



Defend Iraq! Defeat U.S. Imperialism Through Workers Revolution!

The following leaflet was issued by the Spartacist League/U.S. on 16 December 1998, the day the U.S. and Britain began the terror bombing of Iraq, and distributed at protest demonstrations around the country.

The massive bombing attack on Iraq

launched by Clinton on Wednesday, with the eager support of British Labour prime minister Tony Blair, is a display of naked imperialist terror. More than a million Iraqis, overwhelmingly young children, have already been killed by the United Nations starvation blockade

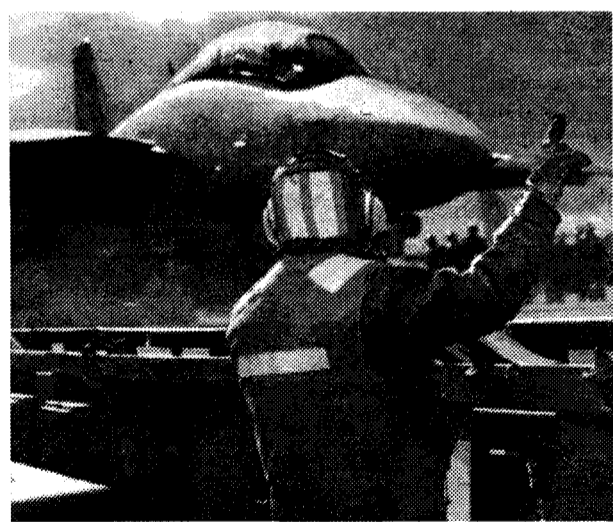
imposed under U.S. diktat since the 1991 imperialist "desert slaughter." Now American and British bombs are crashing into heavily populated areas of Baghdad, slaughtering Iraqi men, women and children. The Spartacist League calls on working people around

the world, especially in the heart of U.S. imperialism, to stand in defense of Iraq: *Down with the imperialist terror bombing! Down with the starvation blockade! U.S./Britain: Get your bloody imperialist hands off Iraq!*

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Anti-Sex Witchhunt Threatens Right to Privacy for All

Clinton Impeachment and U.S. Imperialism



Ashe/Time

Congress delayed debate on Clinton impeachment to rally behind U.S. terror bombing of Iraq.

Last month's Congressional vote to impeach Bill Clinton over lying about his goings-on with Monica Lewinsky has elevated the Republican Party's drive against the Democratic president into a political crisis for the capitalist ruling class. The purpose of the "family values" crusade and accompanying anti-sex witchhunt, pushed for years by both the Democratic and Republican parties, was to socially regiment working people, not threaten the stability of the bourgeois state!

For the population as a whole, there is a truly sinister aspect in the impeachment of the U.S. president for a consensual

sexual affair with the White House intern. As we noted in "Impeachment Drive Threatens Right to Privacy for All" (WV No. 697, 25 September 1998): "At issue is one of the most fundamental democratic rights, the right to privacy—which in practice comes down to the right to a private sex life without meddling or snooping by state and church authorities." But at the same time, the weakening of the constitutionally strong

American presidency, which stands at the apex of the capitalist state apparatus, would not be a bad thing from the standpoint of the interests of the working class and the oppressed.

This is not lost on more farsighted sections of the American ruling class which openly worry that Clinton's impeachment will only further erode "public confidence" in the governmental institutions of American capitalist rule. As expressed in

an editorial in the *New York Times* (16 December 1998): "If impeachment by the House and removal by the Senate would simply harm him and not the Constitution, we would be all for it. But under the present circumstances of a polarized party-line vote, it would assault the Constitution as well as public confidence

in that most precious American asset, the orderly, quadrennial surrender of power from one Chief Executive to another and often from one party to another. "That transfer of power without gunfire or legislative chicanery is the jewel in the crown of American democracy. It should not be sacrificed over Bill Clinton's inability to resist looking at thong underwear. If the Republicans remove him by simple force of numbers, the debate over whether this was a political

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Break with the Democrats and Republicans, Dual Parties of Capital!

Forge a Revolutionary Workers Party!





December 6 San Francisco benefit for class-war prisoners. PDC gatherings nationally drew trade unionists, anti-racist youth as part of labor-centered campaign to free Mumia Abu-Jamal. WV Photos

PDC Holiday Appeal Benefits Mobilize for Mumia

This year marked the 13th annual Holiday Appeal, which raises funds for the Partisan Defense Committee's program of sending monthly stipends and holiday gifts to class-war prisoners and their families. Thousands of dollars were raised, every penny of which goes to the 16 imprisoned black activists, labor militants, members of the Philadelphia MOVE commune and their families. With this act of solidarity the PDC has revived and kept alive the tradition of non-sectarian, class-struggle defense of those imprisoned for championing the rights of

labor and all the oppressed, begun by the International Labor Defense in the 1920s. The Holiday Appeal benefits were held in early December under a felt sense of urgency with the possibility that Pennsylvania governor Tom Ridge could sign a death warrant for black political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal at any moment. At union halls in New York City, Chicago and the Bay Area over 300 trade unionists, students, socialists and

other activists came together to express their solidarity, to organize, and to discuss revolutionary politics and the class-struggle fight necessary to stop the "legal" lynching of Mumia Abu-Jamal and to free this eloquent and courageous fighter against racist injustice. Gatherings were held in other cities as well.

In greetings Mumia sent to the gatherings, he stated:

"I want to thank the many for contributing to the Holiday Appeal and by supporting it, supporting those of us who cannot be with you this year. The various struggles that we are involved in unite around a central core: the freedom of people to resist the stranglehold of the state and capital. All of us struggle for that freedom that is tightly bound with your own, the freedom to resist, to fight back, to live in a society that increasingly sees us all as unworthy of life. To that end we fight. I salute you all and thank you. On behalf of myself and those whose names you do not know. Ona MOVE!"

The extent of the state's vendetta against Jamal was brought home to many when Mumia's own son, Jamal Hart, was sentenced to 15 1/2 years in prison last February on bogus firearm charges after being targeted for his prominent activism to free his father. Participants in this year's Holiday Appeal gatherings in New York and the Bay Area heard a letter from Jamal Hart, one of the PDC stipend recipients, and updates on him and other class-war prisoners.

Those attending in New York included Eben Lugo, a bus operator threatened with arrest by NYC cops for honking his horn in support of a rally for Puerto Rican independence last July. Among the speakers was Mumia's lead attorney, Leonard Weinglass. A highlight of all the gatherings was eyewitness reports on the PDC-initiated labor/black demonstration in Chicago on November 21, which was held under the slogans "Free Mumia Abu-Jamal! Abolish the Racist Death Penalty!" and endorsed by a wide range of trade unions in the U.S. and abroad. That protest drew primarily black working-class militants, representing a hard core of the powerful Chicago proletariat (see "Chicago Rally Demands: 'Free Mumia Now! Abolish the Racist Death Penalty!'" WV No. 702, 4 December 1998).

Indeed, this year's Holiday Appeal in Chicago was in every respect a continuation of the PDC's call for mobilizing *labor's power* on behalf of Mumia and against the racist death penalty. Among those attending were transit, auto, hospital and phone workers. Speakers included Marcellus Barnes, the president of the Black Caucus of the Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU), and Richard Ziebell, president of United Auto Workers (UAW) Local 477. A half-dozen ATU and UAW locals bought books of benefit tickets, and individual trade unionists sold many tickets in efforts which raised over \$3,000 for the Holiday Appeal.

Also addressing the Chicago event was one of the two trade unionists arrested at a UPS facility in suburban Chicago while



TROTSKY

The Communist Fight Against Imperialist Subjugation

From the terror bombing of Iraq to the colonial subjugation of Puerto Rico, U.S. imperialism is a deadly enemy of the world's oppressed. Among its 21 conditions for admission, Lenin and Trotsky's Communist International insisted that Communists fight for the liberation of the colonies and split with social-patriotic and pacifist "socialists" who covered for the predations of the capitalist rulers. Defense of the oppressed



LENIN

colonial and semicolonial masses is key to imbuing the proletariat of the imperialist centers with the consciousness of its historic task to sweep away the capitalist system through socialist revolution.

6. Every party that wishes to belong to the Communist International is duty-bound to expose not only overt social patriotism but also the duplicity and hypocrisy of social pacifism; to explain systematically to the workers that without the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism, no international courts of arbitration, no treaties of any kind curtailing arms production, no manner of "democratic" renovation of the League of Nations will be able to prevent new imperialist wars....

8. In countries whose bourgeoisies possess colonies and oppress other nations, it is necessary that the parties have an especially clear and well-defined position on the question of colonies and oppressed nations. Every party wishing to belong to the Communist International is obligated to expose the tricks of "its own" imperialists in the colonies, to support every liberation movement in the colonies not only in words but in deeds, to demand that the imperialists of its country be driven out of these colonies, to instill in the hearts of the workers of its country a truly fraternal attitude toward the laboring people in the colonies and toward the oppressed nations, and to conduct systematic agitation among its country's troops against all oppression of colonial peoples.

—"Conditions of Admission to the Communist International" (August 1920)

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8 January 1999

Stop Execution of Gary Graham!

We print below a January 4 letter by the Partisan Defense Committee to Texas governor George W. Bush.

We demand a halt to the impending execution of Gary Graham scheduled for January 11. Five years after massive evidence of Mr. Graham's innocence came to light, the State of Texas continues in its vicious bloodlust for his life. Three witnesses to the 1981 murder for which Mr. Graham is scheduled to die failed to identify him in a police lineup, while three others are confident that he was not the gunman. The prosecution's case rested on the testimony of a single witness who observed the gunman for only "a split second" from a distance of 40 feet. Four individuals, who the court-appointed defense attorney refused to call to the stand, signed affidavits saying that Mr. Graham was with them at the

time of the shooting. All four have passed lie detector tests.

The death penalty is a racist and barbaric throwback to the days of slavery. It is the legalized version of lynch rope "justice." Executing the innocent is nothing new for the State of Texas. In 1993, the U.S. Supreme Court found in the case of another Texas death row inmate, Leonel Herrera, that evidence of innocence is no constitutional bar to execution. Four months later, Herrera was put to death. Similarly, in 1995 Jesse Jacobs was executed despite the prosecution's acknowledgement that he was an innocent man. With the impending execution of Gary Graham, the State of Texas is once again boasting of its status as the capital of racist legal lynchings. We demand: Stop the execution of Gary Graham! ■

Coldblooded Killing by Racist Cops

JANUARY 3—In the early morning hours of 28 December 1998, 19-year-old Tyisha Miller pulled into a Riverside gas station to call her cousin, Anthonete Joiner, for help with a flat tire. Miller rolled up the car windows, locked herself in and waited for her cousin. When Joiner and a friend arrived at the station, they found Miller reclining in the car with a pistol in her lap, unconscious, trembling and foaming at the mouth. Shouting and banging on the window failed to rouse her cousin, so Joiner called 911 for an ambulance. But instead of medical help, four Riverside cops showed up minutes later. After getting no response from the black teenager, the cops smashed the car window and opened fire, killing the young woman in a hail of at least 27 bullets, even stopping to reload.

The cops' ever-changing account of these events can't hide the cold-blooded racism of this execution. As a friend of the family, Rev. Bernell Butler, rightly raged, "First they say she shot a gun, then she didn't shoot. What will it be tomorrow? That she made a gun? They shot a sleeping woman." In an interview with the *New York Times* (30 December 1998) Rev. Butler commented, "They might as well have lynched her. This might as well be Mississippi."

Located 60 miles east of Los Angeles, Riverside is racked with racial tensions

which have only been heightened by the killing of Tyisha Miller. Significant numbers of blacks from the Los Angeles area have migrated to this predominately white, conservative area over the past 15 years in search of affordable housing and better schools, but have found naked bigotry from racist skinheads and cops. In 1996, the videotape of the brutal battering of an immigrant couple by Riverside County sheriff's deputies—evocative of the Los Angeles police beating of Rodney King—provoked nationwide outrage. In 1997, two cops beat a Latino man nearly senseless and dumped him in a lake. As one black community activist said, "My lifetime philosophy is to avoid the police. To us these guys are a public hazard." A year ago, there was a bitter debate over a proposal to name a new high school after Martin Luther King Jr., with many whites objecting on the grounds that the rest of the country might think that there is a "black school" in Riverside County!

More than a hundred outraged people turned out for a community meeting about the killing of Tyisha Miller on 31 December 1998 organized by the NAACP, the Urban League and People Reaching Out, an "anti-violence group." Family member DeWayne Butler said emotions have understandably been running high and objected to calls some community "leaders" have made "to be cool." Butler said,

"If it was your daughter, your girl, you would be excited" (*Press-Enterprise*, 1 January). The pro-capitalist black leaders push diversionary pressure tactics such as a civilian police review board to "monitor" cop terror. But such agencies are merely a way of making the system of racist capitalist repression more efficient and "credible" while the cops carry out their daily reign of terror against working people and minorities.

The truth is that the cops are an armed force defending the whole system of class exploitation and racial oppression. As a key component of the bourgeois state, their function is to defend the property and privilege of the ruling class against the working class and the poor. Once this basic truth is grasped, it becomes clear that this apparatus of repression cannot be reformed. It must be completely smashed as part of a struggle to put the working class in power, so that those who produce the wealth shall also rule society.

Riverside mayor Ron Loveridge alibied his police force while trying to blame Miller for having a gun for self-protection. "Guns have serious and sometimes deadly consequences, for carrying as well as for using them," he intoned, as if Miller's murder doesn't itself prove that the hired guns of capital are the deadly threat to minorities. As we said in "Defend the Right to Bear Arms—Clin-



Tyisha Miller

ton Whips Up Hysteria Over 'Assault Weapons'" (WV No. 601, 27 May 1994):

"Americans have good reason to want to keep their guns. The whole history of this country is strewn with examples of *ruling-class* violence: wiping out the Indians, mowing down strikers from Cripple Creek and Ludlow miners to Little Steel, the brutal suppression of ghetto rebellions from Watts '65 to South-Central L.A. in 1991. And when blacks defend their homes against racist terror, when workers defend their picket lines against scabs and gun thugs, the forces of the bourgeois state are mobilized against them."

The Democrats and Republicans, partner parties of capitalist class rule, serve the interests of this racist profit-driven system. A multiracial workers party is desperately needed to lead a socialist revolution and establish an egalitarian society in which racist atrocities like the killing of Tyisha Miller are a distant, painful memory. ■

leafletting for the November 21 demonstration in defense of Jamal. Cops from at least two area police forces poured out of nine squad cars, supposedly to issue a traffic "violation." In mid-December, the charges against the two were dropped. This case underscores the link between the struggle for black rights and those of the working class. Our fight to mobilize the labor movement to free Jamal and all class-war prisoners is part of the struggle to build a multiracial revolutionary workers party which will destroy the whole system of racist capitalist repression through socialist revolution.

We print below excerpts, slightly edited for publication, from two speakers at the December 6 Holiday Appeal benefit in Chicago.

Kevin Quirk

Member of ATU Local 241

I just want to briefly report on something which I think is very important and significant. At the end of September, the 52nd convention of the international Amalgamated Transit Union was held in Chicago. At that convention, a resolution was passed overwhelmingly to endorse the efforts of a number of locals in the ATU, the international women's caucus and the black caucus of the ATU, in their efforts to defend Mumia Abu-Jamal. On the eve of that convention, the international Latino caucus of the union unanimously endorsed a resolution that was submitted by Local 308 here in Chicago, which called for freeing Mumia Abu-Jamal and committing the union's resources for the mobilization to free him. Also, during the convention the black caucus met and renewed their commitment to fight for Jamal's freedom by endorsing the 308 resolution.

The resolution that was submitted by Local 308 was the result of the efforts of a lot of people, some of the people in this room, and a lot of people in both Locals 308 and 241 that have been in the forefront to make the fight for Jamal's freedom labor's fight. And it's very important and significant that the international union went on record to endorse these efforts to defend him.

Now paper resolutions are all well and good, but they're not worth the paper they're put on if they're not put into action. The power of labor is absolutely crucial and central. The ATU represents hundreds of thousands of workers, a key sector of the urban proletariat in this country and in Canada. In some of the major cities of this country, these are overwhelmingly blacks and other minorities. It has power to move people, it has power to stop people. It has the social power which all of labor has. And that is what we're talking about when we're talking about mobilizing labor to fight and make Jamal's name a household name, that we will not let this man die. That we will fight this racist frame-up and we will make it the cause of every champion of the oppressed and of the labor movement.

It was very interesting in the discussion that took place at that convention, because three local presidents, the president of the international Latino caucus, the president of the international black caucus took the floor and told that convention how important this cause was. And I will just recall the words of the local president from Detroit, who made the point that part of the reason the labor movement is in the funk that it's in is because it has not taken up the causes of all the oppressed, let alone, in a lot of cases, its own causes. And that really echoed something that the Partisan Defense Committee and the Spartacist League have hammered away at: Labor and black rights will go forward together, or they will fall back separately.

Ed Clarkson

Spartacist League

Mumia Abu-Jamal is on death row because he was and is seen by the powers that be in this society, by our capitalist masters and their racist cops and courts, as a black revolutionary. For that reason, the FBI unleashed the COINTELPRO terror campaign resulting in the assassination of dozens of members of the Black Panther Party, including Fred Hampton and Mark Clark here in Chicago. Racism, the race-caste segregation of blacks in

this society, has since the 19th century been used by America's capitalist rulers as a wedge to divide working people, especially when they are beginning to struggle against this system of racism and exploitation.

The labor-centered strategy you've heard about today is based on our appreciation as communist revolutionaries that this decaying capitalist system is incapable of lasting reform, that this system must be overthrown by a socialist revolution led by the only class with the social power to bring the capitalist system to its knees—the working class. In this country, this requires that the wedge dividing the laboring masses be destroyed by linking the cause of black liberation to socialist revolution. This requires the mobilization of the trade unions, which are significantly black at their core and integrated on the shop floor, as fighting regiments for socialism. This cannot be done unless the current trade-union leadership is replaced by class-struggle fighters committed to socialist revolution. Most of all, what is required is the forging of a revolutionary workers party to educate the working class in its tasks, to organize the struggles against exploitation and injustice, and to lead the overthrow of rotting American imperialism.

Given these tasks, it is our understanding that blacks must play a significant role in the American revolutionary working-class party. The primary obstacle to forging such a party, it must be said, is illusions in the Democratic Party. In the trade unions, these illusions are fostered by the union tops and in the ghettos by Jesse Jackson, the Congressional Black Caucus and their local counterparts. Both Jesse Jackson, a left liberal, and the anti-Semitic demagogue Louis Farrakhan argue that the ghetto masses must pull themselves up by their bootstraps, pushing the cynical myth that black capitalism will lead to empowerment. AFL-CIO head John Sweeney peddles racist "America First" protectionism against workers in other countries, organizes the armed guards of the capitalist state—cops and prison guards—into the trade unions, and also seeks the intervention of the capitalist state into

the trade-union movement by forced arbitration and no-strike clauses.

We should remember black former Chicago mayor Harold Washington. I understand Democratic Congressman Bobby Rush, a former Black Panther, would like to follow in his footsteps. Washington was a fairly ordinary Democratic Party politico. He didn't promise much, he didn't give much. My friends in transit tell me they remember him not so fondly because he attacked their pension funds. That's simply a fact. He is held in reverence to this day—and I'm sure by not a few in this room—not for his accomplishments, but because the hopelessness of the ghetto, the rampant racism in "Segregation City," makes his personal success as an agent of a foreign class seem like it has the potential for every black person. Unfortunately, that's not true.

One union brother mentioned very nicely the International Socialist Organization (ISO). How is the working class going to fight in this society when the cops, who stand on the other side of the picket lines, inhabit the trade-union movement? How are we going to fight for Jamal's freedom when the prison guards who torture him in Pennsylvania are part of the trade-union movement? And yet the ISO supports all of these things.

I would mention another group, recently formed, the Black Radical Congress, which chose not to endorse our demonstration last week. Fine, that's their choice. But I promise you that these people, who were formed by elements from the Communist Party and Committees of Correspondence, will be out hyping Bobby Rush's campaign. Is there anyone in this room that really thinks that Bobby Rush as mayor is going to make a difference?

The way forward is to forge the multiracial proletarian party necessary to lead the American socialist revolution. Only a victorious socialist revolution can end for all time bloodsoaked imperialist rule. The commitment of the Spartacist League to these ends stands in the sharpest contrast to the politics of the liberal reformers and the sham socialist left. You should join us. ■

Clinton Impeachment...

(continued from page 1)

coup will continue for decades and could become a bigger threat to civic stability than Mr. Clinton's mendacity."

These concerns were echoed by former U.S. presidents Gerald Ford and Jimmy Carter in an op-ed piece in the *Times* (21 December 1998) which opined, "Our political institutions are called into question. Public confidence erodes.... Our political system, too, is on trial." Leading the push in the Senate to censure Clinton as an alternative to impeachment, New York Democrat Daniel P. Moynihan warned, "There has to be a Commander in Chief.... That's an institution that has to be stable, not in dispute" (*New York Times*, 25 December 1998).

In the American political system, much constitutional power originally given to Congress has been transferred to the imperial presidency. This corresponds to the needs of the U.S. imperialist rulers to assert themselves as the world's top cop, without having their wars and military adventures held up by the bother of seeking the approval of Congress, much less that of "the people." This was demonstrated most recently in the renewed, four-day terror bombing of Iraq in mid-December, which *nobody* thought might require a Declaration of War! At the same time, the invocation by *New York Times* editorialists of the "transfer of power without gunfire" and the "threat to civic stability" is not mere hyperbole. Rather, it expresses the concerns by a section of the American bourgeoisie over the vulnerability of its class rule.

Having secured a fabulous increase in their wealth and profits over the past two decades through increasing the exploitation of the working class and slashing virtually all social programs benefiting the poor, particularly the ghetto masses, America's rulers are quite cognizant that they are sitting on top of seething discontent among the masses at the bottom of this society. Fearful that the spark of social protest could ignite a conflagration, the bourgeoisie has vastly increased the powers of state repression. At the same time, the ruling class recognizes the need to maintain the illusion that the capitalist state—its cops, courts and army—is some kind of neutral entity representing the interests of all classes in society.

Now they fear that the illusion of "democracy" is being threatened by the recklessness of the Republicans in their impeachment of Clinton. Opinion polls continue to show that the majority of the population opposes impeachment, partially reflecting the justifiable fear that if the long arm of the sex cops can reach into the White House, then no one is safe. Already, faced with a population which in its overwhelming majority does not vote—a crude reflection of a perception that the interests of working people and the poor are not represented by either of the dual parties of American capitalism—the bourgeoisie worries that the drive to remove Clinton from office



Library of Congress

Reconstruction Congress in 1868 impeaches President Andrew Johnson, who fought extension of rights to emancipated blacks following Civil War. Right: Abolitionist senator Charles Sumner beaten by pro-slavery Congressman on floor of Senate, 1856.



New York Historical Society

could shatter the myth that "the people" choose their rulers.

The Fraud of Bourgeois "Democracy"

Spokesmen for both parties are tripping over each other to insist that lying is a breach of the public trust. In fact, every one of these politicians lies for a living—and the biggest lie of all is that "the people" have any control over this society. Over 80 years ago, Bolshevik revolutionary leader V.I. Lenin neatly skewered the fraud of bourgeois democracy in his book *State and Revolution*: "To decide once every few years which member of the ruling class is to repress and crush the people through parliament—this is the real essence of bourgeois parliamentarism, not only in parliamentary-constitutional monarchies, but also in the most democratic republics."

Americans are taught from their first civics lesson in grammar school that the U.S. has the best, most democratic government in the world. Certainly from the U.S. rulers' standpoint, it has its advantages. Unlike a parliamentary system, where a prime minister and his party can be suddenly thrown out of office by a vote of no confidence, the U.S. electoral system with its "orderly quadrennial surrender of power" provides a great deal of stability for capitalist rule. The best feature for the American ruling class is that the "choice" in this two-party system is between two capitalist parties. In other words, there is no basic choice at all, as the Democrats and Republicans simply represent two wings of one party—in the words of author Gore Vidal, the property party.

The wealth of this country is overwhelmingly concentrated in less than 1 percent of the population, whose property

and profits derive from the exploitation of those who labor. This capitalist class runs the Republican and Democratic parties, whose main difference is not *what* they do but *how* they do it. The Republicans make no bones about being the party of "big business" in viciously going after the working class, blacks, immigrants and the poor. The Democrats lie and do the same thing, but sometimes with a bit of bread and/or circuses, as the Roman emperors sometimes gave the Roman plebeians. America is ruled by the dictatorship of a single class, the bourgeoisie. The façade of democracy is simply designed to obscure the fact that the capitalist state is an instrument of organized force and violence—consisting at its core of the police, army, courts and prisons—for maintaining capitalist property and profits through the suppression of the working class and the oppressed and fending off foreign challengers.

Nearly a century ago, Lenin captured the raw brutality behind the cynical proclamations of capitalist democracy in America. Speaking of the U.S. and Switzerland, he wrote:

"Nowhere does capital rule so cynically and ruthlessly, and nowhere is it so clearly apparent, as in these countries, although they are democratic republics, no matter how prettily they are painted and notwithstanding all the talk about labour democracy and the equality of all citizens. The fact is that in Switzerland and the United States capital dominates, and every attempt of the workers to achieve the slightest improvement in their condition is immediately met by civil war...when there is a strike the bourgeoisie arms, hires soldiers and suppresses the strike; and nowhere is this suppression of the working-class movement accompanied by such ruthless severity as in Switzerland and the U.S.A., and nowhere does the influence of capital in parliament manifest itself as powerfully as in these countries. The

power of capital is everything, the stock exchange is everything, while parliament and elections are marionettes, puppets."

—V.I. Lenin, "The State" (July 1919)

Without necessarily realizing a Marxist understanding of the class character of the capitalist state, any worker who engages in class struggle in this country has either seen or been on the receiving end of precisely what was described by Lenin. Whenever workers fight for the slightest improvement in wages and working conditions, they are immediately met with the forces of the state—from union-busting court injunctions to armed police squads violently busting up picket lines with tear gas and clubs, often augmented by private professional strike-breaking thugs. And what is the response of the trade-union bureaucrats? Their only perspective is to tell the working class, "We'll throw the bums out in the next elections."

Fostering illusions in the "democracy" of capitalist rule is the job of labor misleaders whose purpose is to *prevent* the independent mobilization of the proletariat in defense of its own class interests. Particularly through the agency of support to the Democratic Party, the labor bureaucracy serves to maintain the rule of capital by tying the working class to its exploiters. The union tops are the agents of U.S. imperialism, in whose interests they seek to police and discipline the labor movement. This was directly expressed in a December 16 rally at the Capitol organized by the AFL-CIO bureaucracy of John Sweeney together with black Democrats led by Jesse Jackson protesting Clinton's impeachment—at the very time that the Commander in Chief was raining cruise missiles down on Iraq.

Democrats Fostered Right-Wing Shift

The labor bureaucrats echo liberal politicians and media pundits in sanctimoniously decrying the threat of Republican "extremism" behind the impeachment drive. An example of this liberal outrage was expressed by *New York Times* (20 December) columnist Bob Herbert: "The G.O.P. can no longer conceal that it is a party of extremists, of right-wing absolutists, a party out of step with the political and cultural orientation of most Americans." There are extremists, all right. The question is where did they come from? The shift to the right in American bourgeois politics did not begin with the Republicans but with the Democratic Jimmy Carter administration.

Coming to office in the mid-1970s, the Carter administration kicked off an onslaught of domestic social reaction and the renewal of U.S. imperialism's Cold War drive aimed at the destruction of the Soviet degenerated workers state. These policies, packaged domestically as the "moral" rearmament of America and internationally as a crusade for "human rights," reflected a consensus of the American ruling class. The aim was to overcome widespread public mistrust of the government following the Watergate events, which forced the resignation of Republican president Richard Nixon in 1974, and to refurbish the tarnished



EBONY

Left: Civil rights protests of 1950s and '60s helped shatter Southern Jim Crow segregation but could not attack roots of racist oppression in capitalist system. Right: Spartacists join 1978 Washington, D.C. protest against Supreme Court's racist Bakke decision aimed at dismantling affirmative action.

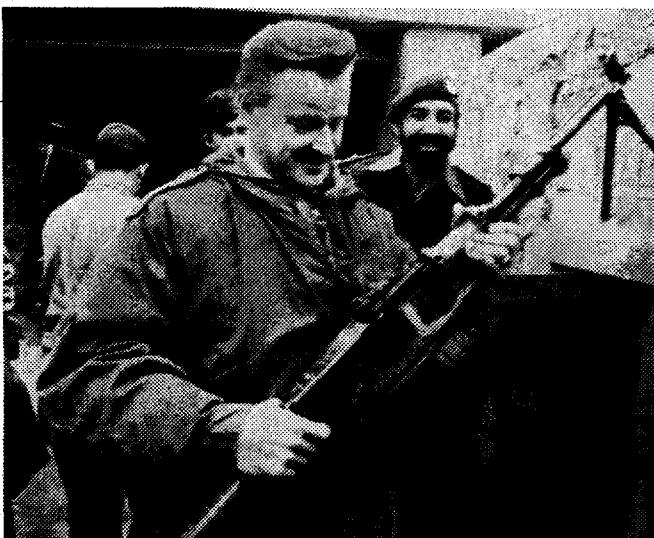


WV Photo



Naythons/Gamma-Liaison

Democratic president Jimmy Carter helped bring Bible Belt bigotry into mainstream of American politics, pushed renewed war drive against USSR. Right: Carter's national security advisor Brzezinski at border of Afghanistan inspecting weapons for anti-Soviet Islamic reactionaries.



Ledru/Sygma

long before the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union and the bourgeois triumphalism over the "death of communism" gave such reactionary themes international currency.

Racist Reaction and Class Exploitation

Clinton is the first American president to be impeached in 130 years, the last being Andrew Johnson in 1868. Coming in the period immediately following the Civil War which smashed the Southern slave system, Johnson's impeachment posed real questions of social significance, centering on the fight for full equality for the newly freed slaves. Opposing the Reconstruction amendments and the 1866 Civil Rights Act, Johnson sought to conciliate the former

could not address the roots of black oppression in the capitalist system.

At the same time, the shape of bourgeois politics in America was fundamentally altered in the wake of the passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act and the Voting Rights Act of 1965. The "New Deal" Democratic Party alliance between labor, Northern liberals and the Southern segregationists cemented by Franklin Delano Roosevelt in the 1930s was blown apart. Republican presidential candidate Barry Goldwater—who voted against the Civil Rights Act—authored the Republican Party's "Southern Strategy," persuading racist Southern Democrats—the Dixiecrats—to defect. For the past 35 years, every presidential election has centered on race, with the Democrats desperately working to reverse the perception that

credentials and military might of U.S. imperialism following its defeat by the heroic Vietnamese workers and peasants.

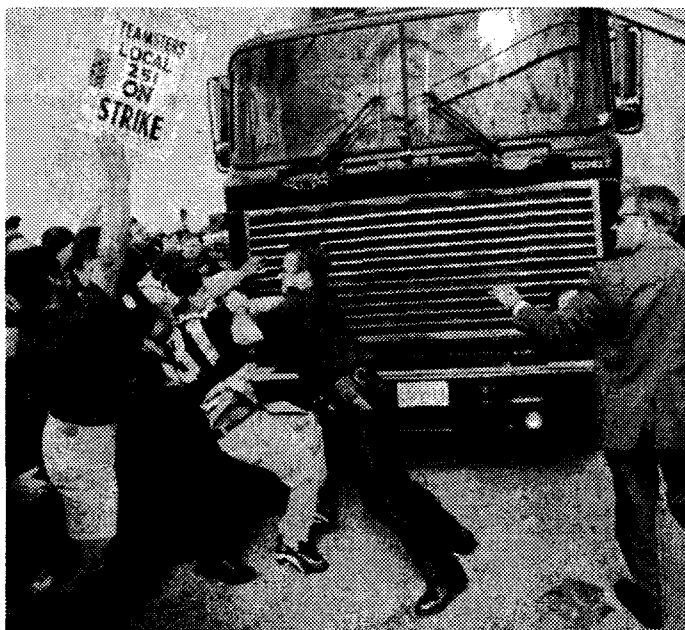
The rulers' primary concern was to reverse the *economic* decline of American imperialism. Emerging victorious out of World War II, the U.S. ruling class had proclaimed the "American Century." But by the 1970s, the arrogant U.S. rulers had let their industrial infrastructure become technologically obsolete. Particularly with the economy distorted by "defense" spending for the Vietnam War, the U.S. was no longer the world's undisputed capitalist powerhouse, as signaled by the devaluation of the dollar in 1971. To reverse its declining fortunes, the American ruling class launched a campaign to increase profitability by cracking down on the working class—closing auto and steel factories, moving production to low-wage plants in the "open shop" South and to neocolonies in Latin America and Southeast Asia, raising productivity by smashing union-protected work rules, instituting "two-tier" wage packages.

For the American bourgeoisie, which had carried out a "red purge" in the unions in the late 1940s and early '50s—the domestic reflection of the Cold War against the Soviet Union—the radicalism of the 1960s was a dangerous "bubble," with social protest threatening to spill over into an aroused labor movement. To counter the "permissiveness" of the '60s, a major ideological assault was launched aimed at instilling an unquestioning acceptance of capitalism, god and family, including the desirability of dying for one's country.

Today, the impeachment of Clinton is presented as the revenge of right-wing Christian fundamentalists of the Republican Party against the dope-smoking, sexually promiscuous, antiwar generation of the '60s. But it was the Carter administration that first brought these fundamentalists into the White House. "Born agains" and biblical references suddenly became mainstream. Sexual "morality" and redemption were introduced as Carter confessed to "lusting in his heart." Attacks on abortion rights were instigated by Carter's Catholic secretary of Health, Education and Welfare, Joseph Califano. In 1977, federal funding of abortions for poor women was cut off, a move mandated by the Hyde Amendment passed by Congress the year before.

Both parties shifted to the right, bringing reactionary social layers to political ascendancy. The fundamentalist Christian right (including a Catholic church politically mobilized by the Polish pope of counterrevolution) has become mainstream. As a political force, it represents backwardness and social reaction. It's anti-science, anti-evolution and pro-creationism, for prayer in the schools and the subjugation of women and children in the family: the antithesis of the values of the Enlightenment of the 17th and 18th century. The resurgence of these forces on the American political terrain occurred

UPS picket line in Rhode Island attacked by cops during 1997 strike. Cops and courts are agencies of capitalist class enemy.



slavocracy and curtail efforts to grant land, civil rights and suffrage to blacks. His impeachment, which failed by only one vote to remove him from office, reflected an era in which the American bourgeoisie still represented a progressive social force. But the Northern capitalists increasingly undermined the great democratic effort of Radical Reconstruction, culminating in the Compromise of 1877 which sealed the betrayal of the aspirations of the black masses, prelude to the White Man's Burden, the great White Fleet and, in general, the arrival of American Imperialism.

Since that time, the forcible subjugation and segregation of the majority of the black population at the bottom of this society has served as a fundamental pillar for the maintenance of American capitalism. Whipping up raw racial and ethnic hatred (before it was the blacks, it was the Catholics) has long served the U.S. rulers to obscure the class divide between capital and labor in order to further the exploitation of the entire working class. Of all the expressions of social protest in the 1960s, the American ruling class was particularly alarmed by the stirrings of black revolt. When the civil rights movement "came North," to the major urban areas, where black workers form a strategic core of the labor movement, the bourgeoisie feared that this could ignite a political mobilization linking the fight for black freedom with the social power of the working class. But the liberal-led civil rights movement, while dismantling formal Jim Crow segregation in the South,

they were beholden to "special interests" like blacks and labor.

The nomination of Southern Baptist Jimmy Carter to head the Democratic Party ticket in the 1976 elections was not accidental. Fomenting racist reaction, Carter openly proclaimed the virtues of "ethnic purity." Busing for school integration, which had just gone down to flaming defeat at the hands of racist mobs in Boston, was killed in city after city. The murderous message was brought home in the blood of five leftist anti-racist militants in Greensboro, North Carolina in 1979 who were gunned down in broad daylight by a group of Ku Klux Klan and

Nazis led by an "informer" for the Feds. After the Democrats were trounced by Reagan and Bush in the 1980s, the Democratic Leadership Council came up with a policy aimed at competing with the Republicans on their own terms to win back the white racist voters, not only in the South but in the expanding suburbs. In 1992, the Democrats fielded a ticket of two Southerners—Clinton and Gore—to win back the White House through a campaign of outright racism. Clinton promised to "end welfare as we know it" and issued calculated insults of Jesse Jackson as the representative of black influence in the Democratic Party. This racist effort was symbolized by Clinton's flying back to Arkansas during the election campaign to oversee the execution of a brain-damaged black man, Ricky Ray Rector.

With this contest for the white racist vote, the Southern and Southwestern states achieved new prominence. This region, largely non-union, also contains the "bible belt" of the United States, the stronghold of the Christian fundamentalists who, formerly regarded as a yahoo fringe, now started to become a potent force in national politics. Within each party, the former right wing became the mainstream. As the more conservative (and whiter) of the two parties, the Republicans have a larger constituency of the Christian right, which was instrumental in turning out the vote for the Republican sweep of the 1994 Congressional elections and installment of Newt Gingrich as the Speaker of the House.

Gingrich made it clear that the intent was to undo the "excesses" of Lyndon Johnson's 1960s "Great Society" legislation, in particular welfare and affirmative action programs which gave only token amelioration to conditions of life for blacks and the poor. In response, the reformist left such as the Communist Party (CP) and Workers World Party (WWP) raised a frenzied cry to defeat Gingrich's "Contract on America" which was a barely concealed call to support Clinton's Democrats. Today, the CP's *People's Weekly World* (19 December 1998) editorializes that the Republicans' impeachment move is "an abuse of power that flouts the national interest for cynical partisan advantage." The "national interest"? The article went to press the very day that the American bombers began attacking Iraq. Meanwhile, in protests against the bombing of Iraq, speakers from the WWP and International Socialist Organization also helped sow illusions in the capitalist state, pronouncing that the Congress should be impeaching Clinton for his attack on Iraq! By that logic, why don't these reformists demand that the bourgeois government simply resign?

Forward to a Revolutionary Workers Party!

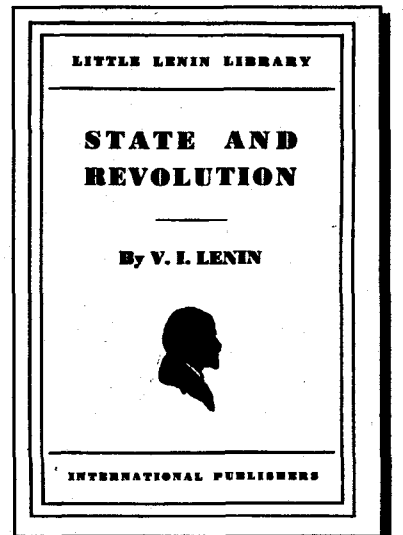
The reactionary themes of white Christian "family values" are hardly the property of some extremist fringe of the Republican Party, as the liberals and reformists would have it. These are the common coin of *both* capitalist parties. The Democrats and Republicans have

continued on page 6



K. A. Kuznetsov

V.I. Lenin, leader of 1917 Bolshevik Revolution, explained that capitalist state is an instrument of violence for suppression of proletariat and must be swept away through socialist revolution.



Begging the Imperialists for "Peace"

Reformist Left and the Attack on Iraq

Not content with killing more than one million Iraqis through over seven years of starvation sanctions, the U.S. imperialists and their British allies once again subjected Iraq to murderous terror bombing last month. While the latest round of slaughter stopped after four days, a huge U.S. naval force remains in the Persian Gulf, where it has been staging provocations against Iraq almost daily.

In the aftermath, sections of the bourgeoisie, particularly on the right, are questioning the utility of the attack. *U.S. News and World Report* (28 December 1998) sneeringly opined that it was "a short, satisfying little air war, but what did it achieve?" Others talked of the "Wag the Dog" syndrome, claiming that Clinton ordered the bombing to divert attention from his domestic travails over impeachment. Still others worried that the starvation sanctions are no longer a useful means of "containing" Iraq. But for all the tactical squabbles among the

bourgeoisie, it is notable that Congress put off its impeachment hearing for 24 hours in order to unanimously endorse the bombing.

The capitalist rulers are of one mind when it comes to asserting America's strength as the pre-eminent imperialist power in the world today, especially in its quest to control Near East oil supplies. With mounting competition from its imperialist rivals, chiefly Germany and Japan, Washington unleashes its military might to terrorize semicolonial peoples and project its power throughout the world.

Calling to "Defend Iraq! Defeat U.S. imperialism through socialist revolution!", the Spartacist League intervened in demonstrations against the bombing in cities throughout the U.S. Other sections of the International Communist League joined in protests from Mexico to Britain and Japan. We sought to impart to workers and youth outraged by the crimes of

the U.S. and British capitalist rulers the understanding that imperialism is not merely a "policy" of a wing of the bourgeoisie but an organic outgrowth of the profit system—the "highest stage of capitalism," as the Russian Bolshevik leader V.I. Lenin described it. As we wrote in an emergency leaflet dated 16 December 1998 (reprinted on page 1):

"The death and destruction being wreaked upon the people of Iraq right now show what imperialism is all about, a rapacious system based on the exploitation, subjugation and murder of the workers and semicolonial masses in order to expand the profits of a handful of filthy rich capitalists.

"This system cannot be 'reformed,' as liberals and reformist 'socialists' would have it. It cannot be pressured into being more peaceful and humane."

Reformist Illusions in "Democratic" Imperialism

Our revolutionary intervention stood in sharp contrast to that of reformist

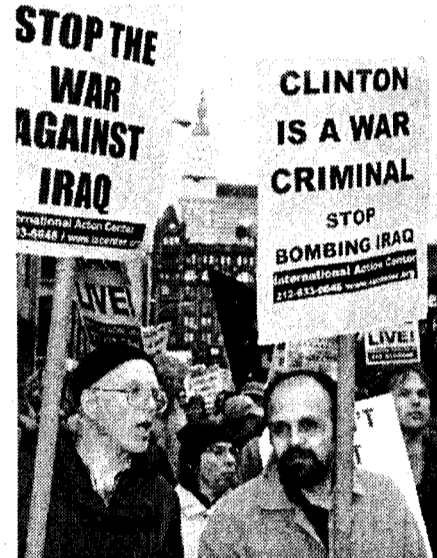
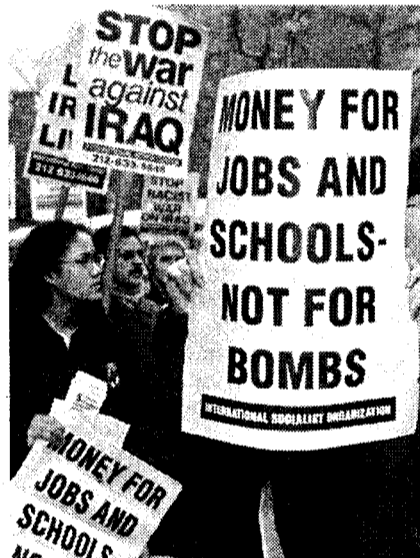
groups like the International Socialist Organization (ISO) and Workers World Party (WWP). These groups raised nearly identical calls to pressure the imperialists to carry out more humane policies—"Money for Jobs" (WWP) or "Money for Jobs and Schools, Not for Bombs" (ISO). The ISO peddles the chimeric idea that imperialist war can be stopped by a "movement to stop the bombings and end the sanctions now" (*Socialist Worker*, 4 December 1998). In a New York City leaflet, the ISO makes the ludicrous claim: "Thousands protested last February to stop the slaughter and we can stop it again." In fact, the only reason the U.S. (temporarily) refrained from bombing last February was because Saddam Hussein, faced with the devastating might of the U.S. war machine, acceded to its imperial diktat.

The ISO has always tailored its supposed "socialist alternative" to fit bourgeois public opinion. Thus on the eve of the 1991 Gulf War, *Socialist Worker* (October 1990) pointedly refused to call for the defense of Iraq against U.S. attack, deeming this demand "a serious tactical error" because it would be unpopular. And the ISO's current campaign against the sanctions is sheer hypocrisy. In January 1991, the ISO scrapped its paper opposition to sanctions in order to endorse a liberal "Campaign for Peace" march in Washington which explicitly called for United Nations sanctions—i.e., the starvation of Iraqis—as an "alternative" to war (see "ISO in the Antiwar Movement," *WV* No. 520, 15 February 1991). Now that a big chunk of the bourgeoisie is questioning the continuation of

WV Photos



December 19 New York City protest against bombing of Iraq. Spartacists call for revolutionary struggle against capitalist rulers, while reformists seek to pressure imperialists to be more "humane."



Clinton Impeachment...

(continued from page 5)

consciously played the race card in every known way: welfare-bashing, the "war on crime," the speedup on death row, immigrant-bashing.

The struggle for black rights and social equality is now dubbed "reverse racism." The 1960s goal of racial integration in

education, at least on the college level, has now been replaced with "diversity" and "meritocracy," the code words for admission of a few token minorities only. In this fetid climate, it comes as no surprise that Senate Republican leader Trent Lott of Mississippi and Georgia Congressman Bob Barr extol Jefferson Davis, the president of the slaveholders' Confederacy, and have addressed gatherings of the "Council of Conservative Citizens," a direct descendant of the KKK-infested White Citizens Councils that terrorized civil rights marchers in the South.

Given that Clinton agrees with 98 percent of the reactionary agenda of the Republicans, there is a reckless quality to the impeachment drive. This worries the bourgeoisie since it introduces elements of instability into the ruling structure of the American imperialist state, particularly doing damage to the façade of "democracy" in which they cloak their class dictatorship. By the same token, this can play to the advantage of the working class. But only if it is equipped with a revolutionary leadership—a multiracial workers party committed to the overthrow of the rule of capital through the proletarian seizure of power.

For the current misleaders of the trade unions, Clinton's impeachment has become another means through which to sow treacherous illusions in the Democratic Party. In its "fight the right" campaigns, the reformist left does the same thing, while sometimes cloaking this

with verbiage about class struggle. But as Lenin wrote in *State and Revolution*:

"It is often said and written that the main point in Marx's theory is the class struggle. But this is wrong. And this wrong notion very often results in an opportunist distortion of Marxism and its falsification in a spirit acceptable to the bourgeoisie. For the theory of the class struggle was created *not* by Marx *but* by the bourgeoisie *before* Marx, and, generally speaking, it is *acceptable* to the bourgeoisie.... A Marxist is solely someone who *extends* the recognition of the class struggle to the recognition of the *dictatorship of the proletariat*."

It is the purpose of the Spartacist League to forge a revolutionary working-class party which in the course of sharp class struggle educates the proletariat in the understanding not only of its social power but of its historic interests. Crucial to building such a party in the U.S. is the understanding of the inextricable link between the fight for labor's emancipation and the cause of black freedom. As we wrote in "Unchain Labor's Power" (*WV* No. 673, 5 September 1997), following the successful UPS Teamsters strike:

"When those who labor rule, the tremendous wealth of this society will be used to provide a decent life for the working people, the poor, blacks, immigrants, the young, the aged. The fight for black freedom will be realized in the overthrow of the rule of American capital. When the workers have the industrial wealth that is now being squeezed out of the working class for the profits of the bosses, we will begin to build a planned socialist economy on an international scale. Then

we can right some historical crimes and pay off some debts, like some of tens of billions of dollars to the Vietnamese and others whose countries have been maimed under the passing treads of American tanks and the bombs of American planes. As for 'compensation' to the people who lined their pockets with fat profits while driving everyone else to ruin, the victorious proletariat can offer to those who don't get in its way that they too will have the right to honest labor and will live to see their grandchildren prosper in a truly humane society." ■

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these sanctions, the ISO feels safe begging the imperialist rulers to end their embargo.

So wedded is the ISO to its "own" ruling class that even as it denounced CIA machinations in Iraq, in the 4 December 1998 *Socialist Worker* it headlined an article, "How the U.S. Betrayed the 'Opposition' Before." By speaking of U.S. "betrayal," the ISO presents rapacious U.S. imperialism as merely a treacherous would-be ally of the oppressed (in this case the Kurdish and Shi'ite opposition to Saddam Hussein), rather than the number one enemy of working people in the world today.

For its part, Workers World calls to "Stop the bombing, stop the war, let Iraq live!" While WWP postures as an opponent of U.S. imperialism, the featured spokesman for its "International Action Center" at antiwar demonstrations was Ramsey Clark, who was Democratic president Lyndon Johnson's attorney general in the mid-1960s during the bloody Vietnam War. Clark carried out the "war at home," prosecuting antiwar protesters as well as escalating the FBI's COINTELPRO program to include a murderous campaign against the Black Panther Party. Workers World's embrace of this bourgeois tool symbolizes its desperate search for imperialist "doves" with whom to unite. When Clark addressed a December 19 NYC protest, the SL contingent chanted, "Remember Bay of Pigs, Remember Vietnam—Democratic Party, We know what side you're on!"

Workers World also spread illusions in the UN, complaining that the U.S. imperialists "violated international law and the Charter of the United Nations" and "paid no attention to the opposition in the Security Council" (*Workers World*, 31 December 1998). As if the UN, under whose auspices the Gulf War and the ongoing starvation of Iraq have been carried out, is anything but a fig leaf for U.S. imperialism! Spartacist supporters at the NYC demo carried signs demanding "U.S./UN/NATO out of the Persian Gulf now!"

British Fake Left Amnesties Labour Party Government

The British imperialist government once again eagerly joined Washington in the terror assault on Iraq. Yet most of the reformist British left focused on attacking *American* imperialism and amnestied the crimes of its "own" bourgeoisie—especially since the Labour Party, which the fake lefts all fulsomely (if "critically") support, is today the ruling party of British imperialism. When Blair's New Labour came to power in 1997, the ISO's British parent group, the Socialist Workers Party (SWP), declared itself "over the moon." Today, pleading "Tony-



Karen Robinson

Desperately ill children deprived of medicine due to U.S./UN sanctions which have killed over one million Iraqis. Baghdad neighborhood devastated by December U.S./British terror bombing.



AFF

Blair, stop this war," the SWP continues to act as a "left" pressure group on the Labour government, feeding deadly illusions that these thoroughly pro-capitalist social democrats can be forced to act on behalf of workers and the oppressed. The SWP has even handed out petitions beseeching Blair to stop arms sales to Indonesia "in line with New Labour's 'ethical' foreign policy." For the British imperialists, "ethical" spells police terror against Catholics in Northern Ireland and the bombing of Iraq.

In a leaflet distributed to antiwar protesters in London, the Spartacist League/Britain emphasized:

"The Labour government is a capitalist government which acts as butchers for bloody British imperialism.... Ostensible leftists like the Socialist Workers Party, who rejoiced when Labour was elected, foster illusions in the possibility of reforming capitalism, begging Labour for 'welfare not warfare' and in the past gave backhanded support to the sanctions which are themselves an *act of war*."

SL/B contingents declared: "Down with U.S./British imperialist terror bombing of Iraq!" and "Labour is a party of racism and war! A Bolshevik party is what we're fighting for!"

The intervention of the British centrist Workers Power (WP) group provided a

chemically pure example of how opportunists capitulate to the bourgeoisie on their own national terrain. In Latin America, where "anti-imperialist" rhetoric is cheap, WP cosigned a leaflet against the bombing with some Mexican and Argentine groups. This leaflet was titled "For the Military Victory of Iraq" and denounced "Blair's 'social-imperialist' government." But in its leaflet handed out in *Britain*, dated and distributed in London on December 17, WP omitted any call to defend Iraq against U.S./British imperialism! Echoing the nationalist "anti-Americanism" so prevalent on the British "left," this leaflet chastised the Labour Party for being "ever keen to prove its loyalty to the US capitalist order." What about Labour's loyalty to *British* capitalism, including its military occupation of Northern Ireland, which WP's leaflet did not so much as mention? Trying to cover its tracks, two days later WP appeared at another antiwar demonstration with a different leaflet (also dated December 17!). This time they did call to "Defend Iraq against US and UK-attack," while still calling to pressure the Labour government to "stop the bombings."

WP has fostered particular illusions in Labour Party "lefts" like Tony Benn, who they have called on to "speak openly

the Democratic Party attorney general during the Vietnam War and the bloody COINTELPRO domestic war against the Black Panther Party. Imperialism is, as Russian Bolshevik V.I. Lenin said, the highest stage of capitalism. And as Lenin's Bolsheviks showed in leading the October Revolution of 1917, it can and must be defeated through workers revolution.

What's behind the murderous attack on the people of Iraq is Washington's aim of intimidating through sheer terror and blackmail all the semicolonial peoples over which it rides roughshod and maintaining its position as top dog against its imperialist rivals, especially Japan and Germany. This is the true face of the "New World Order" proclaimed by America's capitalist rulers over the corpse of the Soviet Union, destroyed by capitalist counterrevolution. In the face of growing competition from its imperialist rivals, the U.S. bourgeoisie wields its arsenal of terror, including the most massive stockpiles of nuclear and biological and chemical weapons, to guard its position as the planet's pre-eminent power.

The blood of Iraqis is today being spilled to cement U.S. control over vast oil and natural gas resources which are

vital to Germany and Japan. Meanwhile, Washington's regional allies carry out their own brutal repression under the umbrella of a bloody "Pax Americana." Zionist Israel continues to subject the long-suffering Palestinian people to starvation, terror and all-sided oppression, now including under the whip of its petty-bourgeois nationalist lackey, Yasir Arafat. Turkey wages a war of annihilation against the deeply oppressed Kurdish people, who are carved up among four capitalist states. And while Washington hypocritically condemns Iraq's Saddam Hussein for his repression against the Kurds, the U.S.—along with Germany—arms the Turkish bourgeoisie to the hilt. Saddam Hussein is an anti-Communist butcher of Iraqi workers and minorities, but it is the task of the Iraqi proletariat to sweep away his despotic regime. We say: Defend the Palestinians—Israel out of the Occupied Territories! Down with all the sheiks, colonels, mullahs and Zionist butchers! For a Socialist Republic of United Kurdistan! For permanent revolution—For a socialist federation of the Near East!

Imperialism breeds war, but it also breeds revolution. It was out of the carnage of World War I that the Bolshe-

against the war." Addressing the London antiwar demonstration on December 19, Benn praised the UN Charter and called to lobby members of Parliament to campaign for "peace." The SL/B responded by chanting "From Northern Ireland to Iraq—Labour government: imperialist butchers," and denouncing the Labour "left" as a "fig leaf for imperialist war."

While Britain was the only country to join the U.S. bombing, other imperialist powers like Canada gave full diplomatic backing to the attack. As in Britain, the reformist Canadian left sought to pressure the capitalist rulers to oppose the U.S. attack. Typically, a leaflet by Socialist Action (SA—affiliated with the U.S. organization of the same name and the fake-Trotskyist United Secretariat) pleaded: "We say to the Canadian government: stop playing lap dog to the bully next door, denounce the aggression, and break the embargo of Iraq." Speaking at a December 19 Toronto demonstration, an SA leader lavished praise on the Ontario leader of the New Democratic Party for opposing the bombing—nowhere mentioning that the social-democratic NDP supported the 1991 Gulf War massacre as well as the starvation sanctions.

Fostering the worst kind of social-democratic illusions, SA's leaflet called to "Demand the expulsion of Tony Blair from the Socialist International!" It was 85 years ago in 1914 that the Socialist (Second) International definitively went over to the side of capitalism, as its component parties supported their "own" bourgeois rulers in the inter-imperialist carnage of World War I. Today, from Blair's Labour Party in Britain to NDP provincial regimes in Canada to Social Democratic and Socialist-led governments in Germany and France, the parties of the Second International enforce capitalist austerity and racist terror on behalf of the bourgeoisie. Sharply counterposing themselves to the reformists of all stripes, our comrades of the Trotskyist League/Ligue Trotskyste marched in Toronto with signs stating "British Labour Party carries out imperialist mass murder" and "Pro-imperialist NDP demanded UN starvation sanctions," calling to "Forge a revolutionary workers party!"

The ICL stands in the tradition of Lenin's Bolshevik Party, whose *break* with the traitors of the Second International was a precondition for leading the Russian Revolution of October 1917. Like Lenin, we say the only way to smash imperialist terror and capitalist misery is through socialist revolution. We fight to forge Leninist-Trotskyist parties throughout the world to make the working class conscious of the need to sweep away the barbaric rule of capital and lead the struggle for new October Revolutions. Join us! ■

Iraq...

(continued from page 1)

This is far more than just a grotesquely cynical exercise aimed at deflecting the Republicans' sinister and vindictive impeachment drive. How many Iraqi babies do America's rulers intend to kill in order to delay the sex-witchhunt proceedings going on in Washington?! The death and destruction being wreaked upon the people of Iraq right now show what imperialism is all about, a rapacious system based on the exploitation, subjugation and murder of the workers and semicolonial masses in order to expand the profits of a handful of filthy rich capitalists.

This system cannot be "reformed," as liberals and reformist "socialists" would have it. It cannot be pressured into being more peaceful and humane. Ostensible leftists like the International Socialist Organization foster illusions in the possibility of reforming capitalism and have in the past given backhanded support to the sanctions which are themselves an *act of war*. The Workers World Party promotes as its chief antiwar spokesman imperialist tool Ramsey Clark, who was

viks led the Russian workers to power. The bloody American ruling class that unleashes terror on the semicolonial peoples also saps the lifeblood from working people in the U.S. It consigns millions of poor and minority women to starvation through the axing of welfare. It robs black youth of any future other than poverty or prison. It craves to kill Mumia Abu-Jamal because he is a black man who speaks out against racist repression. All this and more is pushed by the Democratic Party which once again is acting as the main party of war for U.S. imperialism.

The power to destroy this system of racism, war and exploitation lies in the hands of the multiracial working class. Against the labor tops who tie working people to their exploiters, particularly to the Democratic Party, the Spartacist League is dedicated to building a revolutionary workers party like the Bolsheviks of Lenin and Trotsky—a party which champions the cause of all the oppressed, a party rooted in proletarian internationalism. Join us in building the party which will lead new October Revolutions and put an end once and for all to imperialist mass murder. **Defend Iraq! Defeat U.S. imperialism through workers revolution!** ■

Puerto Rico...

(continued from page 12)

discriminates against them economically, linguistically, racially, politically and culturally. The raw reality of having risked their lives for a government which doesn't even give them the right to vote stirs revolt. Following every war, returning soldiers have been at the forefront of renewed drives for independence.

The excruciating bind for Puerto Ricans is this: with colonial "commonwealth" status comes the right to live and work on the U.S. mainland, and today huge numbers are resident in New York and other mainland centers, where many are integrated into strategic sections of the proletariat. While the island residents are deeply impoverished in comparison to the U.S. mainland, relative to virtually all their Caribbean and Latin American neighbors, with the exception of Cuba, Puerto Ricans are considerably better off by statistics which mean something about the quality of life: infant mortality, literacy, life expectancy. That's the vise of contradiction presented as a "choice" to Puerto Ricans under capitalism: crumbs from the table of the colonial rulers, with the implied indignity, servitude and injustices, or "independence" under the thumb of U.S. imperialism, which means life-threatening impoverishment.

Leninism and the National Question

We Trotskyists of the International Communist League fight for a revolutionary solution to the Puerto Rican national question. As forthright opponents of all forms of U.S. imperialist colonial oppression, we favor the independence of Puerto Rico in order to fight against chauvinism in the United States and to undercut the bourgeois-nationalist leadership of the working class on the island. But given the evident and understandable contradictions of Puerto Ricans on the question, we do not advocate that independence be forced on them. The sympathies of the population are a large factor for Marxists in determining how to get the national question off the agenda and clear the road for revolutionary internationalist class struggle. Therefore, today we champion the *right of independence for Puerto Rico*.

The axis of our fight on the mainland is against national chauvinism, against "English only" racism, against imperialist military and economic oppression, against the U.S. bases which threaten not only the working people of Puerto Rico but proletarians throughout the region and especially in Cuba. We stand for unconditional military defense of the Cuban deformed workers state against imperialist attack and internal counterrevolution. We fight for the release of Puerto Rican nationalist political prisoners as an urgent cause for the North American proletariat. Through such struggles, we work to break the ideological shackles of the chauvinist labor misleaders who tie the workers to their exploiters through the medium of false consciousness such as



Lacy/Hartford Advocate

Left: In vendetta against Puerto Rican independence movement, U.S. marshals drag nationalist leader Filiberto Ojedarios to court in 1988. Right: Protesting massive dragnet against *independentistas* in 1985, demonstrators proclaim, "FBI: the Real Terrorists."



Claridad

anti-immigrant racism and job-trusting protectionism.

On Puerto Rico itself, the cutting edge of our program is against the bourgeois-nationalist forces who seek to derail proletarian struggle through dangerous and false nationalist "unity" between Puerto Rican labor and the local bourgeoisie. We fight for the international class unity of the workers of Puerto Rico and the United States against both the U.S. capitalists and the local bourgeois overseers. Our struggle is for workers power—a victorious workers government of Puerto Rico will decide how they will exercise their national self-determination. Only under the leadership of the proletariat can colonial revolution have an

iat in Puerto Rico inspiring struggle on the mainland, including a political battle against U.S. imperialist domination of the island. Proletarian resistance to looming capitalist counterrevolution in Cuba would have an impact on Puerto Rico, as would any attempt to deploy the U.S. arsenal of death from the huge military installations on Puerto Rico against Cuba, or anywhere else in the region. A working-class revolt in Mexico would also certainly animate the Spanish-speaking Puerto Rican proletariat in opposition to U.S. imperialism.

The particular circumstances and modalities of achieving independence—or voluntary integration—can go a number of different ways. Our call for a *socialist*

national oppression in order to advance the unity and integrity of the proletariat as the motor force for socialist revolution. In this Lenin was sharply counterposed to the opportunist "socialists" of the Second International—chiefly West Europeans whose "own" national questions had largely been resolved by 1871 and who imbibed the chauvinism of the capitalist rulers by deeming the resolution of anybody else's national question, such as the secession of oppressed nations, to be "impractical." Lenin's sharp dialectical approach is outlined in his July 1916 essay, "The Discussion on Self-Determination Summed Up":

"In the internationalist education of the workers of the oppressor countries, emphasis must necessarily be laid on their advocating freedom for the oppressed countries to secede and their fighting for it. Without this there can be no internationalism. It is our right and duty to treat every Social-Democrat of an oppressor nation who fails to conduct such propaganda as a scoundrel and an imperialist...."

"On the other hand, a Social-Democrat from a small nation must emphasize in his agitation the *second* word of our general formula: 'voluntary integration' of nations. He may, without failing in his duties as an internationalist, be in favour of *both* the political independence of his nation and its integration with the neighbouring state of X, Y, Z, etc. But in all cases he must fight *against* small-nation narrow-mindedness, seclusion and isolation, consider the whole and the general, subordinate the particular to the general interest.

"People who have not gone into the question thoroughly think that it is 'contradictory' for the Social-Democrats of oppressor nations to insist on the 'freedom to secede,' while Social-Democrats of oppressed nations insist on the 'freedom to integrate.' However, a little reflection will show that there is not, and cannot be, any *other* road to internationalism and the amalgamation of nations, any other road *from the given* situation to this goal."



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1920 Baku Congress in Soviet Azerbaijan, organized by the Communist International to spread revolutionary struggle among oppressed peoples of the East.

unequivocally progressive, revolutionary significance.

Puerto Rico is a society linked directly, economically, to the U.S., and culturally and linguistically to the laboring masses throughout Latin America and much of the Caribbean. The course of Puerto Rican independence from the yoke of Yankee imperialism is not preordained. A revolutionary socialist upheaval in the U.S. would grant independence in a minute, as well as massive amounts of economic aid. The spark can also light the other way, with the militant proletar-

federation of the Caribbean projects our general conception for workers rule in the area, however we do not know at this point how this will transpire in the concrete. As Leninists, we fight to give the bourgeois-democratic demand of independence for Puerto Rico a proletarian-revolutionary axis, without which all talk of "freedom" and "sovereignty" is just a lot of empty claptrap spewed by bourgeois nationalists interested in oppressing "their own" people.

Puerto Rico is a vivid confirmation of the validity of the program of *permanent revolution*, first elaborated by the Marxist leader Leon Trotsky in the context of the failed 1905 Russian Revolution. In the economically backward countries, the bourgeoisies are too weak, corrupt and dependent on imperialism to resolve the outstanding tasks—such as national liberation—historically associated with the bourgeois revolutions. Consequently, the resolution of the bourgeois-democratic tasks can only be achieved through the proletarian conquest of power, necessarily placing the socialist tasks on the immediate agenda, and the fight to extend workers rule to the advanced capitalist countries.

Our approach to the national question in Puerto Rico comes directly from Bolshevik leader V.I. Lenin. Leading the proletariat to power from within the tsarist "prison house of peoples," Lenin had a keen appreciation for the necessity of fighting all forms of national and colo-

Norden's Group: Yankee Liars for a Fraudulent International

The Spartacist League and ICL have recently been the target of a screeching attack by the Internationalist Group (IG) of former *Workers Vanguard* editor Jan Norden, which asserts the bald lie that "ICL Renounces Fight For Puerto Rican Independence" (Internationalist, November-December 1998). The IG howls that we have become "colonialist socialists," "Kautskyan," indeed we "would not have been accepted in the CI [Communist International]." From a clinical standpoint, the IG's ravings are ample evidence of dementia and contempt for the socialist public: *every assertion is a lie which is refuted by an examination of the ICL's propaganda and work*. Unfortunately, we can't just observe (and relish) the Norden group's hysterical degeneration. The steady bombardment of lies can succeed in sowing confusion and doubts, particularly in a distant audience which has little opportunity for direct examination of the ICL. Norden's group knows this and they work at it.

The question is, *why do they lie?* They vilify the ICL because we exposed the *class treason* of Norden's "League for a Fourth International" (LFI). Norden

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initially tried to cover his defection from Trotskyism with the pretentious macho idiocy that the ICL "pulled its hands out of boiling water" and "deserted" the class struggle in Brazil when we made a principled break with the trade-union opportunists of the LQB (Liga Quarta-Internacionalista do Brasil). The LQB first braintrustered an unprincipled bloc to control the cop-infested municipal workers union (SFPMVR) in Volta Redonda. When the ICL pushed the LQB to implement the principle they claimed to agree with, that cops are not part of the workers movement and don't belong in a trade union, their rotten bloc fell apart and a squalid battle for control of the union ensued. The LQB then dragged the bourgeois courts into the union to protect their own positions, including unelected posts, at the top of the union. Norden's group has never answered the challenge to publish the documentation (court case numbers 30.831, 30.832, 30.833 on file in the Volta Redonda courthouse) which prove that his outfit tied the union to the bourgeois state. (For more information, see "Lies, Damned Lies and Anti-Union Lawsuits: IG's Brazil Fraud Exposed" and "Court Papers Prove They Sued the Union—IG's Brazil Cover-Up: Dirty Hands, Cynical Lies," WV Nos. 669 and 671, 30 May and 11 July 1997.)

One wonders whatever happened to the saga of the LQB in the municipal workers union. After more than two years of Web site postings by the IG appealing for solidarity with their Brazilian comrades against bourgeois state repression, and contradictory assertions that the LQB had thrown the cops out of the union alternating with claims that ex-cop and LQB member Geraldo Ribeiro had been thrown out of the SFPMVR presidency yet still represented "the will of the workers," the IG has gone oddly silent. The socialist public which has been bombarded by the IG's cyberspace postings has a right to know: so what about the IG's claim that they threw the cops out of the union? Just who is president of the SFPMVR today? What about the IG's verbal assertion that the SFPMVR is no longer a union at all, presumably because the bourgeois courts did not reinstall LQB member Ribeiro despite his multiple suits against the union? Incredibly, in the first issue of the *Internationalist* in more than six months, the "boiling pot" of Volta Redonda has been pulled off the LFI's burners without a word of explanation!

Here we have the context for the new lies that the ICL has gone social-chauvinist on Puerto Rico. Norden's LFI is in deep trouble. Their class treason in Volta Redonda redounded against the proletariat and discredited them as the opportunist hustlers they are. Their French "section" is a mirage which cannot be conjured into sight anywhere on the French left. And in their North American headquarters, the Internationalist Group has not had a single publicly advertised meeting in the two-and-a-half years of their existence! Norden can't



Zayas/El Nuevo Día

July 1998: Mayor of Ponce at head of march supporting telephone workers during general strike led by CAOS, class-collaborationist coalition tying together unions and bourgeois-nationalist parties.

justify his political defection from Trotskyism and the ICL, therefore he substitutes the standard "gringo-baiting" lies of Latin American nationalists to hold his phony international together. Slinging mud at the ICL is also the price of admission to the nationalist class-collaborationist milieu Norden tails, milieu which are viscerally hostile to the Bolshevik program and practices of the ICL. *That's why they lie.* The IG's lies are the soft-core violence of political cowards who seek justification for their marginal existence and can't politically answer for their betrayals of principles they claim to uphold.

Doublespeak and Imperialist Arrogance

The IG claims to "advocate independence" for Puerto Rico and that this is the core of their difference with the ICL. Every lousy lawyer knows that if the law is against you, you pound the evidence; if the evidence is against you, you pound the law; if both are against you, then you pound the table. No amount of table-thumping can hide the IG's ridiculous fabrications.

The IG claims that because the ICL does not advocate independence at this time, i.e., we do not take a position now that Puerto Rico *must* separate from the U.S., this is an "outright capitulation before 'their own' bourgeoisie." The *Internationalist* cites our position printed in *Workers Vanguard* No. 696 (11 September 1998):

"Marxists defend Puerto Rico's right to self-determination and support struggles for independence in order to strike a blow against U.S. imperialism and to remove the national question from the agenda in Puerto Rico. But we are not in favor of forcing annexation, federation, or even independence on anyone, least of all by racist U.S. imperialism.

"We do not currently *advocate* independence for Puerto Rico, not least because the vast majority of the population is not in favor of it at this time."

Buried later in the article is the IG's own position, which in classic centrist fashion first capitulates to nationalism

and then attempts to cover itself by borrowing the Marxist position of the SL. Contradicting themselves from one sentence to the next, the IG *advocates* independence, while simultaneously arguing that they would *not advocate* independence if it were contrary to popular sentiment—a vivid illustration of why Trotsky described centrism as "crystalized confusion":

"The Internationalist Group and the League for the Fourth International advocate independence for Puerto Rico, in order to strike a blow against U.S. imperialism and because only by breaking out of the national subjugation of colonial rule can the international class struggle come to the fore. We support struggles for independence from colonial rule, even when they are led by petty-bourgeois and bourgeois forces...."

Next paragraph:

"At the same time, however distorted by the mechanisms of colonial referendums, the fact remains that an overwhelming majority of the Puerto Rican population does not presently favor independence. As the right to self-determination is a democratic question, and the working class has no interest in forcing independence against the will of the Puerto Rican population—especially when the impetus for separation comes from right-wing reactionaries—we underline our defense of Puerto Rico's right to independence."

It appears Norden has egg on his face. So much for the IG's inane assertion that taking the will of the oppressed population into account equals capitulation to U.S. imperialism!

Recognizing the very real contradictions among the oppressed Puerto Rican masses, in 1993 the Spartacist League re-examined our position on the Puerto Rican national question and adjusted our central slogan to call "For the Right of Independence for Puerto Rico!" This was the headline of our article in *Workers Vanguard* No. 588 (19 November 1993), and Norden, who was still editor of *WV* at the time, claimed to agree with the change. Does this mean he was a Kautskyite, or just a political coward who didn't have the guts to argue out his (deviant) position?

Norden's actual, longstanding position, which smacks of Yankee imperialist arrogance, was "independence whether they want it or not." Norden used to strut around the editorial office saying exactly that every time an article on Puerto Rico was discussed for *WV*. This once found unfortunate public expression in an

article titled "Puerto Rico at the Crossroads" (*WV* No. 374, 8 March 1985) which stated, "While *at present* the Puerto Rican masses do not favor separation from U.S. rule, communists are for independence, like it or not." "Like it or not"? Lenin had a few choice words for such vulgar economist caricatures of Marxism on the national question:

"Is it to be supposed that victorious socialism, restoring and implementing full democracy all along the line, will refrain from *democratically* demarcating state frontiers and ignore the 'sympathies' of the population? These questions need only be stated to make it quite clear that our Polish colleagues are sliding down from Marxism towards imperialist Economism...."

"Capitalism rides roughshod over these sympathies, adding more obstacles to the rapprochement of nations. Socialism, by organizing production *without* class oppression, by ensuring the well-being of *all* members of the state, gives *full play* to the 'sympathies' of the population, thereby promoting and greatly accelerating the drawing together and fusion of the nations."

—"The Discussion on Self-Determination Summed Up"

Lenin's main polemic on the national and colonial question was not titled "Secession Now and Forever!" but rather "The Right of Nations to Self-Determination" (February-May 1914). Lies of the Internationalist Group to the contrary, this is Lenin's position:

"The demand for a 'yes' or 'no' reply to the question of secession in the case of every nation may seem a very 'practical' one. In reality it is absurd; it is metaphysical in theory, while in practice it leads to subordinating the proletariat to the bourgeoisie's policy. The bourgeoisie always places its national demands in the forefront, and does so in categorical fashion. With the proletariat, however, these demands are subordinated to the interests of the class struggle. Theoretically, you cannot say in advance whether the bourgeois-democratic revolution will end in a given nation seceding from another nation, or in its equality with the latter; *in either case*, the important thing for the proletariat is to ensure the development of its class. For the bourgeoisie it is important to hamper this development by pushing the aims of its 'own' nation before those of the proletariat. That is why the proletariat confines itself, so to speak, to the negative demand for recognition of the *right* to self-determination, without giving guarantees to any nation, and without undertaking to give *anything at the expense* of another nation."

For genuine Marxists, the question is: how best under the given historical circumstances to break the hold of nationalism and chauvinism and turn the workers against their own bourgeoisie. The conclusion of the *Communist Manifesto* is that the working class has no fatherland. In the struggle for a world socialist planned economy, Leninists fight to remove national oppression which poisons the unity of the international proletariat. The answer is not the same at all times in all places, nor can a policy for one country be mechanically transposed to another.

IG Nationalists in Puerto Rico General Strike

The two-day general strike against privatization of the Puerto Rican telephone company on 7-8 July 1998 shows how the IG talks out of both sides of its mouth; the better to pander to bourgeois

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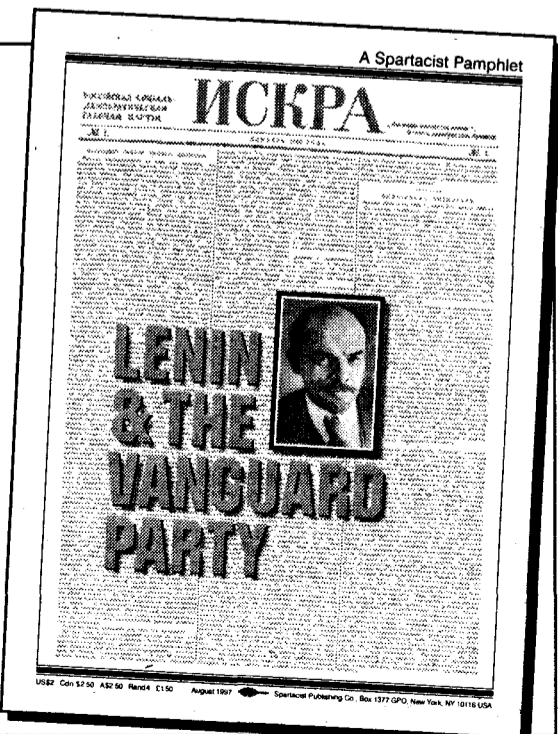
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Puerto Rico...

(continued from page 9)

nationalism. Intersecting the centennial of U.S. colonial rule over Puerto Rico, the strike had the character of a political protest. The political independence of the proletariat was subordinated to the program of bourgeois nationalists, who exploited proletarian discontent over privatization to push their own agenda. The Internationalist Group covered up for the nationalists by denying that they even had any role in the strike movement! The IG even falsified the name of the *class-collaborationist front* directing the strike in order to disappear the bourgeois political and right-wing religious elements.

The strike was led by CAOS. In its propaganda, the IG defines CAOS as the "Broad Committee of Trade Union Organizations." Actually, CAOS stands for "Comité Amplio de Organizaciones Sindicales, Cívicas y Religiosas," translated by newspapers and CAOS itself as "Greater Committee of Trade Union, Civic, Religious, Cultural, Political, Student and Environmental Organizations." The liquidation of proletarian centrality in a broad nationalist swamp to (mis)lead the strike was a conscious move by the nationalists and one that did not go down smoothly. CAOS was born out of a dispute involving the president of the CPT union federation (Central Puertorriqueña de Trabajadores) who wanted an umbrella committee composed only of Puerto Rico's three labor federations. He was outmaneuvered and CAOS was founded explicitly as a "broad popular movement" of "the people," i.e., a class-collaborationist net.

Norden's IG lyingly portrays it as an "umbrella group of labor and leftist organizations" and claims the bourgeois Puerto Rican Independence Party (PIP) "was not part of it (nor were PIP or PPD politicians)." The IG denies the presence of bourgeois elements in order to capitulate to them, but by printing such bald lies, the IG sawed off the very limb they were standing on. CAOS itself, as well as a link on the Web site of the UTIER union, published the list of CAOS delegates at the assembly held to plan the strike. This meeting, held in Carolina in June, included the following: delegate No. 29, "Nuevo Movimiento Independentista (Julio Muriente)" and delegate No. 31, "Partido Independentista Puertorriqueño (Víctor García San Inocencio)!"

The lies are just the cover-up for the IG's political capitulation. Obviously the IG couldn't polemicize against the union bureaucracy's embrace of the bourgeois nationalists and the Catholic church during the strike, because they denied they were a factor. After breathlessly describing the strike as a "make-or-break battle" for the proletariat, the IG held its fire against the bureaucracy's link to the nationalists until after the strike was over. Thus, they made themselves tacit accomplices of the class-collaborationist leadership.

During the strike itself, the maximum criticism the IG made of the leadership was at the level of how many hours to strike! They wrote: "The biggest weak-

ness of the workers' struggle against privatization is at the top, where union bureaucrats have been at odds over whether the strike should be limited or indefinite, when to call it or whether to strike at all." The crucial question of proletarian political consciousness, of the class independence of the proletariat, is barely mentioned, much less fought for explicitly against the nationalist union misleaders.

Once the strike was over, the IG packed away its cheerleading outfit and donned the robes of pseudo-Trotskyism. At a (non-public) educational on the Puerto Rican strike, reprinted as an article in the current *Internationalist*, the IG intones: "Due to bureaucratic betrayal, the strike failed—that is the hard fact that must be confronted by Marxists and all defenders of the cause of labor." Only



December 1960: Masses of Algiers in defiant protest against French colonial rule. Algeria won independence in 1962.

now does the IG denounce "independentist unity" between the labor movement and bourgeois parties like the PIP. With "defenders of labor's cause" like the IG, who needs sellouts?

The clearest expression of the IG's pandering to nationalism and rejection of the struggle to forge a Leninist proletarian party is in their denunciation of the ICL for not advocating independence within Puerto Rico. They write: "For any revolutionary-minded militant in Puerto Rico, this line would be a statement of political bankruptcy." Thus the IG abandons the revolutionary internationalist purpose of Leninism: to combat chauvinism in the oppressor country and to combat nationalism in the oppressed country.

In like manner, the "Program of the Class Struggle Caucus" presented by the IG's Brazilian allies, the LQB (translated in *Internationalist*, January/February 1998), said *not a word* about the need to combat rampant nationalist influences in the Brazilian left. Yet throughout Latin America the fight against bourgeois nationalism is key to the perspective of permanent revolution, the only road to the destruction of the capitalist order. With its proclivity to capitulate, the IG couldn't swim against the stream in its own bathtub. But surely Norden dreams of a bigger pond...Professor Coman-

dante Norden, the vicarious member of a new ruling class in Puerto Rico, together with his sidekick, Bishop Negrete!

Algeria, Vietnam, Ireland

The IG's polemic is at its most absurd in equating the situation of Puerto Rico today with independence struggles in Algeria, Vietnam and Ireland—as if each of these situations was identical or even similar. There was a not small struggle called the *Algerian War* which drove out the French imperialists after eight years of war and over a million dead. As for Vietnam, the struggle for independence too was not a matter of referendums but a *decades-long war*, from urban strikes and rural rebellions organized by the Communist Party in the 1930s, to driving the French out of Indochina at Dien Bien Phu in 1954, to defeating the U.S. impe-

rialist colossus, culminating in a social revolution against the capitalist colonial order in the South in 1975. As for Ireland, the struggle for independence has been waged for centuries, going back at least to Wolfe Tone and the 1798 Rebellion of United Irishmen seeking independence from England.

The IG/LFI should familiarize itself with the struggle for Irish independence, as it is instructive regarding the imperialist relationship between the North American IG and its Mexican grouplet. The IG's alleged Mexican group lacks even the semblance of organizational independence, being identified in the founding document of the self-styled "League for the Fourth International" as merely the backside of a slash: "the Internationalist Group (U.S./Mexico)" (*Internationalist*, April/May 1998)! In the First International, Engels fought against the treatment of national sections as colonial appendages, including as regards organizational affiliation. Against proposals that Irish comrades be subordinated to the British section, Engels argued:

"It was asking the conquered people to forget their nationality and submit to their conquerors. It was not Internationalism, but simply prating submission. If the promoters of the motion were so brimful of the truly international spirit, let them prove it by removing the seat of the British Federal Council to Dublin and submit to a Council of Irishmen."

—Minutes of the General Council, Meeting of May 14, 1872

Naturally, if the ICL had an organized group of cothinkers in Puerto Rico, they would constitute a separate section of our democratic-centralist international, as our Mexican section does today. The IG/LFI, in stark contrast, upholds a degrading relationship of "prating submission."

Independence for Quebec? IG Says "Maybe"

That the IG's line on Puerto Rico is pure capitulation to Latin American nationalism is made clearer by their equivocal position on independence for Quebec. After extensive internal discussion, the Trotskyist League/Ligue Trotskyste of Canada and the ICL changed our posi-

tion in 1995 from recognition of the right of self-determination to *advocacy* of Quebec independence. The IG says this change of line was "correct," only to claim that it was based narrowly on "mounting anti-French chauvinism in English-speaking Canada." Not so. Our line change followed a thoroughgoing *reassessment* of the depth of national antagonisms in Canada over at least two decades (see "Independence for Quebec!" *Spartacist* [English-language edition] No. 52, Autumn 1995). We recognized that we were in fact very late in raising the call for Quebec independence, and that had we not changed our position this would have severely compromised our Canadian section as a revolutionary factor.

Notably, Norden's only contribution to this extensive internal discussion was to argue *against independence for Quebec*. A verbatim transcription of Norden's remarks at the debate on Quebec during a meeting of our International Secretariat in 1995 reveals his argument that the fundamental Leninist understanding of the bourgeois state and the workings of imperialism had become obsolete. As well, Norden embraced "globalization," a latter-day variant of German Social Democrat Karl Kautsky's hypothesis of a unitary world "ultra-imperialism," designed to mask the growing contradictions of the capitalist system and the role of its "labor lieutenants of capital." After dismissing the increasingly polarized and poisoned nationalist tensions in Belgium as just something that "flares up every five or ten years"(!), Norden went on:

"I think the one thing that's important in the recent period is that, I think there is an overall, the national question isn't exactly as it used to be in the past. Because with the continued development and decay of capitalism the economy is becoming much more global."

The stunning social-democratic conclusion of Norden's intervention was exactly as follows:

"But there is a tendency to sort of disaggregate. And that could reflect itself in this fact, you know, in the context where you have basically NAFTA and so on, the Canadian state itself seems to be becoming—to be—more irrelevant."

Norden's revision of Marxism was such a howler that comrade Jim Robertson, who presented the position for independence of Quebec, devoted his summary time specifically to refuting him:

"However, I was concerned by Norden, who I thought was simply being, in a very episodically contemporary way, politically correct by speaking of the breakdown of the nation-state at each end, where you're going to have little regional groupings like Brittany or what have you within France, and then, in the context of the European Union, these big aggregations of capital headed by the United States, Germany and Japan. I believe this to be terribly impressionistic—the global economy which is conquering everywhere. That will last until the first good depression or military clash. It's terribly naive...."

"So yes, I believe that we should advocate the independence of the Québécois. I believe that cuts through a presently terribly poisonous situation. Remember, we're not Stalin that makes it happen the next day. It's an advocacy on the grounds that there are two separate nations with separate languages, separate cultures that should go their separate ways and fight their own bosses, and then the working classes of these two countries will have a basis for a common future."

All opportunism is by nature nationalistic. Thus it is not surprising that Norden, fleeing revolutionary Trotskyism, would embrace Third World nationalism in Latin America while rejecting independence for the oppressed Québécois. Behind this lies a thoroughly anti-Marxist conception of "progressive" peoples like the Puerto Ricans versus peoples who are "reactionary" (or at least less trendy in today's petty-bourgeois leftist circles) like the Québécois. Norden selectively upholds the national rights of certain peoples, but for him that means sucking up to the bourgeois nationalists of these countries. This is very different from Lenin, whose commitment to fight all forms of national oppression in no way meant accommodating to the nationalism of the oppressed.

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In its screed against the ICL, the *Internationalist* pretends there is an iron distinction between colonies (like Puerto Rico) and oppressed nations (like Quebec). They write:

"Colonies are not nationalities in a multinational state. In this case, the right of self-determination is not akin to the right of divorce, which one can exercise or not, depending on the particular situation. Colonial subjugation is akin to slavery, for the relationship between the imperialist power and the colony is inherently oppressive, no matter how it is disguised."

Thus, according to the IG, national relationships in a multinational state are *not* "inherently oppressive"! Try telling that to the Québécois, who have suffered more than two centuries of national oppression at the hands of the dominant Anglo rulers in Canada! In fact, all bourgeois nation-states are *necessarily* based on the domination of a single nationality using a single language, and the oppression of other people(s).

Lenin's writings on the national and colonial question are infused with the understanding that upholding the liberation of the colonies and oppressed nations is essential to making the proletariat conscious of its historic revolutionary tasks. In organizing for the proletarian overthrow of the tsarist prison house of peoples, Lenin did not draw spurious, iron-clad distinctions between, for example, the Ukraine and Poland on the one hand and Turkestan and the Caucasus on the other. Rather, he examined particular national questions in the concrete, taking careful account of the will of the oppressed people wherever possible, in order to further the struggle for proletarian power. This is the heritage the ICL stands on in our fight to reforge Leon Trotsky's Fourth International. It is utterly foreign to the lies and logic-chopping in the service of bourgeois nationalism employed by Norden's IG/LFI. As Trotsky wrote in 1932:

"What characterizes Bolshevism on the national question is that in its attitude toward oppressed nations, even the most backward, it considers them not only the object but also the subject of politics. Bolshevism does not confine itself to recognizing their 'right' to self-determination and to parliamentary protests against the trampling upon of this right. Bolshevism penetrates into the midst of the oppressed nations; it raises them up against their oppressors; it ties up their struggle with the struggle of the proletariat in capitalist countries; it instructs the oppressed Chinese, Hindus,

or Arabs in the art of insurrection and it assumes full responsibility for this work in the face of civilized executioners. Here only does Bolshevism begin, that is, revolutionary Marxism in action. Everything that does not step over this boundary remains centrism."

—"What Next? Vital Questions for the German Proletariat" (January 1932)

Where Is the IG Going?

Norden's expressed view that the national question, indeed even the bourgeois state itself, is increasingly "irrelevant" in the post-Soviet world stands reality on its head. Defense of the right of self-determination is, if anything, *increasingly* important. The escalation of inter-imperialist rivalries coming in the wake of the collapse of the former Soviet Union, the drive by major powers to redivide the world into regional trade blocs, and the increasing shift of industrial production to low-wage Third World countries all *reinforce* the need for communists to champion the rights of neo-colonial and oppressed nations in order to advance the interests of international proletarian class struggle.

The existence of the Soviet Union was a barrier to Norden's headlong capitulation to Latin American nationalism, as the pseudo-Trotskyists in Latin America were all on the other side of the class line in every major conflict between U.S. imperialism and the bureaucratically deformed/degenerated workers states. This ranged from Afghanistan, where the ICL hailed the Soviet Red Army and the fake left tailed U.S. imperialism, to Poland, where the ICL defended the deformed workers state and the fake left promoted Solidarność, a company "union" for capitalist counterrevolution.

But as capitalist counterrevolution engulfed East Europe and the former Soviet Union, Norden became increasingly unhinged. This came to a head following the counterrevolutionary destruction of the former East German deformed workers state (DDR). With the fall of the Berlin Wall in late 1989, the ICL mobilized all our international resources in order to act as the subjective factor, the necessary revolutionary Trotskyist leadership to lead a political revolution in the DDR. But in the aftermath of the annexation of the DDR by West German imperialism, Norden sought to accommodate the very same Stalinist bureaucrats who sold out to capitalist counterrevolution. In a 1995 speech to



WV Photo

September 1991 Spartacist League demonstration in defense of Cuba after cutoff of Soviet aid following Yeltsin's August countercoup.

the East German Stalinist remnants of the "Communist Platform" at Berlin's Humboldt University, Norden spat on the ICL's program and intervention, incredibly proclaiming to these hacks—*against* whom our fight to lead a political revolution was directed—that alas, "there was *no revolutionary leadership*" (see *International Bulletin* No. 38, "Norden's 'Group': Shamefaced Defectors from Trotskyism").

A key juncture marking Norden's break from Trotskyism was his response to the 1990 execution of Cuban General Ochoa by the Castro regime. Here was a convergence for Norden of the two milieus he deeply capitulated to: Stalinist bureaucrats and Latin American nationalists. Thus Norden sought to defend the summary execution of Ochoa, the general who led the victory over South African apartheid's racist army in Angola, arguing that the "evidence" of Ochoa's guilt must be true. Naively asserting that Fidel Castro could not tell a lie, Norden then penned an embarrassing apology for Castro in WV No. 500 (20 April 1990) which required public clarification in the very next issue (WV No. 501, 4 May 1990).

In *The Revolution Betrayed*, Trotsky's searing analysis of the degeneration of the Russian Revolution, the dual nature of the Stalinist bureaucracy and the explosive contradictions of Soviet soci-

ety, the choice was posed starkly: "Will the bureaucrat devour the workers' state, or will the working class clean up the bureaucrat?" Trotsky's prophetic warning was vindicated, bitterly, in the negative. The IG rejects Trotsky's warning, instead counseling the proletariat to accommodate the bureaucrat and even to pressure this parasitic caste to be the revolutionary leadership. The IG denies the historical retrogression of proletarian consciousness which is a direct consequence of the terrible defeat represented by the final undoing of the Russian Revolution. They deny it in order to capitulate to the new *lower* level of consciousness, abandoning the fight to forge authentic Trotskyist parties as they seek illusory shortcuts, whether trade-union hustlers in Brazil or Stalinist bureaucrats from Cuba to the former DDR.

The IG claims that the ICL has rejected the premise of Trotsky's Fourth International, the crucial need to resolve the crisis of leadership of the international proletariat. That is a lie. As stated in the ICL's "International Declaration of Principles and Some Elements of Program":

"Trotsky's assertion in the 1938 Transitional Program that 'The world political situation as a whole is chiefly characterized by a historical crisis of the leadership of the proletariat' predates the present deep regression of proletarian consciousness. The reality of this post-Soviet period adds a new dimension to Trotsky's observation. The only way in which this regression can be overcome and the working class can become a class *for* itself, i.e., fighting for socialist revolution, is to reforge an international Leninist-Trotskyist party as the leadership of the working class. Marxism must once again win the allegiance of the proletariat."

The final undoing of the Russian Revolution means that the identification of proletarian struggles with the ideal of socialism is at a nadir—not everywhere, not evenly, but as a real factor and challenge which must be confronted. The IG ignores this because they alibi the Stalinist bureaucrats who perverted Marxism and abetted capitalist counterrevolution, and because they glorify and capitulate to the existing consciousness of the proletariat. Such fakers will never build a Leninist party. Reforging the Fourth International as the world party of socialist revolution is the task the ICL sets out to resolve, through political combat against the misleaders of the working class and their reformist and centrist tails. ■

斯巴达克斯 **SPARTACIST**

1990年1月

Declaration of Principles and Some Elements of Program

International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist)

We are pleased to announce the publication in Chinese of this important document, which was adopted at the Third International Conference of the ICL in early 1998. It has already appeared in nine other languages. The ICL's Declaration of Principles is a concrete expression of our purpose: to build national sections of a democratic-centralist international which can lead the struggle for worldwide socialist revolution.

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For New October Revolutions!

Third International Conference of the ICL

Declaration of Principles and Some Elements of Program

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WORKERS VANGUARD

IG Centrists Pander to Latin American Nationalism

For the Right of Independence for Puerto Rico!

On 13 December 1998, Puerto Ricans went to the polls for the third referendum on the island's status in the last three decades. The choice of a bare majority of voters (50.2 percent) was "none of the above," while 46.5 percent voted for statehood, 2 percent for independence and less than 1 percent for "free association" or "commonwealth" status. The referendum was contrived by Puerto Rican governor Pedro Rosselló, a staunch supporter of U.S. imperialism who is pushing for the island to become the 51st state. That popular will is irrelevant to the machinations of the rulers was exposed when Rosselló baldly claimed victory for statehood, an option the voters had defeated! Rosselló immediately redoubled his efforts to woo the American Congress, still legally the ultimate arbiter of Puerto Rico's fate, to annex outright the world's largest remaining colony.

This vote, like the preceding referendums, offered "choices" designed to continue colonial domination of the island. As a register of popular sympathies, it was a sham and useful only insofar as the results indicate the simmering discontent and profound ambivalence of the Puerto Rican masses, for whom "status" festers as the national ulcer. Even those who fervently want to get out from under the heel of U.S. colonial subjugation understandably fear a downward economic plunge if ties were severed with the U.S. Meanwhile, bourgeois supporters of the present "commonwealth" status disagreed with its definition on the ballot and asked their followers to vote for "none of the above."

The island inhabitants are struggling to recover from the devastation of Hurricane Georges in September. Thousands are still without food or shelter and couldn't concern themselves with a referendum pushed by a government that has done next to nothing about their plight. One-sixth of the island's residents were declared ineligible to vote because they hadn't registered in time. The one-third of Puerto Ricans who currently reside on the U.S. mainland were denied the right to

vote in this referendum on their national affiliation. For these reasons and others, proponents of Puerto Rican independence called for a boycott of the referendum, so their opinions are not reflected in the vote either. As revolutionary internationalists who oppose all the colonialist machinations of our "own" capitalist rulers, we say: *For the right of independence for Puerto Rico! U.S. troops out! For the rev-*

olutionary unity of the working masses of Puerto Rico and the mainland in the struggle against colonial oppression and capitalist exploitation!



WV Photo

Puerto Rico general strike, July 1998: Water workers march past phone company building in San Juan. ICL intervened to bring Trotskyist program to strikers, distributing translation of WV article, "A Century of U.S. Imperialist Plunder."

WORKERS VANGUARD
— Traducción de Workers Vanguard No. 882, 13 de marzo 1998

¡Por la defensa militar incondicional de Cuba contra el imperialismo y la contrarrevolución interna!
¡Por el derecho de Puerto Rico a la independencia!

Un siglo de saqueo imperialista estadounidense

¡Por la revolución socialista por todas las Américas!

Al tiempo que preparan una armada de destrucción masiva. Hiroshima y Nagasaki por los Estados Unidos en 1945. Lección.

The polarized vote does reflect the deep contradiction of economic circumstance and national feeling. Culturally and linguistically Hispanic, Puerto Ricans chafe under the yoke of Yankee imperialist colonialism. The working people on the island are exploited as a low-wage labor pool by capitalists seeking to maximize their profit margins. "Citizens" of the U.S. with no right to vote in federal elections and no representation in Congress, Puerto Ricans are politically dispossessed and suffer the

classic national oppression of a colonized people. The per capita wage is half that of Mississippi, which is the poorest of any U.S. state. More than half the population of Puerto Rico lives below the U.S. poverty level.

The U.S. rulers will not easily give up this island, which they grabbed during the 1898 Spanish-American War and then turned into a strategic military base

in the Caribbean. In the century of U.S. imperialist domination, Puerto Rico has been used as a key staging area for military operations against Grenada, the Dominican Republic, Central America and the bureaucratically deformed workers state in Cuba. Now that the U.S. Army Southern Command has left Panama, the imperialist eagle is digging its talons deeper in Puerto Rico, expanding the already huge U.S. military presence.

U.S. militarism sharpens the contradiction of life as second-class citizens for Puerto Ricans. Limited citizenship rights were granted to Puerto Rico in 1917 during the first imperialist World War. When the U.S. acquired the Virgin

Citizenship came literally at bayonet point, as Puerto Rican youth were immediately pushed into World War I and smack into the formal racial segregation of the U.S. Army. Today, Puerto Ricans are disproportionately represented as cannon fodder in U.S. imperialism's wars. Per capita, nearly twice as many Puerto Ricans were killed in the Korean war as U.S. citizens from any state. In many ways, military service is the Achilles' heel for continued colonial domination. Puerto Rican soldiers and their civilian families burn at the injustice of fighting for a government which denies their national sovereignty and systematically

continued on page 8



UPI

Left: Puerto Rican National Guard arrested more than 3,000 in crackdown on independence fighters in 1950. Right: Cops attack picketers outside San Juan headquarters of telephone company during June 1998 strike against privatization threat.



AP

For Socialist Revolution Throughout the Americas!