to take on programmatic expression in late 1924, as the Stalinist bureaucracy propounded the anti-Marxist dogma of building "socialism in one country." "For the Russian Opposition!" stated: "The attempts to revise the basic Marxist-Leninist doctrine with the spurious theory of 'socialism in one country' have been rightly resisted by the Opposition led by Trotsky. A number of revisionist and opportunist errors in various fields of Comintern activity and its ideological life in general have proceeded from this false theory." These questions were fully addressed in Trotsky's critique and provided the programmatic basis for organizing the ILO, centrally opposition to "socialism in one country"; to remaining in the Anglo-



Left: First issue of *Militant*, launched in 1928, declares support for International Left Opposition led by Leon Trotsky (below).



Institute for Social History, Amsterdam

Russian Trade Union Unity Committee after the British labor bureaucracy's betrayal of the 1926 General Strike; and to the liquidation of the Chinese Communist Party into the bourgeois-nationalist Guomindang in the 1925-27 Chinese Revolution, leading to the uprising's bloody defeat.

It is no accident that the very first issue of the *Militant* carried an article

titled "The Fortress of the World Revolution," reprinted below, solidifying with the victory of the 1917 Russian Revolution on its eleventh anniversary. The ILO embodied the political continuity of authentic Leninism and the proletarian internationalism that had inspired the October Revolution led by Lenin and Trotsky's Bolshevik Party.

Beginning with its first issue, the *Mili-*

tant serialized those portions of Trotsky's critique that Cannon brought back from Moscow. The complete document was subsequently published as *The Third International After Lenin*. An introduction by Cannon to a 1929 pamphlet titled *The Draft Program of the Communist International—A Criticism of Fundamentals*, containing those portions Cannon brought back from Moscow, stated:

"Trotsky's Criticism of the Draft Program comes to grips with the principal theoretical error which sums up and motivates the opportunist tactics pursued in recent years in the internal questions of the Soviet Union as well as in the International movement: the revisionist theory of socialism in one country. Basing himself on the fundamental teachings of Marx and Lenin, Trotsky turns all his guns on this new revisionism which has been smuggled into the Communist International since Lenin died, to its great detriment. He attacks it from all sides, tearing away the covering of falsely applied quotations from Lenin and reveals its non-Leninist essence, battering down the whole structure of falsification and scholasticism upon which it is built."

This introduction appears as an appendix to the 1936 Pioneer Publishers edition of *The Third International After Lenin*. It is inexplicably not listed in the Table of Contents and has never been reprinted since—either in subsequent editions of *The Third International After Lenin* or in Cannon's own writings—unfortunately making this fine piece of early Trotskyist writing fairly inaccessible.

In his *History of American Trotskyism* (1944), Cannon pointed to the international significance of the emergence of an Opposition group in the U.S.:

"With this inspiring news of a new detachment in far-away America, the little papers and bulletins of the Opposition groups flared into life again. Most inspiring of all to us was the assurance that our hard-pressed Russian comrades had heard our voice. I have always thought of this as one of the most gratifying aspects of the historic fight we undertook in 1928—that the news of our fight reached the Russian comrades in all corners of the prisons and exile camps inspiring them with new hope and new energy to persevere in the struggle."

Though a weekly named the *Militant* continues to be published by Jack Barnes' SWP, it is an organ not of revolutionary Trotskyism but of the Barnesites' quirky reformism. The continuity of the revolutionary heritage of Cannon's SWP and Trotsky's Fourth International is now upheld by the International Communist League. The Spartacist League, U.S. section of the ICL, originated as the Revolutionary Tendency, expelled in 1963 for opposition to the SWP's centrist degeneration, which by 1965 had deepened into outright reformism (see "The SWP—A Strangled Party," *Spartacist* [English-language edition] No. 38-39, Summer 1986).

Following Trotsky's injunction, the ICL fought to the bitter end to defend the gains of the October Revolution when the Stalinists opened the floodgates to capitalist counterrevolution, first in the East German deformed workers state in 1989-90 and then in the Soviet Union itself. In East Germany, we threw the forces of our international into the struggle against the capitalist annexation of that country by the West German bourgeoisie, fighting for a Red Soviet Germany through proletarian political revolution in the East and socialist revolution in the West. In the aftermath of the destruction of the Soviet degenerated

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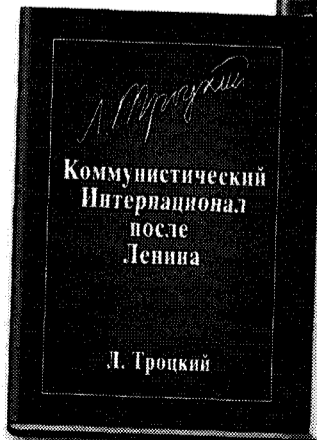
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# China

**Defend, Extend Gains of 1949 Revolution!  
For Workers Political Revolution to Oust Stalinist Bureaucracy!**

## Defeat Imperialist Drive for Counterrevolution!

Part one of this article, which we conclude below, appeared in WV No. 814 (21 November).

The main structural change that has taken place in China's economy over the past two decades is the way in which state-owned enterprises are financed. Under the old centralized planning system, enterprises whose costs for whatever reason exceeded their normal revenue received non-repayable grants from the industrial ministry overseeing them. Likewise, non-repayable grants were used to finance the expansion of enterprise production through retooling, the construction of a new department, etc.

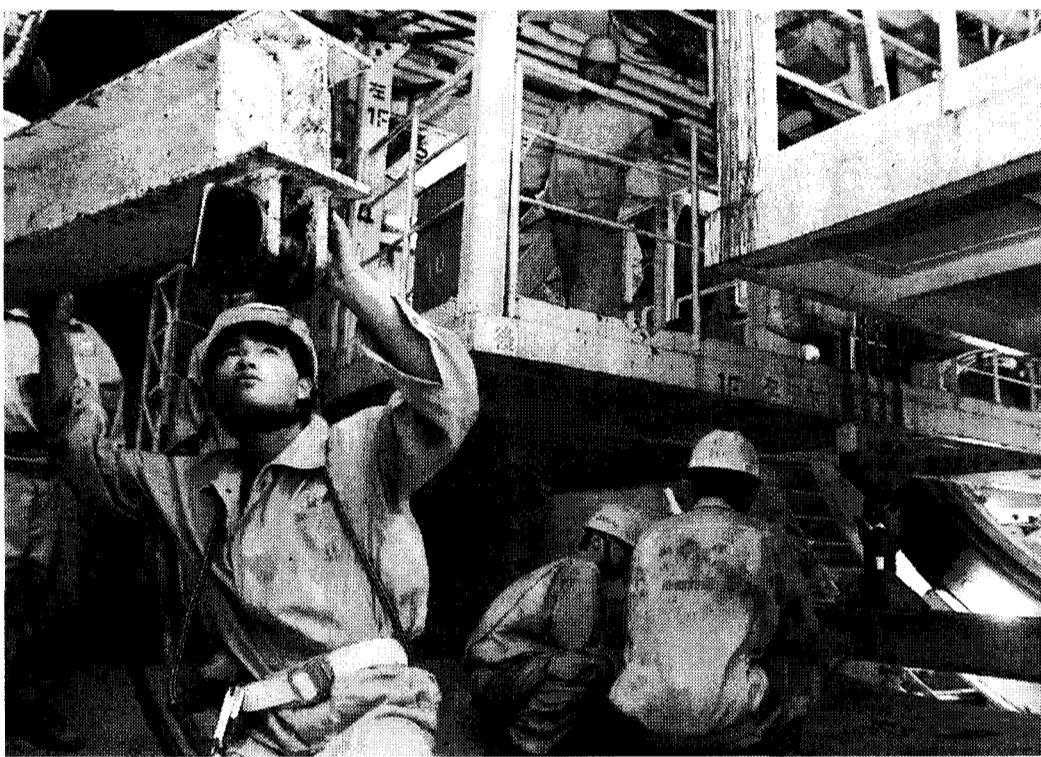
### PART TWO

When "market socialism" was introduced in the early 1980s, enterprises were supposed to become profit-maximizing and financially self-sufficient. External financing would be provided by loans from state-owned commercial banks, which were supposed to be repaid with interest. We do not know if Deng and the other initial architects of the "reform" program actually expected the system to work according to the new economic doctrine and corresponding policy guidelines. Predictably, the system did *not* work. Had all enterprises which did not and could not repay their bank loans been closed down, China would long since have become a complete economic disaster area. But that was not allowed to happen. Instead, in a totally unplanned, inadequate and haphazard way, "non-performing" bank loans were substituted for direct government financing.

Bank loans to loss-making as well as profit-making enterprises are routinely rolled over or even increased without any realistic expectation of repayment. Consequently, all major Chinese banks are technically "insolvent," with "non-performing loans" exceeding income-generating assets. This situation has persisted for many years, since the government finances the banks which, in turn, finance the enterprises.

Thus in 1998-99 the central bank gave

**For a China of Workers and Peasants  
Councils in a Socialist Asia!**



Construction workers building Shanghai tunnel. Combative Chinese proletariat must be mobilized in struggle to defend and extend gains of Chinese Revolution.

\$200 billion to the main commercial banks in exchange for an equivalent amount of their "non-performing loans." This enterprise debt was then shifted to government-owned Asset Management Companies (AMCs), which were supposed to collect a portion of them and/or sell off the delinquent enterprises to private buyers. Since then the AMCs have done little of the one or the other.

The relative stability of China's financial system has rested on two main factors. One, everyone knows the government stands behind the banks. And two, private and especially foreign banks have not (yet) been allowed to compete with them. A report last year by Moody's, the big American financial credit-rating agency, concluded: "While China's banking system may technically be insolvent, abundant levels of liquidity act as a cushion

against stress. The strong deposit levels further reflect public trust in the state banks."

Knowledgeable spokesmen for Western imperialism recognize that the privatization and especially internationalization of the financial system is a necessary step in breaking the economic power of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) regime. Earlier this year the London *Economist* (8 March)—a semi-official organ of British and American bankers—wrote:

"All Chinese banks are, directly or indirectly, state-run, and the government, local or central, interferes both in the appointment of managers and in lending. There is, therefore, no such thing as a market-driven, meritocratic Chinese bank. Without control, foreign investors will find it difficult to create one. "The Chinese, however, have no intention of yielding control."

As the *Economist's* plaint indicates, foreign banks have to date been limited to the margins of China's financial system, mainly in the foreign-trade sector. Needless to say, international finance capital has been pushing hard against those limits. For example, earlier this year the Wall Street giant Citibank was allowed to purchase 5 percent of China's ninth-largest commercial bank. A joint credit card operation was then launched geared to China's newly wealthy elite—capitalist entrepreneurs, top party and government officials, affluent petty-bourgeois types (engineers, academics). For Citibank, this is just the opening wedge in its campaign to penetrate ever more deeply into China's financial system. "China is one of the last great frontiers in finance," proclaimed Richard Stanley, head of

Citibank's operation in Hong Kong (*Wall Street Journal*, 15 September).

Jiang Zemin and his cohorts recognized that opening China's financial system to foreign banks would likely have disastrous economic consequences, not least crippling the government's ability to finance its own expenditures. Thus the agreement by which China joined the World Trade Organization (WTO) two years ago postponed "liberalization" of the financial sector until 2006. Only then is China supposed to allow foreign banks to compete on an equal footing with state banks. But what will actually happen three years hence will not be automatically determined by the schedule stipulated in the WTO agreement. It will be determined by social conflict within China and between China and the forces of capitalist imperialism. In recent months, economic conflicts between especially American imperialism and the Chinese bureaucratically deformed workers state have come to the fore.

### The Battle over the Yuan

China's currency, the yuan (or the renminbi), is not convertible on what bourgeois economists call the capital account of international transactions. Capitalist entrepreneurs in China as

well as managers of state-owned enterprises can acquire foreign currency in exchange for yuan (after prior approval from the central bank) only to pay for imports and other trade-related expenses. Foreign currency acquired by mainland Chinese nationals is required to be transferred to the central bank in exchange for yuan.

In recent years, there has predictably been an increasing volume of illegal currency movements in and out of China, mainly by and through Hong Kong financiers. There is no accurate estimate of the magnitude of these illegal monetary flows, but they have not yet reached the point of seriously affecting the Chinese economy or the regime's economic policies.

For a decade or so, China has pegged the yuan to the dollar. Since the dollar depreciated this year against the euro, the Japanese yen and most other currencies, the price of China's manufactured exports fell sharply on the world market. Most experts in the field estimate that if the yuan were freely traded, it would appreciate from 20 to 40 percent against the dollar.

Some big American (as well as European and Japanese) capitalist outfits also benefit from the current undervaluation of the yuan. Over half of Chinese manufactured exports are produced in foreign-owned factories or joint ventures. Dell computer and Motorola are among the top ten exporting companies in China. On the other side of the Pacific, the giant discount retailer Wal-Mart absorbs 10 percent of China's commodity exports to the U.S.

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However, the main body of American manufacturing capitalists believe (and not without good cause) that they are being damaged by China's "unfair" trade practices. Last spring Franklin Vargo, vice president of the National Association of Manufacturers, told a Congressional committee: "We must press China to end the manipulation of its currency and allow the yuan-dollar exchange rate to be determined by the market" (*Business Week*, 7 July). A bloc of mainly Democratic and some Republican Senators and Congressmen is pushing legislation to impose additional tariffs on Chinese imports to "offset" the undervaluation of the yuan. Moreover, all of the heavy guns of international finance capital—the heads of the U.S. and European Union central banks, the directors of the International Monetary Fund—have pummeled the Beijing regime to revalue its currency.

But on this issue the Chinese leadership has given no ground. Last month, Chinese president Hu Jintao declared: "Keeping the exchange rate of the renminbi stable serves China's economic performance and conforms to the requirements of the economic development in the Asia Pacific region and the whole world."

As a diplomatic sop to the imperialists, Hu promised to set up a group to "study" making China's currency convertible in the future. How far in the future? The *Far Eastern Economic Review* (29 May), a well-informed journal based in Hong Kong, wrote in this regard: "The renminbi is not freely convertible on the capital account, and most analysts don't expect this to change for some years. The fear is that opening the country's capital account too soon will lead to huge outflows because of a lack of confidence in the banking system."

But even if Beijing policymakers project maintaining the existing exchange rate and international monetary arrangements for some years, they may *not* be able to do so. The capitalist enclave of Hong Kong is an ever-widening breach through which illegal currency transactions flow in both directions. The expropriation of Hong Kong's financiers and other sections of its bourgeoisie is vitally necessary to protect China's economy from the destructive onslaught of the Wall Street, Frankfurt and Tokyo banks.

### The Agrarian Question Comes to the Fore, Again

Discussions of China's economy and its supposed "transition to capitalism" in the Western bourgeois media and academia usually focus on industry and finance. However, 700 million of China's 1.3 billion people are still engaged in agriculture. The main social motor force for the 1949 Revolution was a massive peasant uprising against the landlord class, many of whose members received their just deserts at the hands of those



**Migrant workers gathered at Beijing train station. "Market reforms" have thrown millions into unemployment, poverty.**

whom they had brutally oppressed and exploited. All agricultural land was nationalized.

One of the first economic "reforms" of the Deng regime was the decollectivization of agriculture, with peasant families being given their own small plots on the basis of long-term leases. However, land was not reprivatized and restrictions were imposed on the transfer of leaseholds. Even so, competition among peasant smallholders necessarily resulted in ever-widening economic differentiation in the rural villages. A class of rich farmers emerged who, through semi-legal or illegal arrangements, have been able to exploit the labor of their poorer neighbors. Nonetheless, the basic structure of China's agrarian economy is fundamentally and manifestly different from that of India, for example, where over a hundred million landless agricultural laborers toil on the large estates of wealthy landlords.

However, the current structure of China's agrarian economy cannot long be maintained given its membership in the WTO. State-owned industrial enterprises can to a degree be buffered from increased import competition by additional government financing via the banks. But there is no way that China's peasant smallholders can compete with the capital-intensive, scientifically managed agribusiness of the U.S. and other major food-exporting countries. While the Beijing regime has duly reduced tariffs and quotas on agricultural produce, it has also resorted to ad hoc protectionist devices. Last year, new "safety regulations" were applied to imports of genetically modified grain. This year, shipments of soybeans from the U.S., Brazil and Argentina were halted on the grounds that they were "contaminated" by a fungus (one which, however, is also common to soybeans grown in China).

Nonetheless, the basic line of the regime's agrarian policy is *not* to protect the multitude of peasant smallholders. It

is rather to move toward large-scale, de facto *privately owned* farms. Thus a CCP Central Committee plenum held in October adopted a resolution further easing restrictions on the transfer of agricultural land. An American journalist covering the meeting reported: "China is worried about competition in the World Trade Organization from foreign foodstuffs, and the emergence of big farms would increase agricultural efficiency, an agronomist said" (*Washington Post*, 15 October).

However, the resolutions and intentions of the CCP leadership in this regard, as in others, will not automatically and necessarily be translated into economic reality. The 1949 Revolution remains a living memory in the Chinese countryside. Poor peasants know that their grandparents meted out a rough plebeian justice to the brutal landlords and grasping village moneylenders. China's would-be landlords of today could well suffer a similar fate. In fact, over the last decade China has seen many large-scale peasant protests and riots, especially against increased taxation and corruption.

Yet China does have to move from peasant smallholding to modern, large-scale mechanized farming. The question is how. A government based on workers and peasants councils would not only prohibit or restrict the hiring of labor and leasing of additional land by rich farmers but would also promote the recollectivization of agriculture. This does not mean reverting to the agricultural communes of the Mao era, which were basically an aggregate of backward peasant holdings. For the mass of Chinese peasants to give up their own holdings in favor of collective farms, they must be convinced that this will result in a higher standard of living for themselves and their families. Thus a government based on workers and peasants councils would offer reduced taxes and cheaper credits to peasants who joined collectives.

A rational collectivization and modernization of Chinese agriculture would signify a profound transformation of the society. The introduction of modern technology in the countryside—from combines to chemical fertilizers to the whole complex of scientific farming—would require a qualitatively higher industrial base than now exists. In turn, an increase in agricultural productivity would raise the need for a huge expansion of industrial jobs in urban areas to absorb the vast surplus of labor no longer needed in the countryside. Clearly, this would involve a lengthy process, particularly given the limited size and relatively low level of productivity of China's industrial base. Both the tempo and, in the final analysis, the very realizability of this perspective hinge on the aid that China would receive from a socialist Japan or a socialist America, underlining again the need for international proletarian revolution.

### The Spectre of a Workers Revolt

In early 2000, a large state-owned molybdenum mine in Yangjiazhangzi—a town in the depressed old industrial region of northeast China—was closed down. A few parts of the mine which were deemed profitable were privatized,

mainly taken over by cronies of the incumbent managers. A protest at the enterprise headquarters by the laid-off miners over the paltry severance pay quickly escalated into a full-fledged workers revolt. Some 20,000 miners and their families took to the streets, setting up barricades, burning cars, smashing the windows of government offices and setting oil drums ablaze.

The authorities moved cautiously, for fear the workers might use the stock of dynamite in the mine to defend themselves. For two days, the workers battled the People's Armed Police, a paramilitary force created in the mid 1980s specifically to put down growing social unrest. Finally, army units were brought in, firing live ammunition over the protesters' heads, and quelled the rebellion. Two years later, workers also in northeast China unleashed the country's largest revolt since the 1989 Tiananmen upheaval that marked an incipient political revolution.

In its own way, the Beijing Stalinist bureaucracy recognizes that it is sitting atop a volcano of social unrest. Last year, Jiang Zemin declared that "expanding employment and promoting re-employment isn't only a major economic problem, it's also a major political problem." Yet Jiang and his cohorts have failed—and failed miserably—in achieving their own stated policy goal.

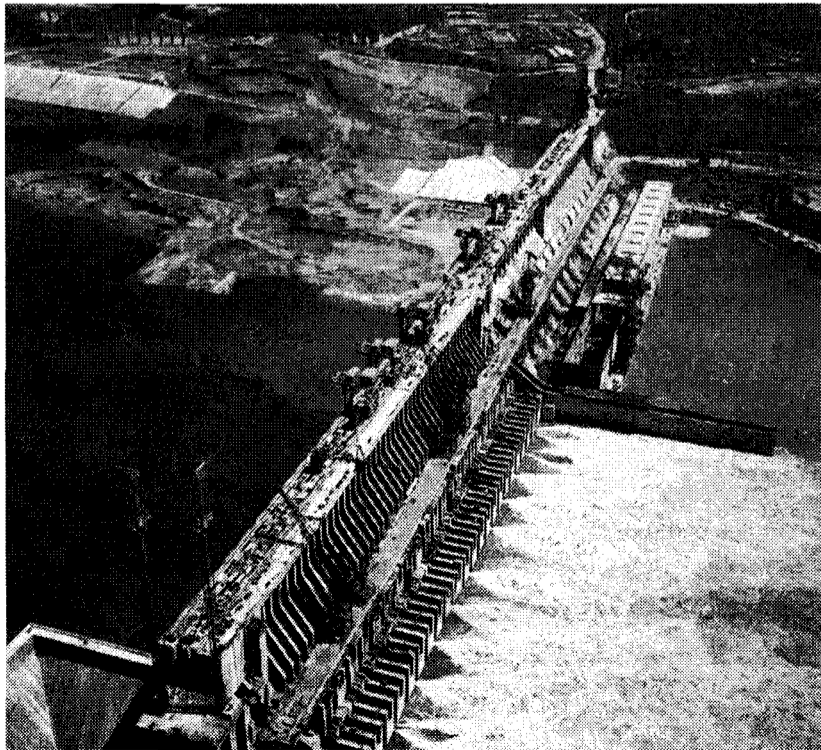
Labor minister Zhang Zuoji reported last year that of the 26 million workers laid off from state-owned enterprises since 1998, only 17 million have been re-employed. And the situation in this regard is rapidly deteriorating. According to government statistics, during the first half of 2002 only 9 percent of laid-off workers were re-employed compared to 50 percent in 1998. In many cities in China, workers line the roadsides seeking employment with signs around their necks indicating their job skills: electrician, carpenter, plumber.

The main means by which the Beijing regime has sought to slow the growth of unemployment has been a huge expansion of public works projects internally financed through an ever-higher level of government deficit spending. But in the not-so-distant future, the Beijing Stalinist regime is going to have to make some hard choices. To substantially increase the proportion of social product collected in taxes will entail cutting into the profits and incomes of the capitalist entrepreneurs and also those of the more affluent petty bourgeoisie. The *Far Eastern Economic Review* (10 October 2002), which is far from anti-capitalist in its outlook, observed: "The vibrant private sectors of the coastal economy are notoriously lax at paying taxes." Alternatively, to substantially reduce government expenditure would entail throwing many more millions of workers into the street and cutting their meager social benefits (e.g., pensions). At that point policy differences within the CCP leadership, intersecting growing social tensions, could begin to fracture the bureaucracy.

During the past year, the Jiang regime has been succeeded by a so-called "fourth generation" of CCP leaders represented by Hu Jintao as president and Wen Jiabao as prime minister. Like Deng before him, Jiang has retained ultimate authority by remaining head of the CCP's Central Military Commission, that is, de facto commander of China's armed forces. The ideological stance of the "fourth generation" leaders indicates the conflicting social pressures upon them. On the one hand, they have been more openly pro-capitalist (legitimizing party membership for entrepreneurs, proposing to enshrine "property rights" in the constitution).

At the same time, the new CCP leadership has adopted a more "populist" political style than the gray, technocratic Jiang regime. Thus, shortly before becoming premier, Wen Jiabao went down a coal mine shaft in bitter cold to celebrate the Lunar New Year with the miners working there. More recently, *China Daily*

*continued on page 6*



**Three Gorges dam is example of vast expansion of investment in state-owned infrastructure.**

# China...

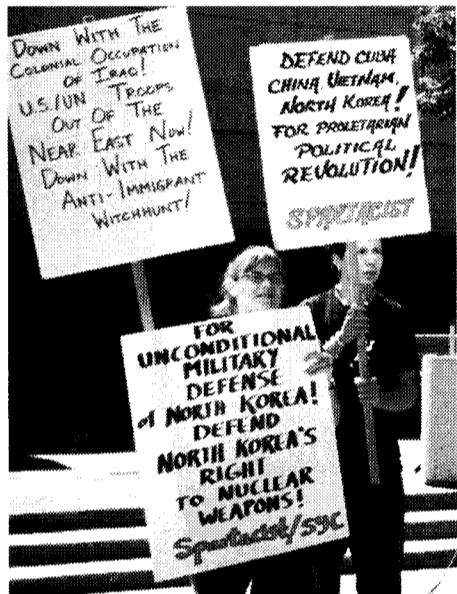
(continued from page 5)

(30 October) trumpeted Wen's personal intervention to help a migrant construction worker collect unpaid back wages, commenting that this "attests to the fact that the new, in-touch-with-people leadership has taken hold when it comes to dealing with the underprivileged in the country."

These "populist" gestures have been accompanied by promises to narrow the gap between rich and poor and between the relatively wealthy coastal provinces and the more impoverished regions of central and western China. If this is not just empty rhetoric but signals differences in the regime over economic policies and priorities, resulting factionalism could open up the political situation. In that event the decisive factors will be the political consciousness of the Chinese working class and other toilers and the ability of revolutionary Marxists (i.e., Leninist-Trotskyists) to intervene to change and elevate that consciousness.

## For Workers Democracy!

In East Europe and the former Soviet Union in the 1980s and early '90s, many workers as well as most of the intelligentsia succumbed to the illusion that the introduction of Western-style capitalism would rapidly produce Western-style living standards. But Chinese workers and



Young Spartacus

**September 16: Chicago SYC speak-out against U.S. occupation of Iraq called for defense of China and other deformed workers states.**

the urban poor have already experienced a large dose of Western (and Japanese) capitalism in the form of hundreds of billions of dollars in foreign investment and joint ventures. They've also experienced the growing presence of Chinese capitalist exploiters, both mainland-derived and offshore. And what those experiences amount to is a massive increase in unemployment, economic insecurity, social inequality and income differentials.

All evidence indicates there is deep and widespread popular hostility to those capitalist elements that currently exist in China. A public opinion survey conducted early this year by People's University found that only 5 percent of respondents thought that the newly rich had

acquired their wealth by legitimate means. The proposal floated at the CCP's 16th Congress last year to incorporate "property rights" in the constitution has provoked something of a popular backlash. In the past few years, there has been a rash of murders of wealthy tycoons.

If Chinese workers are unlikely to have illusions in Western-style capitalism, the question of Western-style "democracy" is another matter. When the political situation in China opens up, anti-Communist counterrevolutionary groups and parties will doubtless hide their advocacy of "free market" economics while pushing for "democracy," i.e., a parliamentary government elected on the basis of one man, one vote. Typical of such types is Han Dongfang, a pro-imperialist "dissident" who publishes the journal *China Labour Bulletin* in Hong Kong and is a darling of right-wing Congressmen and the anti-Communist AFL-CIO bureaucracy in the U.S.

Parliamentary government is in fact a political form of the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. In such a system the working class is politically reduced to atomized individuals. The bourgeoisie can effectively manipulate the electorate—in which the vote of a factory worker counts the same as that of a factory manager or technocrat—through its control of the media, the education system and the other institutions shaping public opinion. In all capitalist "democracies," government officials, elected and unelected, are bought and paid for by the banks and large corporations.

As Lenin explained in his classic polemic against social democracy, *The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky* (November 1918):

"Even in the most democratic bourgeois state the oppressed people at every step encounter the crying contradiction between the formal equality proclaimed by the 'democracy' of the capitalists and the thousands of real limitations and subterfuges which turn the proletarians into wage-slaves...."

"Under bourgeois democracy the capitalists, by thousands of tricks—which are the more artful and effective the more 'pure' democracy is developed—drive the people away from administrative work, from freedom of the press, freedom of assembly, etc.... The working people are barred from participation in bourgeois parliaments (they never decide important questions under bourgeois democracy, which are decided by the stock exchange and the banks) by thousands of obstacles, and the workers know and feel, see and realise perfectly well that the bourgeois parliaments are institutions alien to them." [emphasis in original]

Under bourgeois democracy, workers merely have the illusion of some control or power over the government. But under a workers state, the question of workers democracy is not one of abstraction or illusion, but at bottom a question of power. In a workers state like China, the dictatorship of the proletariat is deformed by Stalinist misrule—the proletariat as a class is deprived of political power, which is instead monopolized by an anti-working-class bureaucratic caste whose policies ultimately threaten the very existence of the workers state. The working class and rural toilers can exercise real political power only through a dictatorship of the proletariat ruled by their own class-based governing institutions, the



Peter Turnley

**May 1989: Contingent from Beijing Workers Autonomous Federation arriving in Tiananmen Square. Entry of proletariat into mass student protests heralded incipient political revolution.**

soviets (the Russian term for councils), which would be open to all parties defending the collectivized foundations of the workers state. In the same work quoted above, Lenin explained:

"The Soviets are the direct organisation of the working and exploited people themselves, which helps them to organise and administer their own state in every possible way. And in this it is the vanguard of the working and exploited people, the urban proletariat, that enjoys the advantage of being best united by the large enterprises; it is easier for it than for all others to elect and exercise control over those elected. The Soviet form of organisation automatically helps to unite all the working and exploited people around their vanguard, the proletariat. The old bourgeois apparatus—the bureaucracy, the privileges of wealth, of bourgeois education, of social connections, etc. (these real privileges are the more varied the more highly bourgeois democracy is developed)—all this disappears under the Soviet form of organisation.... "Proletarian democracy is a million times more democratic than any bourgeois democracy; Soviet power is a million times more democratic than the most democratic bourgeois republic." [emphasis in original]

The alternatives facing China are proletarian political revolution or bloody capitalist counterrevolution. It must be noted that under no circumstance will capitalist restoration produce any form of bourgeois democracy. The counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet degenerated workers state and the deformed workers states of East Europe offer a glimpse of what capitalism has in store for China's workers—fratricidal warfare, poverty and unemployment, all-around social devastation (see "Why We Fought to Defend the Soviet Union," WV Nos. 809 and 810, 12 and 26 September).

It is no accident that, around the time of Yeltsin's counterrevolutionary coup in 1991, many Yeltsinite "democrats" argued that a "Russian Pinochet" would be needed to administer nascent capitalist rule in the former Soviet Union. Economist Gavriil Popov, a key Yeltsin ally and chief ideologue of the "Democratic Platform" of the Soviet CP, who was elected mayor of Moscow in 1991, frankly acknowledged that the introduction of capitalism would not be compatible with bourgeois democracy:

"Now we must create a society with a variety of different forms of ownership, including private property; and this will be a society of economic inequality. There will be contradictions between the policies leading to denationalization, privatization, and inequality on the one hand and, on the other, the populist character of the forces that were set in motion in order to achieve those aims. The masses long for fairness and economic equality. And the further the process of transformation goes, the more acute and more glaring will be the gap between those aspirations and economic realities."

—"Dangers of Democracy," *New York Review of Books*, 16 August 1990

Even in the former USSR, which was a global industrial and military power, the capitalist political regimes in the various constituent republics range from semi-bonapartist "parliamentary" rule to outright dictatorship. A capitalist China would subject its masses to even more immense social dislocation and far greater poverty.

Moreover, where the old Russian bourgeoisie was destroyed as a class, the Chinese bourgeoisie was simply driven offshore by the revolution and today remains ready to reclaim its lost holdings and wreak revenge, above all against the combative proletariat. Capitalist restoration could bring with it a revival of the imperialist-sponsored warlordism that marked pre-revolutionary China, leading to the subjugation and dismemberment of the country at the hands of Western and Japanese imperialism while inflicting massive destruction on North Korea and Vietnam.

To achieve soviet democracy in capitalist countries requires a proletarian social revolution that expropriates the bourgeoisie and overturns the capitalist profit system. In contrast, in China it requires a proletarian political revolution to oust the ruling bureaucracy and to place political power in the hands of workers, soldiers and peasants councils. Such a political revolution is premised on the unconditional defense of the collectivized economy which is the social foundation of the workers state. Its program was encapsulated by Trotsky in his classic analysis of Stalin's Russia, *The Revolution Betrayed* (1936):

"It is not a question of substituting one ruling clique for another, but of changing the very methods of administering the economy and guiding the culture of the country. Bureaucratic autocracy must give place to Soviet democracy. A restoration of the right of criticism, and a genuine freedom of elections, are necessary conditions for the further development of the country. This assumes a revival of freedom of Soviet parties, beginning with the party of Bolsheviks, and a resurrection of the trade unions. The bringing of democracy into industry means a radical revision of plans in the interests of the toilers.... 'Bourgeois norms of distribution' will be confined within the limits of strict necessity, and, in step with the growth of social wealth, will give way to socialist equality.... The youth will receive the opportunity to breathe freely, criticize, make mistakes, and grow up. Science and art will be freed of their chains. And, finally, foreign policy will return to the traditions of revolutionary internationalism."

The fight for workers democracy is intimately linked to the struggle for the extension of revolution. Karl Marx once wrote that with scarcity, want is generalized, "and with want the struggle for necessities begins again, and that means that all the old crap must revive." The material basis for bureaucratism lies with scarcity—the bureaucracy deems itself the arbiter of how scarce resources are used and distributed. Historical necessity once again forces the question of revolutionary internationalism. Without a socialist America, a socialist Europe, a socialist Japan, the working people of China will not be able to eliminate scarcity and want. Indeed, the fate of the Chinese proletariat—the fate of working people and the oppressed throughout the world—will be decided in the struggle for international socialist revolution.

The International Communist League is committed to bringing this revolutionary Marxist program—the only program which can defend China against the powerful forces of imperialist-backed counterrevolution—to the workers and rural toilers of China today. ■

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# Young Spartacus

## Protest Mass Arrests at Miami Anti-FTAA Demos!

As the representatives of American capital sought to deepen imperialist domination over the economies of Latin America at the FTAA summit in Miami the week of November 16, the downtown area was turned into a massive armed police camp meant for some 20,000 anti-FTAA protesters, mostly youth activists and trade unionists. More than 40 law enforcement agencies, from the city police to the FBI to the Department of Fish and Wildlife, carried out a systematic campaign to terrorize and hunt down activists before, during and after the main day of protests on November 20, which was brought to an end when riot police unleashed an arsenal of "non-lethal" weaponry on demonstrators.

Throughout that day, phalanxes of cops in full riot gear with plastic shields and batons, backed up by mounted water cannons and armored personnel carriers, blocked city streets; others were stationed on the rooftops or patrolled the skies in helicopters, identifying activists for assault or arrest. The police held up 87 busloads of union members, preventing them from reaching the AFL-CIO rally on time, and swarmed over smaller anti-FTAA protest actions. Dozens of youth were injured and bloodied in orchestrated police rampages. There were a total of 282 arrests over the period from November 11-22.

There are numerous reports of sexual assaults, including forced sex acts, and beatings of jailed protesters as well as denial of food, water and medical attention and threats of federal detention for refusing to reveal their national origin. Members of Anarchist People of Color (APOC) in custody were among those

horribly mistreated.

As part of a nationwide attempt to round up activists and prevent them from reaching Miami, eight people were arrested November 16 on false charges in a vicious police raid with all the markings of a planned provocation at a NY Area APOC fundraising benefit for the Miami FTAA protests. Police pepper-sprayed and indiscriminately beat with nightsticks many of those in attendance.

The naked display of capitalist "law and order" in Miami was observed by law enforcement officials from several cities in anticipation of upcoming large-scale demonstrations. Meanwhile, a recently leaked FBI security bulletin of October 15 reveals "a coordinated, nationwide effort to collect intelligence regarding demonstrations" against the Iraq war and occupation (*New York Times*, 23 November). This intelligence-gathering activity is borrowed from the tradition of COINTELPRO in the 1960s and '70s when the FBI sought to "neutralize"—including through murder—black militant and anti-war groups. Under the pretext of the "war on terror," the Feds and local law enforcement are attempting to criminalize dissent. As one lawyer for the FTAA protesters noted, "The 'criminals' included anyone in the streets of Miami."

We reprint below a letter issued by the Partisan Defense Committee on November 24 in protest of the mass arrests in Miami.

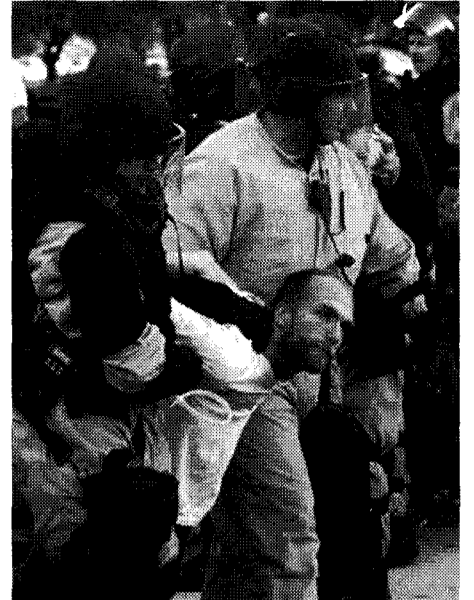
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The Partisan Defense Committee vigorously protests the violent police rampage unleashed on anti-FTAA summit protesters in Miami during the week of

November 16. More than 230 protesters have been arrested, some on felony charges. Detained protesters are reported as receiving brutal treatment in prison. On November 21, sixty-two people protesting in solidarity with detained protesters were themselves arrested. We demand the immediate release of all detained protesters and that all charges be dropped!

Police used everything from water cannons, concussion grenades, wooden batons, pepper spray and rubber bullets to tasers and tear gas on the crowds of protesters. Over 125 protesters reportedly suffered injuries, as serious as traumatic head injuries, facial lacerations, bone fractures and exposure to chemical irritants. Even people at the Wellness Center, the location where protesters were being treated for their injuries, were attacked by police wielding pepper spray. On November 20, the day of the 20,000-strong permitted march sponsored by the AFL-CIO, police blocked selected protesters from entering the march. Those excluded became the targets of worse police repression. When some AFL-CIO members attempted to open access to the permitted march, police shot rubber bullets at six steelworkers.

For months, Florida police and government tried to intimidate people from protesting the FTAA summit; this effort against the protests is linked with Miami's bid to become the permanent headquarters of the FTAA. The most outrageous example of this intimidation is that the chief justice of the Florida Supreme Court suspended guarantees of speedy trials and hearings in Miami-Dade. Another example is that some pro-



AP  
Anti-FTAA protester arrested in police sweep outside Miami-Dade County Jail, November 21, at demonstration demanding release of those arrested the day before.

testers were arrested under rarely invoked city ordinances such as "obstruction of free passage on sidewalks." In preparation for the protests, the City Commission passed ordinances banning the possession of "hard items." Such broad language provides police with the pretext to arrest anyone they choose.

Miami Mayor Manuel Diaz says that the security operation that ended in several arrests and police assaults against protesters "should be a model for homeland defense." In fact, tacked on to the \$87 billion federal spending bill for the occupation of Iraq was \$8.5 million to beef up security and intelligence specifically for the Miami demonstration. "Homeland defense" and the "war on terror" mean increased domestic intimidation and repression against minorities, political activists and the labor movement.

Again we raise the demands: free the arrested protesters and drop all charges now! ■

## Goose Creek, South Carolina

## Racist Gun-Wielding Cops Terrorize High School Students

On November 5, 14 cops stormed Stratford High School with guns drawn and pointed at students, screaming at them to lie down on their stomachs and restraining at least a dozen youths in plastic "flex-cuffs" when they didn't respond quickly enough. As a police dog sniffed and barked at the students, police rifled through their bags and lockers. Many parents were incensed by the raid: "I'm absolutely outraged," said one. "This is supposed to be a free country, not a police state."

The putative reason for this raid was a search for drugs, though the cops came up with none and made no arrests. As this incident proves, the "war on drugs" is a war all right—a war on minorities. Stratford High School is a 22 percent black school, but of the 107 students assaulted in the hallway that day, according to school principal George McCrackin, 70 percent were black. Since the mid '80s, the racist "war on drugs" has been the main vehicle for the explosion in the number of black

youth ensnared in the criminal injustice system—such that today nearly one in three black men in their twenties is in prison, on probation or on parole.

The police came to the school at the principal's request and launched their commando-style raid when he gave them the signal, after buses from black neighborhoods arrived. In order to encourage police action, McCrackin handed over four days of video surveillance to the cops. The supposed evidence of drug activity: students "suspiciously" standing under the camera as opposed to in front of it where they could be caught on the tape! Though the administration stated that they didn't know guns would be drawn, McCrackin has called the episode "a valuable experience" and sounded just like an American imperial president when proclaiming he would "utilize whatever forces I deem necessary to keep this campus safe and clean."

This raid exemplifies the state repression and terror that is a daily reality for

black Americans. Economic contraction means blacks are increasingly deemed a surplus population in capitalist America; the racist ruling class no longer wants to "waste" money on them simply to keep them alive, let alone educated. From budget cuts and overcrowding to entryway metal detectors and armed security guards, today's schools for the poor and working class look much more like prisons.

The future in capitalist America for black youth is more and more a choice of fighting (and dying) "for country" or spending life behind bars. And behind every corner is the cop's nightstick, trying to keep blacks and the working class "in their place." Democrats and Republicans alike motivate, support and enforce such police-state measures to assure that the few filthy rich capitalists can continue to exploit the working class with minimal disruption.

The liberation of black people from daily oppression at the hands of the racist ruling class and their police attack dogs



WCSC

Video surveillance at Stratford High School captures November 5 police raid.

is only possible through a workers revolution that will establish a socialist egalitarian society for the benefit of all. Each racist state atrocity underscores further the crying need for this solution. *Down with the racist "war on drugs"! For black liberation through socialist revolution!* ■

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# Iraq...

(continued from page 1)

briefly in 1963 and again in 1968. With backing from the U.S., he slaughtered Kurds and other ethnic minorities, Communists and labor leaders, and anyone who challenged his rule. But in this he was no different from any of the other emirs, colonels and sheiks in the region, not to mention the Zionists with their huge nuclear arsenal, who are today turning Palestinian towns into graveyards—all of whom are generously supplied with whatever “weapons of mass destruction” they wish as long as the U.S. determines it’s in its interest.

We called for the Iraqi working class to topple Hussein. Today we call for the Iraqi workers to throw out the U.S. colonial government, as well as their native Iraqi ruling class. We call to defend the Palestinians and to build a Hebrew-Arab workers party to smash the Zionist capitalist state. We call for the workers throughout the region to topple their respective butchers and establish a socialist federation of the Near East.

## Down With the Colonial Occupation of Iraq!

The occupation imposed in the name of “democracy” has made the Iraqis very nervous as to its real intentions from the start, when they saw that the *only* Iraqi institution the U.S. deemed worth defending against looting was...the Oil Ministry. Forget the priceless antiquities from the dawn of civilization. The Iraqis started fighting, justly, against the occupation of their country and today show no signs of stopping. The Bush administration is obviously having serious problems in maintaining its rule in Iraq and this is a good thing.

Marxists are not bloodthirsty and we do not savor the killings of American working-class youth. These deaths are the direct responsibility of the U.S. ruling class, which is sending them to fight and die for its interests. But we are not pacifists and we don’t simply hate the loss of life. We have a side in this conflict—with the Iraqis against the forces of U.S. imperialism. We are for the defeat of U.S. imperialism wherever and whenever possible.

I don’t know much about who makes up the resistance to the occupation in Iraq today, but it’s a fair bet that the vast majority of them are, to put it mildly, extremely far from our perspective of workers revolution. The fact that we support them militarily against the U.S. doesn’t mean we lend them any political support or have any illusions about their aims. Reactionary Islamic fundamentalist forces are making conditions increasingly dangerous and frightening for women in particular. As for the supposedly active Hussein supporters, it’s quite possible that some of them are mostly seeking a way to express their opposition to the occupation. An Al Jazeera reporter (26 October) interviewed one such person, an 18-year-old who had been with a group of schoolchildren and young men waving pictures of Hussein at American soldiers. The reporter asked whether he liked the former president. The guy laughed and responded, “Honestly, he was a dog and the son of a dog. But this really irri-

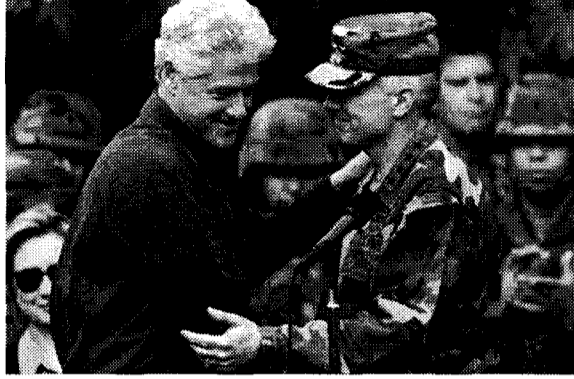
tates the Americans—and that makes me happy.”

The combination of an expensive imperialist adventure, dubbed “a mess” by a key capitalist mouthpiece, the *New York Times*, plus economic problems at home and internationally, spells huge trouble for Bush. An October 2 piece in the *Asia Times* summarized the impasse of the Bush administration with this colorful description: “To say that there’s blood in the water and the sharks are circling around the Bush administration’s Iraq policy would be understatement at this point. It’s more like a blood bank that’s been dropped into the water, the

charge of tracking down Saddam Hussein and the leadership of Al Qaeda, one General William Boykin, was found to be proclaiming that Bush is in the White House because god put him there and the enemy in the war on terrorism is “a guy named Satan”? So yes, you could make a point that the entire Bush administration really just needs to be institutionalized, but although the idea is emotionally satisfying, it doesn’t address where the insanity comes from, namely the capitalist system.

Capitalism is an irrational system that breeds such irrational individuals. But unfortunately, the entire capitalist ruling

**Bill Clinton with Wesley Clark, commander of U.S./NATO forces during Balkans War and current Democratic presidential hopeful, in 1999.**  
**Below: Passenger train destroyed by U.S./NATO terror bombing of Serbia.**



AP photos

sharks have taken the first bites, and Amazonian piranhas are clamoring for visas on an expedited basis.”

On the one hand, of course, it’s gratifying to find these bloodsucking ghouls in trouble. On the other hand, if Bush is going down, someone else is coming up. Who? I’m not going to make any predictions about who will win the election in 2004; things could go either way. But at this point, it does look like sections of the ruling class are shifting over to their *other*, less obviously nutty and vicious party next time around, the Democrats. The morass in Iraq, combined with the economic recession at home, has resulted in a pretty rapid movement to get rid of the Bush administration, which looked unstoppable just a few months ago. Call it the “Dixie Chicks” barometer: at the height of the war there was a hysterical outbreak of patriotic indignation when one of the Dixie Chicks confessed she was embarrassed by Bush. Now CNN reportedly has run a poll asking if you find the Bush administration’s leadership an embarrassment.

It’s pretty easy to look at the Bush administration as a right-wing cabal of loonies, nuclear cowboys escaped from the reels of *Dr. Strangelove* and intent on ruling the world. What else can you think when the Pentagon official in

class cannot be simply dismissed as irrational or stupid, or we’d have a much easier time getting rid of them. The U.S. capitalist class has concrete material interests, which are to gain the maximum degree of profits for itself by exploiting working people in this country and internationally. Their profits have to be defended militarily, which requires the use, or the threat of, imperialist troops. As I said earlier, defending these interests means that the capitalists *have to* seize and maintain spheres of influence at the expense of their imperialist rivals.

This is true of the entire American ruling class; they only have differences of opinion about the best way of going about this, which are roughly expressed in the two main capitalist parties, the Democrats and Republicans. The Democrats are every bit as interested as the Republicans in the U.S. being the dominant imperialist power, but they want to do it a little differently. They want to drop the embarrassing “pre-emptive strike” stuff which is scaring their erstwhile allies to death, and emphasize less “unilateral” imperialism by working through the UN, while doing essentially the same thing.

It would be wrong to say there’s simply no difference between the two parties, but as far as the working class and oppressed internationally are concerned, the differences don’t amount to much. In fact, because they are historically, and treacherously, supported to the hilt by the leaders of U.S. unions and are therefore seen as friends of labor, the Democrats tend to be *better* at driving down living conditions of the poor, wringing concessions from unions, and ratcheting up state repression. The current occupation in Iraq is brutal, but it was the more “reasonable” Democratic Clinton administration that starved one and a half million Iraqis, mostly children and the elderly, through eight years of UN sanctions and bombed Iraq at intervals.

Anyone who hoped the Democrats would somehow prevent the colonial occupation of Iraq was sorely disappointed. Today, as the occupation runs into trouble and flag-draped coffins come home, the

Democrats are hoping to gain support in next year’s election by complaining increasingly loudly about “Bush’s war.” This didn’t, however, prevent them from passing the spending bill to support the occupation, lest they appear “unpatriotic.”

## Fake Socialists Tail Democratic Party

Our message to antiwar youth and workers is that it is impossible to oppose imperialist war without opposing the capitalist system that breeds it and the capitalist parties that carry it out. This very basic truth, however, runs counter to the program of the supposedly “socialist” organizers and main builders of the recent demonstrations or those that took place during the war. These demonstrations were consciously organized and built by supposedly socialist organizations to embrace Democratic Party spokesmen like Al Sharpton, whose participation would supposedly encourage the unity of all opponents of the war. The “socialist” organizations I am referring to are Workers World Party, who leads the group ANSWER; the Maoists of the Revolutionary Communist Party who built the utterly liberal pacifist group Not In Our Name; and the reformist International Socialist Organization (ISO).

In politics every program and every action has a *class* character: does it serve the working class and oppressed, or does it serve the capitalists? The antiwar demonstrations were built in opposition to the imperialist war, but they were consciously designed *not* to oppose imperialism as a system; that’s what made them “broad.” The so-called socialists who lent their assistance to liberal Democrats deliberately *obscured* the fact that war is an inevitable product of capitalism. They conveyed the war as merely a bad policy by a bad group of politicians, the Republicans. They sent the implicit message that a “better” set of politicians, the Democrats, would stop the war.

Today the ISO says: “A UN occupation won’t bring democracy or liberation to the people of Iraq any more than the U.S. will” (*Socialist Worker*, 17 October). This is pretty priceless coming from the ISO, who clearly hope no one will compare their words with what they do on the ground. The ISO consistently capitulates to forces that look to the UN, like in the first Persian Gulf War in 1991, when it officially *endorsed* a January 26 “Campaign for Peace” march, one of whose demands was for UN sanctions. We call the UN a “den of imperialist thieves and their victims.” Its imperialist members have competing interests, as the Iraq war made clear. Several weeks ago the UN officially endorsed the fait accompli, the American occupation of Iraq. From the inception of the UN, when under its auspices the U.S. devastated the Korean peninsula during the 1950-53 Korean War, to the first Persian Gulf War to today, the UN has served to provide a fig leaf for U.S. imperialism.

Today the ISO is writing articles that denounce the Democrats and argue against supporting them as a “lesser evil.” They’re doing this in order to support *another* capitalist party, the Greens, as they did in the 2000 presidential elections and in the recall election in California. But the Greens are a capitalist party. In fact, they aren’t even an “alternative to the Democrats”: Nader has explicitly called for a Democratic majority in Congress, is supporting Democrat Dennis Kucinich for president and is rumored to be considering running only after Kucinich is defeated for the nomination.

The Greens looked to the UN to deal with the “problem” of Iraq’s supposed “weapons of mass destruction.” The real reason for the Greens’ existence is that in a period where you often can’t tell the Democrats apart from the Republicans, the Greens want to “remind” the Democrats that they should at least occasionally remember their liberal supporters if they want to win office. The Greens appeal almost exclusively to white, petty-bourgeois liberals; Nader ignored black oppression as a matter of principle during the 2000 presidential election, saying that

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P.O. Box 77462  
San Francisco, CA 94107

### New York City

Saturday, December 13  
5 to 10 p.m.

6 Harrison St., Manhattan  
(Take 1 or 9 to Franklin St.)

For more information:  
(212) 406-4252  
P.O. Box 99, Canal St. Sta.  
New York, NY 10013

### Chicago

Sunday, December 14  
3 to 7 p.m.

United Electrical Hall  
37 S. Ashland (at Monroe)

For more information:  
(312) 563-0442  
P.O. Box 802867  
Chicago, IL 60680

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specific demands against racial discrimination were "divisive." And this is who the ISO has supported.

Workers World goes about the same purpose a little differently. The ANSWER "Call to Action" for October 25 denounces "Bush" and "Bush's war" 15 times without once mentioning the Democrats. Is there an agenda here? Some of those around groups like ANSWER say they oppose the Democrats, that they're just "using" big name politicians like Sharpton or Jesse Jackson to make the demonstrations bigger, and what's wrong with that? But get real: given the massive political weight of the capitalist Democratic Party versus the nonexistent weight of these so-called socialist groups, who's using whom? Why do such politicians participate? By supporting a wing of the capitalists, the organizers of these demonstrations in fact *bolster* the capitalist system and help to ensure that imperialist war will continue.

In ANSWER's material you'll also, inevitably, find something along the lines of this lament, also taken from the flyer for October 25: "The U.S. is spending almost \$4 billion a month to occupy Iraq.... Remember these numbers when the government says there's no money for education and healthcare, or libraries, firehouses, childcare or vital social programs." Their banners always say something like: "Money for Jobs, Education and Healthcare, Not for War!" This presents capitalism, and imperialism, as a system which can be made to stop war and serve the interests of the oppressed; you just need big enough demonstrations to make them serve our interests.

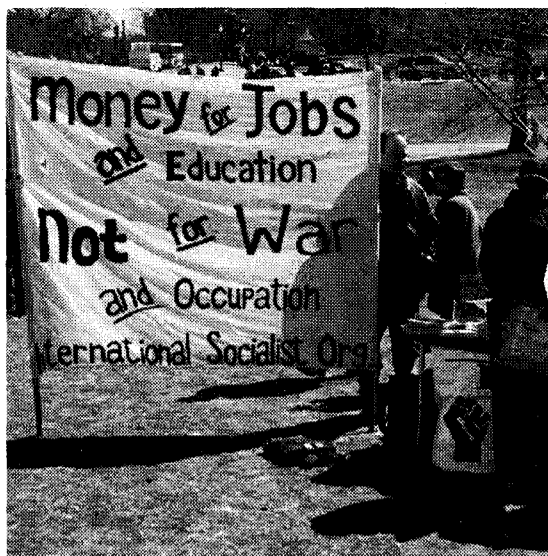
On the other hand, of course, there were really big demonstrations around the world last year and this spring, which clearly didn't stop the war and don't look to be stopping the occupation. There was an article in the *Washington Post* just before October 25 in which the organizers were asked about the early days of the occupation when the antiwar left seemed to disappear. Some activists said they and others were demoralized when their efforts failed to stop the war. One New Jersey organizer called it "discouraged peace activists syndrome."

The point is not to be "discouraged," but to draw the lesson of this experience: Nothing will stop the imperialists from pursuing their interests as long as capitalist imperialism exists. Petitions to Congressmen or marches by millions around the world are not going to change this fact. The capitalist class must be removed from power. To do this, we look on the other side of the class line, to the working class, because they have the social power to bring down capitalist rule.

### The Proletariat Is the Key

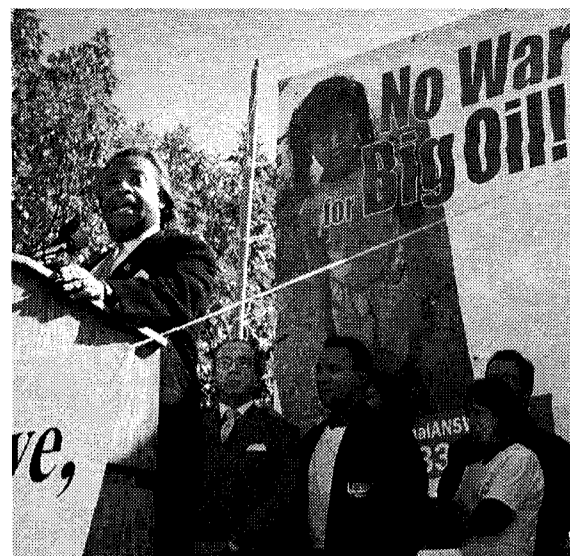
I know I have to defend this assertion because the term "working class" has become increasingly abstract to youth today, who are taught by the concepts of "globalism" and "postmodernism" that this is some quaint Marxist notion. Well, as you hopefully saw in the front-page article in *WV* (No. 814, 21 November), L.A. has been convulsed by strikes for weeks by workers who defied the bosses' attempts to drive down their wages and slash health care benefits. Everyone here must remember the experience in New York around last Christmas, when the front page of every newspaper was filled with growing hysteria about the possibility of a transit strike, which was ultimately knifed by the union tops. A potential strike by longshore workers on the West Coast in the summer of 2002 made the ruling class completely and clearly hysterical about the threat to their profits. Even when such struggles are betrayed by the trade-union bureaucrats, as they generally are, they explode the myth preached by "postmodernists" that the proletariat is obsolete. In fact, they show pretty clearly that workers, or the proletariat, are critical to the functioning of the American and world capitalist system. Clearly the proletariat not only exists, but it can bring the economy of the "world's only superpower" to a halt.

Every capitalist society creates its own



WV Photos

Left: ISO banner at March 15 antiwar rally promotes illusion that capitalism can be reformed to serve interests of workers and oppressed. Right: Al Sharpton speaking at 26 October 2002 antiwar rally. Workers World's ANSWER coalition builds platforms for capitalist politicians, serving to bolster illusions in Democratic Party.



gravedigger, the working class. But U.S. capitalism contains within it a particular weakness because it was built on the foundation of black slave labor. Although the Civil War eliminated slavery and the civil rights movement won formal legal equality, blacks remain forcibly segregated on the bottom of U.S. capitalist society, the victims of institutionalized racial oppression. Increasingly over the past few decades, as the U.S. has shut down factory after factory, creating ghost towns where they used to produce steel, whole layers of black people no longer have any prospect of ever having a decent job. The industrial jobs that have been lost have been replaced with prison cells: the prison population of 2.1 million is four times what it was 30 years ago.

Also, blacks are disproportionately represented in the military because it's one of the few ways they see to escape poverty. This points to the historic Achilles' heel of the American military:

teachers of "globalism" say, but because the leadership of the labor movement has a defeatist and treacherous program; they chain the workers to the Democratic Party and that spells defeat. As we wrote two decades ago and have repeated many times:

"No decisive gain of labor was ever won in a courtroom or by an act of Congress. Everything the workers movement has won of value has been achieved by mobilizing the ranks of labor in hard-fought struggle, on the picket lines, in plant occupations. What counts is power. The strength of the unions lies in their numbers, their militancy, their organization and discipline and their relation to the decisive means of production in modern capitalist society. The bosses are winning because the power of labor, its strength to decisively cripple the enemy, has not been brought to bear."

— "Labor's Gotta Play Hardball to Win," *WV* supplement (March 1984)

We are fighting to break workers and the oppressed from the Democrats and Republicans, to build a revolutionary work-

olution, but as having initiated world socialist revolution. They recognized that for the Russian Revolution to survive, workers revolutions had to triumph in the imperialist countries. This understanding was unfortunately confirmed in the negative. Due to the lack of revolutionary leadership outside of Russia, workers revolutions didn't triumph in West Europe, despite revolutionary opportunities particularly in Germany in 1918-1919 and 1923. The failure of these revolutions ushered in a period of demoralization that set the stage for a political counterrevolution in the Soviet Union, which was led by Stalin in 1923-24. In the context of international defeat and the Soviet Union's isolation, Stalin developed the "theory" in 1924 that socialism could be built in one country. Under this anti-Marxist dogma of "socialism in one country," the Stalinist bureaucracy proceeded to accommodate imperialism and betray the promise of the Bolshevik Revolution. In opposition to Stalinism, Trotsky formed a Left Opposition to defend Bolshevism, the program of revolutionary internationalism—the program we stand on today.

On the one hand, the bureaucracy sought to defend its own privileges against the interests of the working class. Conservative and nationalist in outlook, it sought to conciliate the imperialists and transformed the once-revolutionary Third International into a wretched instrument of the Kremlin's foreign policy. On the other hand, as Trotsky underlined, the bureaucracy derived its privileged position from the expropriation of the bourgeoisie in Russia and the creation of a nationalized, planned economy—which represented the key gains of the 1917 Russian Revolution that remained despite Stalinist misrule. Trotsky termed the Soviet Union a degenerated workers state.

The existence of the Soviet Union as a "superpower" largely shaped the world environment in which U.S. imperialism operated. It allowed peasant-based guerrilla movements in China, North Korea, Cuba and Vietnam to wrest power and expropriate capitalism, setting up societies qualitatively similar to the bureaucratically degenerated Soviet Union. These revolutions, despite being bureaucratically deformed from the start, were victories for the oppressed internationally as well as a boon to blacks, workers and immigrants here. They also stayed the hand of U.S. imperialism for decades—especially the Vietnamese Revolution, which was a really bruising defeat for the imperialists and which haunts them to this day. Today, a crucial task for leftists and workers internationally is the military defense of these remaining deformed workers states against imperialist attack and internal counterrevolution.

### We Said: "Hail Red Army in Afghanistan!"

In 1979, the Soviet Union initiated its most progressive act in decades of Stalinist misrule by intervening into Afghanistan. A left-wing military coup had taken place the previous year. To give a sense of Afghanistan at the time, the life expectancy was 40 years, there was no industry, and the illiteracy rate

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WV Photo

Spartacist-initiated Revolutionary Internationalist Contingent at January 18 San Francisco antiwar demonstration.

it's composed disproportionately of young black men who have little cause or inclination to fight, and maybe die, for the interests of a ruling class that treats them with racist contempt at home. And despite deindustrialization, one sector in which blacks are integrated is at the workplace. As was reflected in this war, black people tend to be less inclined than whites to buy the ruling class' hype about "democracy."

Add to the picture increasing numbers of immigrants who have entered the U.S. working class in the past few decades, bringing higher class consciousness and a tradition of fighting against the bosses. Especially after September 11, as the ruling class has escalated its assault against everybody, immigrants have felt the brunt in heightened racism, the threat of deportation and more grinding exploitation as the bosses seek to take advantage of their vulnerability. Some have chosen to fight, however, as we're seeing in the strikes in L.A. This underlines the crucial importance for the labor movement to take up the call: Full citizenship rights for immigrants!

The American labor movement generally fails to mobilize in the interests of all working people not because the unions have become "irrelevant" today, as some

ers party that fights for workers revolution, to bring about a socialist world.

### U.S. Imperialism in the Post-Soviet World

Of course, today it's generally believed that workers revolution is impossible, that "communism has failed" and that the only thing to do is to accept that capitalism is forever. In bringing about this change in consciousness throughout the world, the defining experience of the last 15 or so years has been the collapse of Stalinist rule in East Europe and the Soviet Union in the late '80s and early '90s. The shape of today's world—including the U.S.'s position on top and Iraq's desperate one—is tied in innumerable ways to the existence and collapse of the Soviet Union in the last century. So I'm going to speak at some length about it, beginning with the 1917 October Revolution in Russia, which dealt a huge blow to world imperialism and remains a powerful example for the world's oppressed today; it continues to prove that imperialism can be brought down by the working class under revolutionary leadership.

The first inter-imperialist war, World War I, gave birth to the Russian Revolution. The Bolsheviks never viewed themselves as having made the "Russian" Rev-

# Iraq...

(continued from page 9)

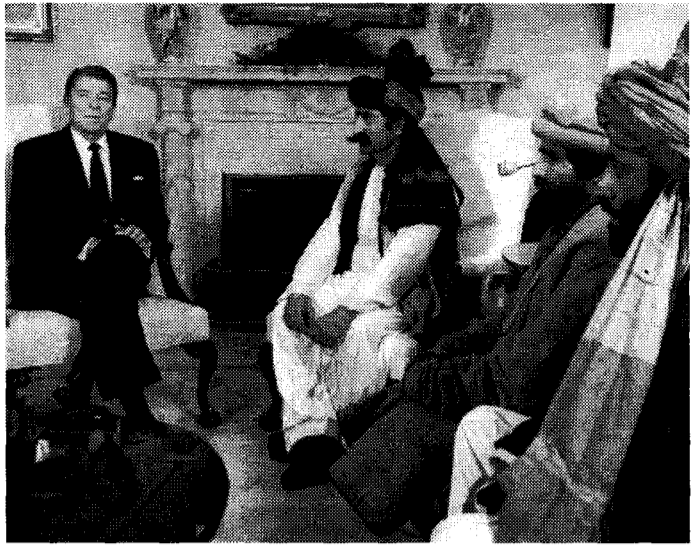
was 90 percent for men, 98 percent for women. Almost all women were imprisoned under the *burka* and sold like animals under the bride price system. The leftist government, the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA), wanted to institute some reforms to modernize the country and improve these hideous conditions. When they tried to limit the bride price—the buying and selling of women—the woman-hating, Islamic fundamentalist *mujahedin*, backed by the CIA, took up arms against the government, and the PDPA asked the Soviet Union for help.

The Soviet Union intervened, not so much out of concern for women as out of the justified concern that it didn't want a CIA-backed, reactionary government on its border. It could hardly have been clearer that there was a side to take with the Soviet Union and the PDPA's goals for social progress against the CIA and the Islamic *mujahedin* who wanted to keep Afghan women enslaved. So we did take a side and said, "Hail Red Army in Afghanistan!" On the mullahs' side, Democratic president Jimmy Carter oozed hypocritical concern about "human rights" while funding the Islamic cutthroats, screaming about Soviet "expansionism" and launching Cold War II.

The imperialists' anti-Communist "human rights" crusade was joined, disgracefully, by almost every other leftist organization in this country. There was a consensus originating from the ruling class and including everyone from anarchists to feminists. Groups like the Revolutionary Communist Party and Progressive Labor denounced what they called "Soviet social-imperialism," while the ISO embraced the *mujahedin* as "freedom fighters," screaming "Troops Out of Afghanistan!" (*Socialist Worker* [Britain], 12 January 1980.) Reagan and Bush funded Cold War II in Afghanistan to the tune of billions of dollars and organized the CIA to help recruit more than 70,000 of these vile Islamic fundamentalists from more than 50 countries and including Osama bin Laden, to be trained by the CIA at "jihad universities" to fight the "godless Soviets."

Gorbachev began pulling Soviet troops out of Afghanistan in 1988 hoping to appease the imperialists, who gloated over their victory. The ISO, along with most of the "left," gloated with them, saying, "We welcome the defeat of the Russians in Afghanistan. It will give heart to all those inside the USSR and in Eastern Europe who want to break the rule of Stalin's heirs" (*Socialist Worker* [U.S.], May 1988). It did "give heart" to the forces for counterrevolution—in East Germany, East Europe and the Soviet Union in 1991—which the ISO and many other fake socialists cheered.

On our side of the class line, the side of



Left: Afghan *mujahedin* reactionaries with paymaster Ronald Reagan in the White House, 1983. Right: Members of Afghan women's militia with Soviet-supplied rifles in struggle against CIA-backed Islamic reactionaries.



the oppressed, we called the withdrawal of Soviet troops a betrayal and said that it would lead to horrors for the women of Afghanistan at the hands of the Islamic fundamentalists. We fought against this taking place with the small forces available to us. In 1989, after Gorbachev had withdrawn all Soviet troops, we offered to the Afghan government to organize an international brigade to fight the Islamic reactionaries, as Trotskyists organized to fight the fascists in the Spanish Civil War. The government rejected the proposal but asked for money, so we organized an international fund drive, raising \$44,000 for the people of Jalalabad, under siege by the *mujahedin*.

When it was clear capitalist counterrevolution was rearing its head in the Soviet Union and East Europe, we threw all our available resources internationally into the fight. We were a tiny organization, as we are today, but the imperialists had thrown down the gauntlet. They were intent on having these countries back in the capitalist camp for them to bleed to death, and we didn't hesitate to join the battle and try to show the working class how history could be changed in its favor. Counterrevolution was not a foregone conclusion. Especially in East Germany after the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, there was a real possibility the East German working class would fight for power in a political revolution against the Stalinists and to defeat the capitalist counterrevolution. When it became clear that Trotskyists might again be able to do political work in the Soviet Union under Gorbachev, we sent comrades to Moscow. We did what we could to mobilize the proletariat to defeat the counterrevolution led by Yeltsin and Bush. In both places, as well as throughout East Europe, the forces of counterrevolution were too strong, and capitalism was restored, but we did not give up these historic battles without a fight.

Today as well, we do not accept that defeat at the hands of imperialism is inevitable. We fight to defend every gain the working class has won. So we defend the remaining deformed workers states in China, Cuba, North Korea and Vietnam.

We resolutely defend North Korea's right to nuclear weapons to defend themselves against the nuclear madmen in Washington. And actually, the fact that North Korea has nuclear capacity makes it much less likely that the U.S. will attack it: it's not defenseless like Iraq. While we defend it militarily, we know that the North Korean workers state is bureaucratically deformed by Stalinist misrule, as are the workers states in Cuba, China and Vietnam. So we fight for workers political revolution against the Stalinist bureaucracy to bring an internationalist, authentic communist leadership to power. Our defense of these countries is not conditioned, however, on political revolution taking place.

## For Socialist Revolution to End Imperialist War!

We're proud to have fought the imperialists in their efforts to retake the globe. There's no "end of history," as one Reaganite ideologue gloated after the fall of the Soviet Union. He meant that supposedly now there are no contradictions, and capitalism, and particularly the U.S., will rule forever. We know that the contradictions in capitalist society will inevitably lead not only to new wars and miseries for the oppressed, but also opportunities and, occasionally, victories. But having taken a side and fought, we also have to recognize that the world's working class and oppressed lost an important battle in the period I've just described. Recognizing this fact is necessary if we're going to lead the working class and oppressed to gain enough strength and confidence in the years ahead to reverse the tide.

So let me explain what I mean about how this defeat has shaped today's world. Right after the fall of the Soviet Union, we were all told that now there would be a "peace dividend"—finally, there would be money for health care and public housing and education since supposedly there was nobody left to fight. What a bitter joke! We told the truth at the time: that the fact that the U.S. was now the undisputed "top cop of the world" made the world a vastly more dangerous place, not less, and that the working class and oppressed everywhere would feel the lash of *more* brutal, naked capitalism. The first Persian Gulf War in 1991, which occurred just months before Yeltsin's counterrevolutionary coup in the Soviet Union, unfortunately proved that we were right about renewed imperialist war. In the next decade or so after the fall of the USSR, the U.S. militarily intervened in Somalia, the Balkans, Haiti, Afghanistan and Iraq, while stepping up their attacks on working people at home. So much for the "peace dividend." The children of the former Soviet Union, the world's first workers state, now experience malnutrition as a norm. Today, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, there are an estimated 27 million *slaves* in the world—not horribly oppressed wage slaves or peasants, but people who have literally been enslaved. All this is the result of the victory of "freedom and democracy," which we uniquely fought.

The Maoists often say "the most oppressed are the most revolutionary." By that token, the increasingly brutal oppression of most of the world's population should make the workers and oppressed increasingly revolutionary today. It's true

that the more the U.S. imperialists savagely attack the world's oppressed, the more they exacerbate the contradictions that inherently exist within capitalism, creating the social tinder that can and must bring them down. But it's not automatic; we can't just sit and wait for it to happen. It takes human beings fighting for the interests of the oppressed to give the just outrage that exists the consciousness and political leadership it needs to succeed.

I'm going to address one way in which consciousness has changed, specifically, thrown back, since the so-called "death of communism," this time closer to the terrain of the U.S. I'll read a small quote which I think expresses it. We got an e-mail building for an anti-globalization protest against the FTAA (Free Trade Area of the Americas) in Miami on November 17 to 21. I have no idea who the writer is, but I want to quote him because I think it's pretty typical of how youth think today: "There is a new left on the rise, a left that seeks to change the world without taking power, a left that is almost invisible to the gaze of the corporate media and that has been pushed to the periphery of events such as the World Social Forum: the autonomous left."

"Change the world without taking power"? But taking power is exactly what's necessary! My point is: it's not an accident that this somewhat mystical conception of changing society is popular among today's generation of youth, while it wasn't a current among leftists of your parents' or grandparents' generation. Why? They saw firsthand social revolutions that "shook the world," while you've been taught that communism is an "experiment that failed" and nothing can stop U.S. imperialism, so you might as well try to find ways to tame the beast.

In fact, while it's not possible to "tame" U.S. imperialism, it is possible to destroy it. Today we're facing a U.S. imperialism more powerful than ever, and it is a frightening thing: the only ruling class to have used nuclear weapons against people openly muses about the possibilities of using "limited" nuclear arms. They're rounding up immigrants, setting up domestic spying programs, shredding the Constitution and laying out plans for what they call "war without end." There's plenty of reason for people all over the world, including within this country, to fear the U.S. But the commonly held belief that U.S. imperialism is omnipotent and eternal not only serves the interests of the ruling class, but it's just *wrong*.

This irrational, bloody capitalist system sowed the seeds of its own destruction long ago in the powerful, integrated working class whose position gives them the power to bring the warmongers down. Every day imperialism creates new contradictions, new antagonisms, new challenges to the very existence of imperialism; they can't "end history" in their favor, much as they wish to. It's our job to bring to a close the capitalist chapter and start writing a new one in which those who labor will rule, and the barbarity of war will be a distant memory. We're fighting to build the revolutionary party that leads the way in bringing that about. We are the party of the Russian Revolution. I urge you to join us in fighting for new Octobers. ■

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

Web site: [www.icl-fi.org](http://www.icl-fi.org) • E-mail address: [vanguard@tiac.net](mailto:vanguard@tiac.net)

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

### Boston

Box 390840, Central Sta.  
Cambridge, MA 02139  
(617) 666-9453

### Chicago

Box 6441, Main PO  
Chicago, IL 60680  
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### Public Office:

Sat. 2-5 p.m.  
222 S. Morgan  
(Buzzer 23)

### Los Angeles

Box 29574, Los Feliz Sta.  
Los Angeles, CA 90029  
(213) 380-8239

Public Office: Sat. 2-5 p.m.  
3806 Beverly Blvd., Room 215

### New York

Box 3381, Church St. Sta.  
New York, NY 10008  
(212) 267-1025

### Public Office:

Sat. 1-4 p.m.  
299 Broadway, Suite 318

### Oakland

Box 29497  
Oakland, CA 94604  
(510) 839-0851

### Public Office:

Sat. 1-5 p.m.  
1634 Telegraph  
3rd Floor

### San Francisco

Box 77494  
San Francisco  
CA 94107

## TROTSKYIST LEAGUE OF CANADA/LIGUE TROTSKYSTE DU CANADA

### Toronto

Box 7198, Station A  
Toronto, ON M5W 1X8  
(416) 593-4138

### Vancouver

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

# Archives...

(continued from page 3)

workers state in 1991-92, our Prometheus Research Library published the first Russian-language edition of Trotsky's book and distributed it across the former USSR, under the title *The Communist International After Lenin* (1994), to re-introduce to the workers of the former USSR the long-suppressed program of proletarian internationalism smuggled out of Moscow by James P. Cannon in 1928.

## The Fortress of the World Revolution

Militant, 15 November 1928

Eleven years have gone by since the Russian workers took the hammer of revolution in their hands and broke the chain of World Imperialism at its weakest link. The history of the whole intervening period represents on the one hand the efforts of the imperialists to forge that chain together again and bind it tighter around the enslaved masses and, on the other hand, the struggle of the proletariat to tear it apart from the whole of humanity.

The Russian Revolution was not merely a national event—it was the beginning of and signal for the International Proletarian Revolution. Herein lies its true meaning, its great historic significance. From this standpoint the revolutionary workers of the world hail the cause of Soviet Russia as their cause on the eleventh anniversary of her "October."

The Russian Revolution broke forever the "unity" of the world and divided it into two hostile camps—the camp of imperialist exploitation and the camp of social revolution. At one pole stands America, the strongest imperialist world power. At the other stands the

USSR, the land of the workers rule. The antagonism between them and the systems they represent is irreconcilable. They cannot live together permanently side by side. The victory of the Soviet system on a world scale means the liberation of enslaved humanity and its ascent to heights of culture and achievement beyond our dreams—to socialism and beyond that to communism. The victory of imperialism would hurl civilization into the abyss. Such is the issue of "the epoch of wars and revolutions" in which we live and fight.

The Russian Revolution revived the revolutionary movement of the world and inspired the proletarian masses with new confidence and hope. It lifted up the banner of socialism, trampled in the mud of social-patriotism by the traitor leaders of the "socialist" parties, and made it again synonymous with Internationalism. Lenin, the leader of the Russian Revolution, was also the leader of the Communist International which arose out of the ruins brought about by social treason in the war. Eleven years of the dictatorship of the proletariat has confirmed everything that Lenin taught about the international significance of the revolution and the indissoluble bonds between it and the world proletariat.

Soviet Russia is the fortress of the World Revolution. While it stands the imperialist system shakes on its foundations. Every attempt at "stabilization" brings greater insecurity and deeper contradictions. The example and the brotherly help of Soviet Russia inspires and strengthens the movement of the workers and oppressed peoples throughout the world. The flag of our Socialist Fatherland is the flag of our hope and on this eleventh anniversary we again hail it as our own.

Between the Soviet Republics united in the USSR and the international revolutionary proletariat there is an organic connection. They are bound together spiritually and politically. They are united by ties of mutual solidarity which no power on earth can break. Just as the Soviet



Basil Blackwell Inc.

**Left Oppositionists in Siberian exile demonstrate on the anniversary of Bolshevik Revolution, 1928. Banner slogans are "Turn the Fire to the Right, Against Kulak, NEPman and Bureaucrat, Not in Words But in Deeds" and "Long Live the Dictatorship of the Proletariat!"**

Republics constitute an impregnable fortress of the world revolution so is the international proletariat the protector of the Soviet Republics. The revolutionary workers see in every blow aimed at Soviet Russia a blow aimed at their own cause and react against it as such. The defense of the Soviet Union is our own fight. It is and will be a central rallying slogan of the labor militants of the entire world. "Defend the Soviet Union!" is a slogan leading the workers to follow the example of the Russian Revolution. So they must conceive it. So will the victory of socialism in Russia and throughout the world be finally secured.

The victory of the Russian proletariat grew out of the World War. The establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat in Russia and the organization of the Communist International—two vast achievements historically linked together—are the plus signs against the slaughter of the

millions and the collapse of the Second International. The imperialist war makers and their "socialist" lackeys unleashed forces which they could not control.

The imperialist masters of the world want to take back these gains of the workers wrested out of the bloody pit of war and revolution. Armaments are being multiplied on an unprecedented scale. War clouds darken the skies. War plans grow apace. They are aimed primarily at Soviet Russia and through it at the entire international labor movement.

The celebrations of the workers throughout the world on this eleventh anniversary of the Russian Revolution must therefore be dominated above all by the solemn realization of the war danger and the steel resolve to meet it by revolutionary means; by the resolve to put all our weight and all our sacrifice in the scale for the cause of Soviet Russia which is the cause of the oppressed and exploited. ■

# Chicago...

(continued from page 2)

company's increased power to impose discipline. Even more ominously, the new contract includes several provisions that threaten the future of the union. The number of part-time drivers, who are "on call" six days a week and receive limited benefits, would increase from 20 percent to 25 percent of the workforce. Workers hired after September 2001 would have their medical benefits slashed upon retirement and would no longer be eligible to retire with full pension after age 55. The company is betting that as years pass, these "new hires" will not want to fight to keep retiree medical benefits that they themselves will not receive.

The Excel "training" program, which the arbitrator agreement will impose on Local 241 as well as 308, creates wage differentials and undermines seniority for workers doing repairs; two repairmen, working side by side on the same job, can be paid at different rates and are eligible for different job picks. What's needed is a fight for: **Equal benefits and equal pay at the highest rate for equal work! Full-time work for all! End split shifts! Shorter work shifts with no loss in pay!**

For four years, the CTA has frozen the wages of Local 241 members at 1999 levels. Angry members demanded strike action at repeated raucous union meetings. Official and unofficial demonstrations demanded a contract. For two years, ATU 241 officials pursued various court suits, hoping to "force" the company to negotiate. When in February 2003 former president Lee Robinson made a back-room deal with CTA chief Frank Kruesi, it was voted down the next month by 88 percent of the members. But Executive Board members opposed to Robinson's sellout themselves ran to the bosses' courts against the union in an attempt to get an injunction to prevent the member-

ship from voting! The ATU International then moved in to put the local into temporary receivership and organized the March contract vote.

The Executive Board's invitation of the capitalist courts into the union is nothing short of treachery. Far from being a neutral body, the courts, together with the military, cops and prisons, are the core of the bourgeois state, an apparatus of repression whose function is to maintain the system of capitalist class rule and property. The bosses' courts intervene to weaken and even destroy unions and take matters out of the hands of the union members. Labor must clean its own house! Government hands off the unions!

## Democratic Party—Enemy of Labor

The labor bureaucrats push the defeatist lie that you can't strike against City Hall. ATU Local 1277 transit workers in Los Angeles did just that, shutting down public transportation for five weeks. But the sellout of the L.A. transit strike by bureaucrats taking their cue from Democratic Party politicians also underlined the need for the complete independence of the unions from the bosses, their state and their political parties.

This is a key lesson for Chicago ATU members, some of whom have become so discouraged by the machinations of the union bureaucracy that they have turned to bourgeois politicians for aid. One group of workers distributed a leaflet declaring that it was time to "do for ourselves" and calling on members to attend an Operation PUSH meeting to ask Jesse Jackson, Sr. for help. Not one to pass up such an opportunity, Jackson demanded \$35 a head in PUSH membership fees from distressed transit workers. PUSH and Jackson sponsored a series of rallies outside CTA facilities and headquarters at the Merchandise Mart calling for a contract.

Jackson represents the Democrats and the Democrats, no less than the Republicans, represent the capitalists. The party

of Jackson is the party of Daley is the party of Kruesi. Jackson postures as a "friend of labor" in order to head off and contain social struggle. His role is to rope in working people, particularly black people, to vote for whatever racist, anti-labor candidate the Democrats run. What this Democratic "lesser evil" meant under Clinton was the axing of welfare, a sharp rise in the disparity between rich and poor and a massive increase in the black and Hispanic prison population.

Unlike Jackson, who is a direct representative of the capitalists, the union bureaucracy are the political agents of the ruling class *within* the workers movement, seeking to divert labor struggle into bourgeois electoral politics. On October 1, the ATU International endorsed Richard Gephardt in the Democratic Party presidential primaries. The full-color photo of Gephardt on the International's Web site is in stark contrast to their paltry support for the ATU Local 1277 strike in Los Angeles.

Much more than a struggle over wages is at stake. The CTA is the Chicago employer that provides one of the largest number of decent-paying jobs to black people. The transit unions are a reservoir of potential power in defense of blacks, Latinos and immigrants against police terror. In response to Kruesi's recent fare hike, the transit unions must fight for free, quality mass transit for all and for the restoration of transit service cut by the CTA to swaths of the West Side and South Side ghettos and barrios. In championing the cause of the oppressed, the unions will find a wide base of support.

Over the past year and a half, three bus drivers have been victimized by the cops: Arlene Russell, Karen Kelly and Henry Walker. It was thanks to the union's mobilization that charges against Russell were dropped. The racist cops who arrested Russell held her for eight hours while they ran her fingerprints against an international "terrorist" database—a chilling example of how the repressive

measures adopted in the post-September 11 "war on terror" target workers and minorities. Yet the ATU tops *endorsed* the Patriot Act.

The behavior of the trade-union bureaucrats—endlessly flexible in their dealings with the bosses, remote from and dictatorial toward the union members—is in no way a phenomenon particular to this union struggle or even the U.S. labor movement. The union misleaders' strategy of derailing strikes in order to rely on arbitration, the courts or labor boards is directly contrary to the interests of the ranks. Thus this slavish strategy requires that they suppress union democracy. In a 1940 article titled "Trade Unions in the Epoch of Imperialist Decay," revolutionary leader Leon Trotsky pointed out that the capitalist system, in its epoch of imperialist decay, increasingly requires the subordination of the trade unions to the bosses' state. Driven, on the one hand, by the need to wage war to increase the capitalist rulers' power and profits and, on the other, by its increasing inability to provide its subjects with the wherewithal to survive, the imperialist state seeks to bring the unions under its control. In this country, that subordination is effected, for the most part, by the links and overlap of the trade-union tops with the Democratic Party.

Independence from the capitalist state requires independence from the capitalist parties. The working class needs a socialist revolution and a workers government to get rid of this profit system that robs the workers and poor, maintains segregation and launches imperialist wars. To that end, there must be a fight for a workers party committed to such a program. Building that party will require a struggle in the unions against the misleaders who tie the workers to the Democrats, a fight in the labor movement for a leadership committed to a program of class struggle, a fight to oust the trade-union bureaucrats whose loyalty to capitalism means selling out the workers' cause. ■

# WORKERS VANGUARD

## Teamsters Honor Grocery Workers Pickets

# Victory to UFCW Strike!

## Shut Down the Distribution Centers! Stop the Scabs!

LOS ANGELES, December 2—In a crucial development for the Southern California grocery workers strike, United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) picket lines went up the Monday before

### Southern California

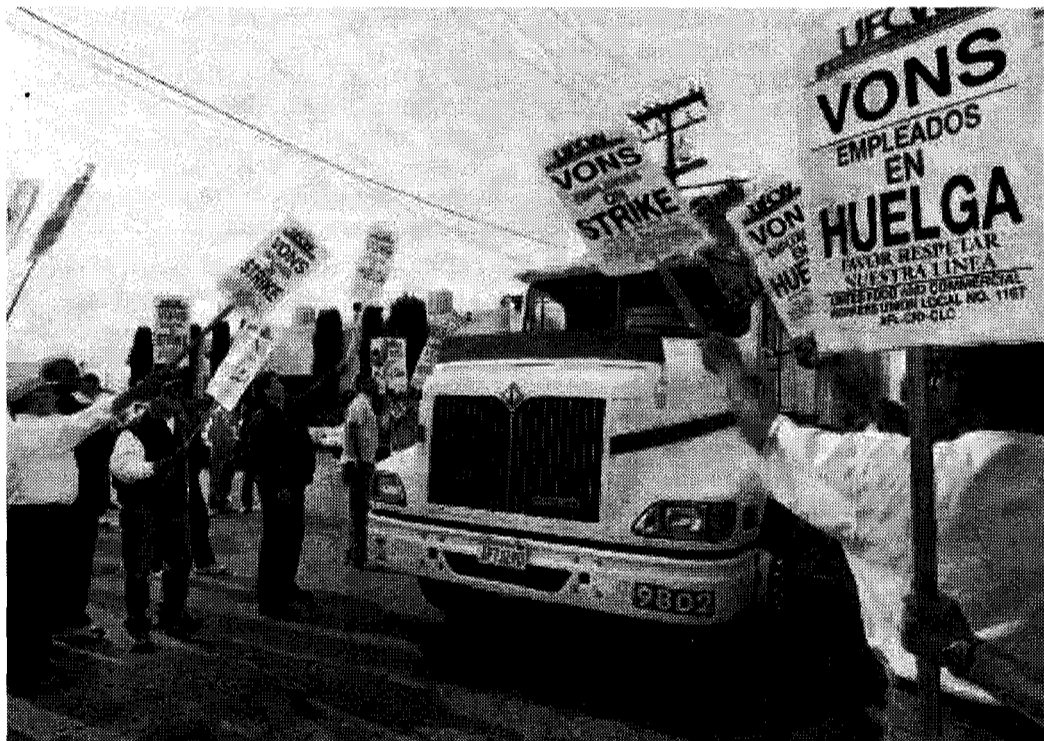
Thanksgiving at nine distribution centers in Southern and Central California that supply some 859 Albertsons, Ralphs and Vons supermarkets. More than 8,000 Teamsters drivers and warehouse workers are honoring the UFCW pickets, disrupting food deliveries during the busiest grocery shopping season of the year. At a Vons distribution center in El Monte, Teamsters drivers walking away from their trucks were greeted by striking grocery workers saying "Glad that you're back with us!"

As we've said from the beginning of the strike over seven weeks ago, the key to victory for the grocery workers is to shut all the distribution centers down tight. All three grocery chains were forced to take the unusual measure of closing their stores on Thanksgiving Day. Picketing the distribution centers should not be just a temporary pressure tactic for the holidays; nothing should move until the UFCW strike ends in victory. But while the UFCW bureaucracy claims that the distribution system has been "effectively shut down" (*UFCW Daily Update*, 26 November), thousands of scabs are freely driving trucks in and out of the distribution centers and working inside. The Teamsters, while honoring the picket lines, have not been mobilized by their leadership to join the lines. The Teamsters have a big stake in this battle, with their contract expiring in two years, and facing the threat of being replaced by non-union, "independent" truckers. What's necessary is to mobilize mass, militant UFCW and Teamsters pickets at the distribution centers to **stop all scabbing!**

The question of tactics to win this strike poses the broader question of a **class-struggle strategy** based on unconditional independence of the unions from the employers, their state and their political parties. This is directly counterposed to the class-collaborationist policy of the labor bureaucracy. The labor tops' support to and reliance on the Democratic Party is an expression of their allegiance to the capitalist system. How such policies lead to sellout and defeat was clearly demonstrated during the recent strike by some 2,000 L.A. transit workers in the Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU) against the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA). It was the alliance between ATU head Neil Silver and Democratic City Councilman Antonio Villaraigosa that set the stage for the

sellout deal. Villaraigosa used his image as a "friend of labor" to sell the union a rotten deal, something Zev Yaroslavsky, chairman of the MTA Board, could not easily get away with.

Although the majority of the ATU membership voted for the new contract on November 19, which mandates that the future of their union health benefits be left in the hands of a pro-company "mediation" committee, it was largely because they saw no real alternative. Many at the meeting were so disgusted they did not vote at all.



Ferazzi/L.A. Times

**UFCW pickets at Vons distribution center in El Monte, November 24. UFCW, Teamsters: Build mass pickets to shut distribution centers down!**

Workers leaving the November 19 meeting angrily described how Villaraigosa was strutting around the meeting glad-handing members after having knifed them in the back. Ken Lewis, a veteran mechanic, lashed out at ATU head Silver, saying, "We didn't strike for wages, Neil, we were on strike for benefits!" Health care, he said, was "the most important thing...and we don't have benefits. Why did you cave?" (*Los Angeles Times*, 20 November). It could take months for an agreement to be made on the health benefits issue, and the ranks won't even be allowed to vote on it themselves—the ATU executive board will decide for them.

The L.A. transit showdown is far from settled. After five weeks honoring the ATU picket lines, bus and train drivers in the United Transportation Union (UTU) and the clerks and custodians in the Transportation Communications International Union (TCU) are still working without a contract. An important opportunity to forge unity in struggle was squandered by the bureaucrats; the TCU and UTU should have officially declared themselves on strike and no one should have gone back to work without decent

contracts for all MTA workers.

The UTU and the TCU should now both go out on strike with ATU members solidly honoring and joining their picket lines, sending a message that they won't accept any givebacks in health benefits! No one should go back to work until *all* MTA transit workers have a contract that protects health care. No contract, no work! Transit workers need a common contract expiration date and, beyond that, one union for the entire industry.

Workers across the country have a stake in the victory of the Southern Cali-

fornia labor struggles. Many workers have demonstrated in solidarity with the multiethnic grocery strikers. On November 10 in San Pedro, thousands of longshoremen effectively shut down the port for eight hours to join a grocery workers rally, along with Teamsters, health care workers, government workers and teachers (see letter, page 2). This was widely appreciated by UFCW strikers; one striker at the Compton distribution center told a *Workers Vanguard* salesman, "We need longshore to go out and shut down the harbor."

The supermarket owners are playing hardball because they're determined to force health care, pension, and two-tier wage take-backs into their Southern California contract as a first step toward slashing wages and benefits around the country as other UFCW contracts come up. Thousands of other UFCW workers in Kentucky, West Virginia and Ohio are on strike, and thousands more are working without a contract in Arizona and Indiana. The strike must be extended within California and against the struck supermarket chains nationally. Instead, the union leadership has been sending striking workers to Safeway stores in

Northern California, Washington, Baltimore and Denver to put up "informational pickets." Fellow UFCW members are working behind these "pickets," illustrating that such tactics undermine workers' consciousness that the picket line is the battle line in the class struggle.

In an article titled "2 Sides Seem Entrenched In Supermarket Dispute," the *New York Times* (10 November) noted that the 70,000-strong UFCW strike is "the biggest labor dispute in the nation in recent years." It takes place in the context of growing discontent over the colonial occupation of Iraq, the erosion of civil liberties, especially for immigrants, and increasing economic dislocation in the midst of a jobless economic "recovery." "The stakes are enormous.... If the employers succeed in their effort to extract large concessions,... other employers across the nation will see this as a green light to try to do the same thing." Ruth Milkman, chairwoman of the University of California Institute for Labor and Employment, told the *New York Times*.

The capitalists know, as every worker should know, that the interests of the workers and the bosses are diametrically opposed. For profits to go up, the capitalist must increase the rate of exploitation, driving down the living standards of the working masses. The trade-union bureaucrats promote the illusion that there can be "fair" terms of exploitation and the lie that the interests of labor and capital can be reconciled.

While some Democrats have paid lip service to the plight of the downtrodden, heavily immigrant supermarket workers, the Democratic Party no less than the Republicans is a political representative of the employers and an enemy of working people. The aim of the capitalist government, whether in its Democratic or Republican face, is to use its arsenal of repression to suppress labor struggle. Today, picket lines at distribution centers are being constantly videotaped by company security and harassed by the cops.

Labor militants must link the fight to oust the sellout union bureaucrats with the struggle to build a revolutionary workers party. To put an end to union-busting, mass unemployment, racist attacks on black people and immigrants and the imperialist brutalization of the neocolonial masses abroad requires a socialist revolution to overthrow the capitalist system of exploitation and oppression. The same ruling class that is slaughtering Iraqis in the Near East is also bent on destroying the hard-won gains of working people and minorities in America. Only when the capitalist exploiters are expropriated and those who labor rule will the wealth of this society be used for the benefit of all. **Victory to the UFCW strike!** ■