

Shredding Everybody's Rights

Down With Government War on Immigrants!

Free All the Detainees!

While American occupation forces revel in their colonial slaughter, Iraqis without homes, jobs, food or clean water are getting a quick lesson in American "democracy"—last week chief civilian administrator L. Paul Bremer III ordered U.S. troops to shoot to kill alleged looters. In a sick joke, Washington dispatches "experts" to Baghdad to draft a constitution for Iraq while running the U.S. Constitution and Bill of Rights through the shredder. The easy U.S. victory in its one-sided slaughter in Iraq has further greased the skids for the Bush gang's police-state plans. More than a year and a half after the September 11 attack on the World Trade Center, just about every single right supposedly embodied in the Bill of Rights is under siege.

Under the Patriot Act and a panoply of executive orders, the government's secret police have vastly expanded authority to tap your phone, search your home, scour your financial records, interrogate your librarian and place you under arrest without probable cause that a crime has been committed. *And they want even more.* Earlier this month, the Senate passed, by a majority of 90 to 4, a new bill co-sponsored by New York Democrat Charles Schumer expanding the government's ability under the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act to use secret surveillance tools against people not tied to foreign governments or even "not thought to be members of known terrorist groups," as the *New York Times* (9 May) reported.

As the bombs began falling on Baghdad, Bush decreed "Operation Liberty Shield," mandating automatic detention of asylum-seekers from 34 countries and tightening "security" at domestic transportation facilities, including through increased surveillance of all passengers. Since March the Transportation Security Agency has been testing the Computer Assisted Passenger Pre-Screening System (CAPPS II), under which travelers will be labeled as "green," "yellow" or "red" security risks. Though reminiscent of the McCarthyite 1950s, when Communists were stripped of their passports, this could potentially affect far more people. As ACLU spokesman Katie Corrihan pointed out, "This system threatens to create a permanent blacklisted underclass of Americans who cannot travel freely." Dozens of leftists and peace activists on



Los Angeles May Day march. Defense of immigrants is key to fight against government assaults on democratic rights.

WV Photo

the airlines' "no fly list" were pulled from flights to prevent them from attending antiwar protests and other political events not to the liking of the government's thought police.

Two recent rulings underline that Bush, Ashcroft & Co. will justify no matter how tenuously or ludicrously, every new repressive measure on the basis of the "war on terror." Consider the case of 18-year-old Haitian immigrant David Joseph. In April, Ashcroft ordered that Joseph, who scrambled ashore in Florida in October, be detained indefinitely, overturning a ruling to the contrary by an Immigration Appeals court. Although there was no allegation that Joseph was dangerous, had anything to do with "terrorism," or had committed any crime other than trying to enter the U.S. to escape desperate poverty in that hellish American neocolony, Ashcroft cited the war on terrorism for this blatantly racist order. According to Ashcroft, releasing Joseph "would tend to encourage further surges of mass migration" by Haitians, with "attendant strains on national and homeland security resources."

Then on April 29, the Supreme Court upheld a provision of the draconian 1996

Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act mandating imprisonment of legal immigrants who are facing deportation for even the most minor convictions at some point in their lives, including decades before. Two years ago, the Supreme Court ruled in the *Zadvydas* case that such immigrants could not be held indefinitely, even if no country would accept them. Now, as an article by civil libertarian and Georgetown University professor David Cole in *Newsday* (15 May) put it, "The court for the first time upheld a law authorizing the preventive detention of individuals on a categorical basis" if they are non-citizens, "thus reneging on its own statement 50 years earlier that the due process clause does not 'acknowledge any distinction between citizens and resident aliens.'" Cole continues:

"History shows that what the government does to foreign nationals in the name of national security eventually gets extended to U.S. citizens. The guilt-by-association campaign of the McCarthy era was an extension to citizens of tactics first deployed against foreign nationals in the Palmer raids of 1919-20. The internment of 70,000 American citizens of Japanese descent during World War II was an extension to citizens of the his-

torical treatment of 'enemy aliens' during wartime. "Double standards may be a politically tempting way to avoid the hard choices presented by the war on terrorism, but what we do to foreign nationals today will come back to haunt us tomorrow."

"Alice in Wonderland Meets Kafka"

Anyone who thinks they have nothing to fear had better wake up and smell the coffee. In justifying its plans, government spokesmen rant that "terrorist sleepers" lead outwardly normal lives—students, businessmen, parents and soccer dads—and therefore everybody is suspect. Even some right-wing Republicans are getting cold feet over the galloping pace of the attacks on civil liberties. An April 10 ACLU forum titled "Discussion with Conservatives: State of Civil Liberties Post 9/11" featured Lori Waters, a representative of Phyllis Schlafly's reactionary Eagle Forum. Waters prefaced her remarks by observing, "Everyone in this room is a suspect until it's proven that you're not" (*Village Voice*, 30 April). Last week, when Texas Democratic Party legislators hid out in an Oklahoma hotel to

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Victory: Charges Against Arlene Russell Dropped

Chicago

An important victory was won on April 21 when bogus charges of "assault" on a police officer were dropped against black Chicago bus driver Arlene Russell and an official apology was extended to her! This is a victory not just for Russell but for all intended victims of police brutality in "Segregation City."

Key to Russell's ability to beat back these charges is her membership in one of the city's most powerful unions, Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU) Local 241. The case sparked outrage among many transit workers, particularly women bus operators who face racist, anti-woman abuse on a daily basis. Dozens of Arlene's union brothers and sisters mobilized for her court hearings, sending a clear message that she did not stand alone. Both ATU Locals 241 and 308 went on record in defense of Russell, posting calls in bus barns and train yards urging members to

come out in her defense. In a protest letter on Russell's behalf sent to the Cook County State's Attorney last August, then-Local 308 president Jerry Williams wrote, "ATU Local 308 and its membership of over 4,000 will not sit by while fellow transit workers or any minority workers continue to be victimized by some racist police officers who violently abuse them."

The railroading of Arlene Russell began last July 17, when, while driving the number 12 bus, she was arrested after passing an elderly man waving from the other side of the street. Police loaded the elderly man in their squad car and pulled in front of Russell's bus, cutting her off and forcing her to stop the bus. After the two cops jumped out of their patrol car, one of the officers began pounding on the bus door while shouting racial epithets, calling Russell a "stupid black bitch." When Russell used her cellphone to protest this racist abuse to the city's Office of Professional Standards, the cop who had hurled racist remarks tried to

grab the phone out of her hand and then violently grabbed her arm. She was then arrested on fabricated assault charges and held for eight hours after her arrest while the cops ran her fingerprints through an international "terrorist" database.

This racist assault on Russell was just the first in a series of brutal police attacks on black Chicago bus drivers while on duty. Three months after Russell's arrest, a white cop pressed phony felony battery charges against Karen Kelly, another black bus operator, ludicrously claiming that she had intentionally tried to run him down with her bus. This February, yet another black ATU 241 driver, Henry Walker, was violently dragged off his bus, beaten and held for three days in custody. His crime? He and his busload of passengers witnessed the cops brutally beating a black man as he lay handcuffed in the street. Both Kelly and Walker face possible prison time on these fabricated charges. It is urgent that the union mobilize in defense of their own. Drop the charges against Karen Kelly and Henry Walker! All out to defend Kelly and Walker!

This string of attacks on unionized black bus drivers comes in the context of the government's "war on terror"—a war against immigrants, blacks and labor. In the post-9/11 climate of growing fear and intimidation, a victory such as Russell's is particularly noteworthy, underscoring the importance of bringing the social power of this union to bear in defense of its membership. That's a first

step. What is posed on a larger scale is mobilizing the labor movement in defense of immigrants, black people and all working people—at home and abroad—against the all-sided attacks of America's racist capitalist rulers. As a recent Chicago Labor Black Struggle League newsletter (April 2003) stated in regard to the cases of Russell, Kelly and Walker:

"In this climate, the racist cops think they have a green light to run over the rights of, and brutalize, anyone unfortunate enough to cross their path.... These drivers are not just nameless, faceless victims, however, but members of the powerful Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU). Many of the ATU brothers and sisters of these drivers victimized by the cops have mobilized in their defense, as has the LBSL. There will be no end to police brutality except through socialist revolution. What we desperately need is a militant, multiracial workers party to fight for the rights of all the oppressed and to fight for a workers government."

We urge all labor, student and community organizations to demonstrate their solidarity by attending the next court dates for Kelly and Walker. Karen Kelly is due to appear on June 2 at 10 a.m. at the Skokie Civic Court, 5600 Old Orchard Road, Room 208. Henry Walker's next court appearance will be on June 26 at 9:30 a.m. at Chicago's Criminal Courts Building, 2600 S. California St., Room 302. We also urge that protest statements be sent to: Richard Devine, Cook County State's Attorney, 500 Richard J. Daley Center, Chicago, IL 60602. Fax: (312) 603-3000. ■



TROTSKY

Communists and the Trade Unions

The recent explosion of strikes in France points to both the combativity of the French proletariat and the hampering of its struggles by its division into separate unions based on political affiliation. In a 1923 article addressed to French revolutionary syndicalists who had adhered to the Communist International, Leon Trotsky advocated the unity of the trade unions—the basic organizations of the working class for economic struggle against the capitalists—on an industrial basis. At the same time, Trotsky



LENIN

stressed the necessity for communists to fight inside the unions against the reformist misleaders and to win workers to the class-struggle banner of communism.

The Communist International has most determinedly combated the split in the trade union movement in France, that is, its actual conversion into syndicalist parties. The main consideration of the Communist International has been the historical task of the working class as a whole, and the enormous independent significance of the trade union organization for solving the tasks of the proletariat. In this respect, the Communist International has from its very inception defended the real and living independence of the trade unions, in the spirit of Marxism....

The Communists have no reason, either in their ideology or their organization, to hide themselves behind the trade unions. They do not misuse the trade unions for machinations behind the scenes. They do not split the trade unions when they are a minority in them. They do not in any way disturb the independent development of the trade unions, and they support trade union struggles with all their strength. But at the same time the Communist Party reserves the right of expressing its opinion on all questions in the working-class movement, including the trade union question, to criticize trade union tactics, and to make definite proposals to the trade unions, which, on their part, are at liberty to accept or reject these proposals. The party strives to win the confidence of the working class, above all, of that section organized in the trade unions....

The party, if it be worthy of the name, includes the whole vanguard of the working class and uses its ideological influence for rendering every branch of the labor movement fruitful, especially the trade union movement. But if the trade unions are worthy of their name, they include an ever growing mass of workers, many backward elements among them. But they can only fulfill their task when consciously guided on firmly established principles. And they can only have this leadership when their best elements are united in the party of proletarian revolution.

—Leon Trotsky, "A Necessary Discussion with Our Syndicalist Comrades" (March 1923), reprinted in *Leon Trotsky on the Trade Unions* (Pathfinder Press, 1969)

Florida's Depraved Anti-Abortion Scheme

In a sinister move, last week Florida governor Jeb Bush, oozing concern for "the unborn child's best interests," personally appealed to the state Supreme Court to overturn a 1989 ruling and grant a legal "guardian" for the fetus of a 22-year-old mentally disabled woman. The woman became pregnant after she was raped in one of the state institutions in which she has lived most of her life. Anti-abortion bigots like Jeb Bush have seized on her particularly vulnerable situation to set a precedent. The Florida Department of Children and Families is seeking two guardians from the state court—one for the woman and one for the fetus—meaning that the woman's right to have an abortion would be subordinated to the "rights" of the fetus! If the Bush scheme is implemented, it would be another step toward declaring abortion "murder."

Similarly, the anti-abortion bigots have seized on the murder of California woman Laci Peterson, who was about eight months pregnant when she was killed. The man accused of her killing, her husband Scott, faces two murder charges—the second one for the fetus—in accordance with the law in California and 25 other states against "crimes" against "unborn victims." There have been four unsuccessful attempts since 1999 to make such laws federal. Utilizing the highly publicized Peterson case, anti-abortion U.S. Senators have again introduced the "Unborn Victims of Violence Act," hoping that this time they'll succeed. And these reactionaries have the full support of the Bush White House, which has signed the grotesquely named Born-Alive Infants Protection Act, mandating that an aborted fetus showing signs of life be considered a "person"; and last fall issued regula-

tions extending health care coverage to fetuses—but not to poor pregnant women!

The moves to declare fetuses and embryos "sacred human life" are among hundreds of laws passed in states across the country in the past decade that have significantly eroded women's right (as well as access) to abortion. The crusade by anti-abortion bigots to again slam the door against this most basic and private health care decision for women is part of a broad ruling-class offensive against the democratic rights of all.

The Bush gang in the White House is certainly a scary bunch, rife with Christian fundamentalists who want to impose their reactionary "morality" on every aspect of everyone's personal life. But it was the Democrats who paved the way for Bush & Co.'s reactionary agenda. Playing to the Christian right, "born again" Democratic president Jimmy Carter in 1977 intoned in regard to the ban on federal funding of abortions for poor women, "There are many things in life that are not fair." Under "pro-choice" Bill Clinton, well over 200 state measures were passed restricting access to abortion. The strategy of reliance on the Democratic Party and the capitalist government has served to effectively *demobilize* the struggle in defense of abortion rights. Abortion rights, like other crucial democratic rights, were wrested from the capitalist class through tumultuous class and social struggle, not through lobbying the Democrats or the government. The fight to defend women's rights, including the right to abortion, must be broadened into a struggle against the entire capitalist system. **For free abortion on demand! For women's liberation through socialist revolution!**

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The Magdalene Sisters: Women's Oppression and the Irish Clericalist State

The following article is reprinted from Spartacist Ireland No. 3 (Spring/Summer 2003), newspaper of the Spartacist Group Ireland, section of the International Communist League.

One of the most powerful and popular films screened recently in Ireland was *The Magdalene Sisters*, which portrays the inhuman brutality and degradation women suffered as prisoners in one of the many Magdalene "laundries" run by

SPARTACIST IRELAND

the Catholic church from the early 19th century until 1996. Director Peter Mullan was inspired to make the film after seeing the powerful Channel 4 documentary on the laundries, *Sex in a Cold Climate*. The Vatican, which admits no wrongdoing, condemned the film as slanderous and tried to suppress it. Despite this, the film won the Venice Film Festival's Golden Lion award.

Approximately 30,000 mostly young and poor women were forcibly sent to these church prisons because they were considered "fallen women." The four protagonists of the film depict reasons women were incarcerated in the laundries: Margaret is raped by a cousin, Bernadette (an orphan) is considered too flirtatious, Rose and Crispina each has a child outside wedlock. Rose has her baby ripped from her arms only hours after giving birth and Crispina is later driven insane by her brutal treatment in the laundry and her separation from her son. There are also many older women who had spent most of their lives there. Women are forced to slave from early morning to evening in the profit-making laundries. Sister Bridget is repeatedly shown greedily counting the money. The women are beaten, degraded and suffer sexual abuse. All this that they might do penance for their "sins"!

The women were imprisoned not only by the walls of the laundries, but also through rejection by their families and society. In one scene in the film, Margaret has an opportunity to escape, but doesn't because she knows she has nowhere to go. When one of the other women does manage to escape, her father brings her back to the laundry and beats her. After Bernadette eventually escapes, she is terrified of being reimprisoned when she sees cops and nuns on the street.

Mary Norris recently described her experience in a Magdalene laundry in Cork: "Plenty of people will think the events in the film have been exaggerated to make

For the Separation of Church and State!

Above left: Women were forced to slave in brutal conditions in Magdalene laundries, now depicted in new movie (above right).

it more dramatic. But I tell you, the reality of those places was a thousand times worse. There's a scene in which a girl is crying in the dormitory and another goes over to her bed to comfort her. That could never have happened. You weren't allowed any private conversation. "Again, in the film the girls get glimpses of the outside world and even ordinary people who don't live in the laundries. In reality, we were totally incarcerated. You could see nothing except sky."

—*Irish Independent*, 8 March

It was not the Catholic church alone that was responsible for these institutions but the state as well. In *The Politics of Irish Social Policy 1600-1990*, Frederick W. Powell talks about state involvement with the Magdalene laundries:

"The incarceration of these women, especially of women who had more than one child outside marriage (some of them women who had been deserted and could not legally remarry), was proposed by the Commission on the Relief of the Sick and Destitute Poor in 1927 and, writes Powell 'by 1932 an arrangement had been established between the local authorities and the sisters-in-charge of Magdalene asylums in Dublin and elsewhere for the containment of "this more intractable problem"."

—*The Irish Times*, 1 May 1999

Mary Norris was taken away from her unmarried mother by the Irish state: "A car drew up and a police officer and a child protection officer got out and told my mother they'd come to take us away as she was a bad example" (*Irish Independent*, 8 March). The role of the state in helping maintain these prisons is also shown in a scene in *The Magdalene Sisters* where the cops escort the young women through the local town in a "Corpus Christi" procession.

Clericalist Capitalist State: Enemy of Women

The Magdalene laundries were merely the tip of the iceberg of the crimes perpetrated against women and children by the Catholic church and the Irish clericalist state. As many as 300,000 children were locked in "industrial schools" where they were denied an education and forced to do manual work for no pay—slave labour—with the profits of their labour going to the church. From the 1940s to 1970s,

a horrific medical procedure was carried out on pregnant women who would otherwise have had a caesarean birth. They were forcibly, and often without their knowledge or consent, subjected to an operation known as symphysiotomy, where the cartilage junction of the pubic bone was sawed through in order that the pelvis would "open like a hinge" during childbirth. As a consequence many women were crippled and condemned to a life of incredible pain and suffering. Expressing the Catholic-dominated medical profession's rationale for this inhuman butchery, Dr. Alex Spain argued that if caesarean births were carried out, "The results will be contraception, the mutilating operation of sterilisation, and marital difficulty" (*Irish Examiner*, 17 April 2001). Women were simply seen as vessels for making babies.

In addition to all this, there were the horrendous consequences of the church's "normal" ideological brainwashing. As prominent biologist and staunch atheist Richard Dawkins aptly noted in an interview with *The Dubliner* magazine (September 2002):

"Regarding the accusations of sexual abuse of children by Catholic priests, deplorable and disgusting as those abuses are, they are not so harmful to the children as the grievous mental harm in bringing up the child Catholic in the first place. I had a letter from a woman in America in her forties, who said that when she was a child of about seven, brought up a Catholic, two things happened to her: one was that she was sexually abused by her parish priest. The second thing was that a great friend of hers at school died, and she had nightmares because she thought her friend was going to hell because she wasn't Catholic. For her there was no question that the greatest child abuse of those two was the abuse of being taught about hell. Being fondled by the priest was negligible in comparison."

The popularity of *The Magdalene Sisters* is an indication that many people have family members or know someone who was incarcerated in one of these prisons. The timing of the film also intersected outrage over a series of other scandals in the Catholic church, from the brutality dished out to children in "indus-

trial schools" to the scores of cases of sexual abuse inflicted by priests, which sparked protests outside churches last year. Because of these protests and widespread outrage against the church hierarchy as well as some reforms in recent years, many people think that the role of the Catholic church in Ireland has fundamentally changed, that things like the Magdalene laundries are merely historical excesses. Indeed, the Irish bourgeoisie has for a number of years attempted to cultivate the image of Ireland as a modern, secular state. Despite some important but limited and reversible reforms—and the fact that many people no longer listen to church rules, especially regarding sexuality—Ireland remains a vicious clericalist state where there are strong ties between the state and the church.

Condoms were only legalised in 1985. Divorce (only legalised in 1997) is difficult to obtain. While homosexuality ceased to be a criminal offence in 1993, gays are beset by anti-gay bigotry on a daily basis. Meanwhile, abortion is still banned.

The Catholic church controls 93 percent of the schools (another 6 percent are run by the Church of Ireland) as well as most of the hospitals. In the budget for 2000, the government proposed to "individualise" the tax bands in order to encourage married women to enter the labour force but was met with howls of indignation by the bishops and backed down. The government has made sure that the church's massive wealth will be barely dented by compensation claims by people who suffered in the "industrial schools": a "secret" deal was arranged so that the religious orders will have to pay

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For a Socialist Republic of United Kurdistan!

The Kurdish People and the U.S. Occupation of Iraq

The following is an edited presentation by Workers Vanguard Editorial Board member Bruce André at a Spartacist League/Spartacus Youth Club public educational in Berkeley on May 3.

Colonial occupation of a country always reinforces and feeds on everything that is most reactionary in that society. We are seeing that rule of history played out in Iraq today under the U.S. colonial occupation. Islamic fundamentalists calling for an Islamic republic are on the march in the south, Baghdad is swarming with vermin backed by the Pentagon or the CIA, maneuvering for a share of the country's wealth. All this against the backdrop of the devastation of the country's industry and infrastructure by 12 years of starvation sanctions, massive U.S. bombing, and finally widespread looting which U.S. troops allowed to go on while they raced to secure the oil fields.

Meanwhile, ethnic and religious conflicts are threatening to erupt in all-sided communalist slaughter. In Kurdistan in the north, in towns seized by the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), both of which are operating under U.S. command, thousands of Arabs have been driven from their homes. Human Rights Watch called the expulsions a violation of Article 3 of the Geneva Convention on war crimes, which prohibits forced population transfers. Arabs in Mosul demonstrated, chanting not only "U.S. Out!" but also "Kurds Out!" U.S. troops fired into the crowds, killing 17 people in two days. The Turkmen minority in that city feels so threatened by Kurdish forces that many are calling for Turkish military intervention. One aid worker declared, "We are going from one war to another" (*Washington Post*, 17 April).

These ethnic conflicts are the legacy of British imperialist conquest following the collapse of the Ottoman Empire in World War I. The British deliberately created a country divided against itself, with the Shi'ites in the south and Kurds in the north lorded over by the same Sunni Muslim elites who had ruled under the

Ottomans. Decades of rule by bourgeois-nationalist regimes further deepened ethnic divides. Saddam Hussein, whose Ba'ath Party came to power in the 1960s with U.S. support, carried out a program of "Arabization," in which Kurds, Turkmen and Assyrians were driven from the oil-producing regions around Mosul and Kirkuk. Today there are 300-400,000 displaced Kurds who wish to return to their homes in Kurdistan. A PUK commander in Kirkuk province declared: "We want it orderly, but the Arab settlers must go."

in other countries to seek independence. This is especially true of Turkey, which since the mid-1980s has been waging a war of extermination—backed by the U.S. and Germany—against that country's oppressed Kurdish minority and against the Turkish Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK). Actually they changed their name last year to KADEK, the Congress for Freedom and Democracy—that name tells you a lot about where they're heading politically—but some party leaders have continued to use the initials PKK,

that since the 1991 Gulf War against Iraq, Iraqi Kurdistan has been essentially autonomous as a result of the "no fly zone" in the north of the country enforced by U.S. warplanes. Actually, that experience could serve as a textbook example of how petty-bourgeois nationalism adds up to betrayal and defeat. After siding with the U.S. in the 1991 war against Iraq, the KDP and the PUK launched an uprising at the call of the CIA's "Voice of Free Iraq." But the promised aid from Washington never materialized and the

Kurdish nationalists were left to the tender mercies of Saddam Hussein, who drove hundreds of thousands of Kurds from their homes. The KDP and PUK leaders then looked to Turkey for support, helping to hunt down and kill Turkish PKK militants who had sought refuge in Iraqi Kurdistan. By the mid '90s the KDP and PUK were at each other's throats over how to divvy up the profits from smuggling Iraqi oil to Turkey. The PUK got Iran to send in troops on its side, so the KDP invited Saddam Hussein to send in his tanks, turning the dirty nationalist feud into a renewed war between Iran and Iraq, paid for with Kurdish blood.

And the decade of the 1990s was merely the most recent chapter in the long history of petty-bourgeois Kurdish nationalists sacrificing the Kurdish national struggle for illusory support from the imperialists or their regional lackeys, who invariably end up dumping the nationalist leaders and slaughtering their people. The KDP was formed in 1946 by Mullah Mustafa Barzani, the embodiment of the treachery visited

upon the Kurdish people by their supposed leaders. Barzani started his political career during WWII pledging blind obedience to the British, "whatever your orders may be" (David McDowall, *A Modern History of the Kurds* [1996]). The British responded by driving Barzani and his followers out of Iraq. When a revolutionary wave swept Iraq in 1958, Barzani launched another Kurdish revolt, but he made an offer to the Ba'ath Party to call a cease-fire if they came to power. The Ba'ath Party took power in a counterrevolutionary coup and profited from Barzani's cease-fire to attack the Kurds.

Barzani then got support from an unholy alliance of the CIA, the Israeli Mossad and the Shah of Iran. In return, Barzani helped the Iranians by holding back the Kurdish struggle in Iran. When leaders of the KDP of Iran finally refused to continue this suicidal policy in 1967, Barzani began hunting them down and turning them over to the Shah. One of them was executed by Barzani and then handed over to the Iranians, who publicly displayed the body in towns throughout Iranian Kurdistan as a warning to others.

Meanwhile, in 1979 the Iranian KDP hailed Khomeini's so-called Islamic Revolution. They weren't alone, by the way. Virtually the entire left internationally, except our tendency, hailed Khomeini. The reformist Socialist Workers Party in this country is currently running a three-part series in the *Militant* holding up the so-called Islamic Revolution in Iran as an



April 28: Under guns of U.S. military, Iraqis protest U.S. occupation outside Palestine Hotel in Baghdad.

Even through the distorting lens of this country's capitalist media, which parrots every lie put out by Washington, one can see the widespread distrust and anger at the U.S. colonial occupation among the Iraqi population. However, one place in Iraq where there are no doubt widespread illusions in the U.S. occupation is among Kurds in Kurdistan. Kurds were a special target of terror by Saddam Hussein—as many as 100,000 are thought to have been massacred—in order to ensure unquestioned control by the Ba'ath regime of the vast oil reserves located in Kurdistan. The petty-bourgeois nationalists at the head of the KDP and the PUK hoped that their alliance with Washington would win them some form of independent rule in Iraqi Kurdistan and a share of the oil. Unfortunately for them, it's not going to work out that way. Washington's claim to act as an ally of the Kurdish people is nothing but cynicism and hypocrisy. The U.S. imperialists—in fact, all the imperialist powers—are dead set against any expression of Kurdish national rights.

The 25 to 30 million Kurdish people in the Near East constitute the largest nation in the world without a state; it stretches from eastern Turkey, through a portion of Syria, across northern Iraq and into Iran (with some Kurds also scattered in the Caucasus). What the imperialists fear—and the local powers as well—is that any serious concession to Kurdish nationalism in Iraq could destabilize the whole oil-rich region by inspiring Kurds

which I will do as well in this talk. Some 37,000 people have been killed and several thousand villages in Turkish Kurdistan have been turned into ghost towns. The Turkish bourgeoisie is so intent on stamping out any hint of Kurdish separatism that for years speaking Kurdish in public was outlawed and Kurdish people were officially referred to as "mountain Turks." Today the U.S. invasion of Iraq has prompted the Ankara regime to reimpose a de facto state of emergency in Turkish Kurdistan. Tanks line the streets; cars are pulled over and searched. Many trade unionists and antiwar protesters have been arrested and beaten.

Petty-Bourgeois Nationalism: Dead End for Kurds

Like all petty-bourgeois nationalists, the KDP and PUK have a long history of looking for allies among the local capitalist powers and their imperialist godfathers. To see where this strategy gets you, take a look at the Palestinians. Under the leadership of the petty-bourgeois nationalists of the PLO, even the politically sophisticated Palestinian people have been simply led from one massacre to another—not just by the racist Zionist butchers but also by supposed allies like the king of Jordan. Today, even as the Zionists gun down Palestinians on a daily basis, the PLO acts as their police auxiliaries in the Occupied Territories.

As evidence of Washington's good graces, Kurdish leaders point to the fact



Spartacist 1984 statement "For a Socialist Republic of United Kurdistan!" in Turkish and Kurdish.

example of anti-imperialist struggle. To get an idea of what it meant for the left to support Khomeini, imagine if Osama bin Laden and the guys who flew those planes into the World Trade Center took state power. You get the picture? The International Socialist Organization (ISO) hailed Khomeini's Islamic Revolution with the headline: "The Form, Religious—The Spirit, Revolution" (*Socialist Worker*, January 1979). They went on to hail the *mujahedin* who fought with the CIA against the Red Army in Afghanistan. This pamphlet that the ISO sells on its lit tables, *The Prophet and the Proletariat*, explains how reactionary Islamic fundamentalists like the cutthroats in Algeria who murder unveiled women are actually "anti-imperialists." In Iranian Kurdistan, the groups who came together to form the Komala/Communist Party of Iran also supported the mullahs. Khomeini wasted no time in turning on his leftist and Kurdish supporters, slaughtering some 30,000 Kurds by early 1984.

During the Iran-Iraq War of 1980-88, the KDP got support from Iran while the PUK, which had split off a few years previously, made a cease-fire deal with Saddam Hussein. But in 1983, the fortunes of the Kurds changed radically because Saddam Hussein got a visit from a U.S. envoy—none other than today's defense minister, Donald Rumsfeld—who informed him that the U.S. was going to throw its support to him against Iran. Now, with arms and other assistance pouring in from the U.S. and Europe—including the technology to develop poison gas and biological weapons—Hussein felt strong enough to move against the PUK and the Kurdish population. The PUK responded by joining a united military front with the KDP and the Iranian army, which drove deep into Iraqi Kurdistan. Hussein responded by launching air bombardment and poison gas attacks, killing Kurdish civilians by the thousands.

Now, that's a pretty sordid litany of betrayals, but I subjected you to it to make a political point. I gave a talk in Paris a few months ago on the Near East—it was published recently in *Workers Vanguard* (see "A Marxist Perspective on the Near East," WV No. 799, 14 March)—in which I emphasized that the Palestinian people can only achieve liberation from the terrible oppression they suffer under the Zionist jackboot if they ally their struggle with that of the working class in the surrounding Arab countries and in Israel itself. The same can be said with regard to the Kurds. It is obvious on the face of it that to win independence for the entire Kurdish nation would require the revolutionary destruction of at least four capitalist regimes—and accompanying imperialist domination—right across this strategically important region. That's what we mean by the slogan of a Socialist Republic of United Kurdistan—a united independent Kurdistan could only come about through the struggle for proletarian revolution.

That means that the motor force for the struggle for Kurdish independence is to be found in the proletariats of the countries which oppress the Kurds—the Arab, Persian and Turkish proletariats. They, in turn, must be won to actively



Lee/NY Times

February 26: Kurdish students in Sulaimaniya, Iraq, burn Turkish flag to protest threatened Turkish intervention on eve of U.S. invasion.

championing the Kurdish right of self-determination. There is no other way that one can even imagine achieving the democratic right of national self-determination for the Kurdish people. Within the nationalist framework, it's not even conceivable on an abstract level. Which is why Kurdish nationalist organizations almost never even raise the call for independence of the entire Kurdish nation. Instead, they call for things like "autonomy" for the particular piece of territory that's located in the country they're in—"federalism" for Iraqi Kurdistan is what the KDP and PUK appear to be calling for today.

The PKK and the Kurdish Question in Turkey

Unlike the other Kurdish groups, the PKK has won mass support not only among the rural population of Turkish Kurdistan but among workers in West Turkey, West Europe and elsewhere. But the PKK nationalists see the proletariat as just another sector of the "people" to be used as a means of pressuring the Ankara regime, or the Social Democrats in Germany, to grant concessions. The PKK emphatically rejects the perspective of independently mobilizing the proletariat to lead all the oppressed to carry out a socialist revolution in the Near East and in the advanced capitalist countries. Consequently, they have ended up making increasingly abject overtures to the arch-enemies of Kurdish freedom, the Western imperialists and the Turkish state. In the past, the PKK has made repeated calls on the UN, the European Union—even the U.S.—to use their good offices to resolve the Kurdish question. After his capture four years ago, PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan called on his supporters to lay down their arms.

Today, the PKK has gone so far as to embrace the U.S. colonial occupation of Iraq! The *Financial Times* (15 April) reported that a PKK leader "said the movement had shelved its ambitions for a unified state for all Kurds" and now "wants to establish a dialogue with Washington on joining its campaign of democratisation in the Middle East." A 25 April

English-language posting on the "Kurdish Observer" Web site quotes a KADEK (PKK) statement as follows: "The [U.S.] intervention will be successful only if it paves the way for improving the common values of humanity.... Therefore for [the] USA the only way is to give [an] opportunity to democratic regimes to be established and support them." The PKK's long list of democratic demands that follows that quote does not even hint at calling for the withdrawal of U.S. and other imperialist forces from the Near East—which is not surprising since the PKK looks to the imperialists as the instrument for implementing their program!

The Worker-Communist Party of Iraq/Iran (WCPI), which we intersect particularly in Canada but which has a certain base in Iraqi and Iranian Kurdistan, also published a list of democratic demands they want to see implemented in Iraq (*WPI Briefing*, 28 April). Typically for them, they simply ignore the Kurdish question. And to whom do they look to implement their demands? The WCPI calls for the withdrawal of U.S. and British forces but wants them replaced by "the intervention of the United Nations" to "safeguard free and secure conditions." From the Korean War of 1950-53 to the 1991 Persian Gulf War against Iraq, the UN is nothing but an instrument serving the interests of the great imperialist powers. The Iraqi people were starved by 12 years of economic sanctions imposed by the UN, they were bombed almost daily by U.S. warplanes, operating in the "no fly zones," and UN weapons inspectors spied on Iraq and helped ensure it was as defenseless as possible in the face of the U.S. onslaught. Now the WCPI looks to the UN to bring democracy to Iraq!

During the Cold War, when the Soviet Union faced hostile encirclement by the imperialist countries, petty-bourgeois nationalist forces like the PLO or the South African ANC were often politically and militarily backed by Moscow, giving them some room to maneuver. The PKK got a modicum of military support from Soviet-friendly Syria. After the counter-revolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union in 1991-92, however, the petty-bourgeois nationalists were left suspended in mid-air. The PLO responded by looking ever more closely to Washington to broker a deal, which has not relieved the suffering of the Palestinians one iota. In South Africa, the now bourgeois-nationalist ANC presides over a system of neo-apartheid in which the black masses are just as exploited and oppressed—by the same white ruling class—as they were under apartheid. In the very unlikely event that the PKK ever succeeded in cutting a deal with the Turkish bourgeoisie, it would simply use its new position of authority to exploit its own people and serve as Kurdish gendarmes for the Turkish state. That's the program of petty-bourgeois nationalism.

There is plenty of historical experience to show that our perspective of united

class struggle by the multinational proletariat in the Near East is not simply a pipe-dream. We ran a two-part article in WV Nos. 740 and 741 (25 August and 8 September 2000) which I would recommend in this regard; it shows the rich tradition of proletarian class struggle in the Near East in the decade and a half following WWII and gives an idea of the enormous possibilities this held out for national and ethnic minorities as well as women.

One example of united class struggle not dealt with in that article was shown in 1991 when 48,000 coal miners in the Turkish city of Zonguldak went on strike at the very moment that the Turkish government was gearing up for the U.S.-led assault on Iraq. The strike went beyond economic issues by demanding "No to the war!" Solidarity strikes occurred in Kurdish eastern Anatolia and among Turkish workers; miners reportedly raised the demand for the right of Kurds to use their own language.

The Kurds are not simply pathetic victims of repeated betrayals, although if you looked only at the history of Kurdish nationalism you might get that impression. There is a sizable Kurdish working class with a history of militant struggle in the oil fields of Kirkuk and other strategic centers. But for the most part the Kurdish proletariat is to be found outside of Kurdistan in such industrial centers as Istanbul and the mining regions of southern Turkey, as well as Baghdad—at least before it was starved by sanctions and bombed to rubble. It is in the urban centers, among the industrial proletariat, that the power exists to lead the Kurdish people to freedom.

Hundreds of thousands more Kurds are dispersed throughout West Europe together with the Turks in the coal mines, metal plants and chemical works of Germany and West Europe. In Germany, tens of thousands of Kurds are members of powerful trade unions together with their German and Turkish class brothers and sisters. Throughout Europe, immigrant workers have been the target of racist campaigns launched by the "left" no less than right-wing governments, seeking to use racism to divide the working class and demoralize it. When a cargo ship loaded with 900 Kurdish refugees ran aground off southern France two years ago, the popular-front coalition government at the time composed of Socialists, Communists and Greens threw all the Kurdish refugees into concentration camps guarded by the army. Turkish leftist and Kurdish nationalist groups, including the PKK, are banned in Germany. Even after two or three generations in the country, many of those of German or Kurdish origin cannot become German citizens under the racist citizenship laws.

Our comrades in France, Germany and elsewhere have insisted on the fact that immigrant workers are a strategic component of the proletariat. We fight for mobilizing the power of labor to block deportations and we fight for full citizenship rights for all. Immigrant workers in Germany and throughout West Europe are a living bridge between the struggle for the emancipation of the Kurds in a socialist Near East and proletarian revolution in imperialist West Europe. The key lies in forging an internationalist leadership modeled on Lenin's Bolshevik Party, which liberated the oppressed nationalities of the tsarist autocracy's "prison house of peoples" by leading the proletariat to power in the 1917 Russian Revolution.

[TO BE CONTINUED]



Reza/Sipa

Khomeini's 1979 "Islamic revolution" carried out bloody repression against Kurdish minority in Iran.

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Young Spartacus

Open Letter to Supporters of Direct Action

The following open letter by the Bay Area Spartacus Youth Club was issued on May 11.

The end of the war on Iraq and the onset of colonial occupation have spiked the momentum of the reformist-organized liberal peace movement, while driving into inaction many of those who wanted to "Stop the War." In contrast to the dominant "loyal opposition" politics, the Spartacus Youth Club built Revolutionary Internationalist Contingents at antiwar demonstrations based on the fight to

Bay Area SYC

defend Iraq against the U.S. imperialist attack and the struggle to win workers to a program of class struggle against the capitalist rulers. Also repulsed by the servile liberalism of much of the left, a substantial number of activists have been impelled towards the strategy of direct action. In conversations at breakaway marches it's become apparent that we have agreement with some supporters of direct action that the task at hand is not merely to end *this* war, but to end the system behind all wars. Our substantial differences center on the questions of what that system is and how to get rid of it.

Many of those who participate in direct actions argue that the big, docile demonstrations failed unequivocally because one cannot politely ask the government to stop waging war. Instead they assert that



Surrounded by cops, protesters against Iraq war "disrupt" San Francisco intersection. Despite their greater militancy, direct action supporters share liberals' strategy of appealing to the rulers to be more humane.

tacit supporters. So what was decisively different about this rally? It did not immediately threaten the transport of war material, since APL was not scheduled to move any cargo that day. Nor does the matter reduce to the particular brutality of the Oakland police, who at a rally in Oakland two days earlier had refrained from a single violent confrontation.

What makes the Port of Oakland fundamentally different from any corporate

all colluded well before April 7 to premeditate the cop riot, going so far as to reserve space in a port railyard to serve as a temporary cop command center, where company officials worked alongside police. Far from being an extreme incident, this collusion reflects the normal functioning of capitalist class society, where the state exists not as some neutral institution too often occupied by administrations with sundry corporate connections, but as the executive committee of the ruling class. Although governments can be venal and bloodthirsty to different degrees, they nevertheless exist to administer the capitalist state, whose sole function is to ensure the political dictatorship of the capitalist class and to safeguard the system of class exploitation.

The present international imperialist order—where advanced capitalist nation-states vie for mutually advantageous positions of economic and political hegemony in a conflict militarily dominated by the U.S.—is a product of the development of capitalist society in an era when capitalists, having thoroughly plundered their own countries, turn to the rest of the world for profit. It's vital to understand that the deadly military ventures in the service of profits, the impoverishment of working people in favor of military spending and corporate payoffs, the subordination of the so-called "third world" to the industrialized world, are not the result of some imperialist *policy*, but inalienable features of modern capitalism itself—the imperialist *system*. While this may seem evident, it is implicitly denied by the direct action strategy of targeting "corporate and gov-

ernment power" (in the words of DASW), a perspective rooted in anti-globalization ideology. In this view, poverty and war do not result from the capitalist system itself, but from malevolent, overgrown corporations and an "undemocratic" clique in Washington that simply refuses to listen to reason. This opens the door to all kinds of "solutions," from seeking to rid the world of the IMF or WTO to blockading corporate headquarters, that are based on the illusion that imperialism is a policy that can be reformed rather than a system that must be smashed.

Direct action supporters offer a range of explanations of how direct action can "unplug the war machine at its roots." DASW states that its goal is partly to "raise the economic, social and political costs of waging this war, and continue to stop business as usual until the war stops." Street occupations are considered as "clogging the arteries" of the system, forcing change. Some argue that only an effort to "take democracy to the streets" can reverse the trend against civil liberties and for war. Others paint the problem as a system of hegemony that must be answered with an assertion of freedom involving personal sacrifice—as stated by Joshua Clover, a participant in the April 7 action, "It's about stating, in terms that cannot be ignored, that one's freedom is not assigned by the guys with the guns" (*Village Voice*, April 16-22).

A seemingly more radical, but fundamentally equivalent perspective, raised by some anarchists at breakaway marches and direct actions, is the slogan "No War but the Class War." But what is meant by "class struggle" is something akin to what has transpired thus far on the streets of San Francisco and the driveways of corporations, reducing the term to mean the rebellion of the disenfranchised and discontented against the privileged, the powerful, and the cops. *This is not class war*. In fact, these explanations are all different variants of a strategy of putting pressure, *militant* pressure, on the corporations (the "war profiteers") and the government (the "warmakers") to stop the war. DASW makes this explicit in a rather sad appeal to SF mayor Willie Brown, asking that "instead of castigating the demonstrators...[he] join us in opposing the war profiteers who do business in San Francisco." A similar thrust is evident in more recent efforts to redress the April 7 attack by way of an "independent investigation" and a sufficiently diverse Citizens Police Review Board. But this operates on the illusion that the cops, an integral part of the capitalist state, can be reformed away from their mission of enforcing capitalist law and order. While the idea of reforming the police may not be pushed by all



Haitalia/SF Chronicle

Police open fire on direct action antiwar protesters at Port of Oakland, April 7.

antiwar activists must directly challenge the machine that directs the war and occupation. As Direct Action to Stop the War (DASW) states as its goal, "If the government and corporations won't stop the war, we'll shut down the warmakers!" Similarly, the anarchist zine *Slingshot* (Spring 2003) argues to "create increasing levels of chaos and disruption" to force the government to "fight on two fronts at once—one of them right here at home." Some participants in recent direct actions have taken to wearing badges emblazoned with "Uproot the system behind war."

Protests and direct actions have been ongoing since the war started, and, whether in San Francisco intersections, at Chevron headquarters, or at Lockheed Martin, the pattern has been the same: protesters sit down, police cut through their lock boxes and cart them away to be cited and released. But the demonstration at the Oakland port on April 7, called to protest APL, a shipping company that transports military cargo, fell victim to an egregiously violent response from the Oakland police, who injured nine dockworkers and dozens of protesters, including two Spar-

headquarters is its role as a vital link in the chain of *capitalist production*, where capitalist exploitation occurs in its rawest form, and thus where profit is generated. The capitalists harbor an ultimate fear that this chain might be broken by organized workers stopping work as a political act; the cops' deliberate targeting of this protest had the character of a pre-emptive strike against any potential union action. The power to shut down production and bring the whole economic system to a grinding halt invests workers with inordinate social power vastly out of proportion to their numbers. This is effectively ignored by direct action activists blockading and otherwise disrupting corporate headquarters—inasmuch as such actions do not stop the flow of profits (there is no production in suburban corporate offices) it can only be a mere annoyance to the capitalist bosses.

The police attack of April 7 underscores the role of the state in enforcing the capitalist order, thus illustrating in high resolution the inner workings of the capitalist system behind this and all imperialist wars. The shipping companies, the Oakland city government and the police

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direct action supporters, the fact remains that direct action reduces to the idea that if only the system's everyday functioning could be disrupted and destabilized enough, the rulers would have no choice but to accede to our demands.

Thus, in a fundamental way, there is a congruence between the strategy of the liberal peace movement—pushed by the craven reformists of the ISO, ANSWER/WWP, RCP/NION, etc.—which begs the capitalists to be nicer to the people of the world, and the program of direct action advocates. They each seek in their own way to pressure the rulers to cease their imperialist aggression. A break from liberal docility does not in itself represent a break from the liberal program of capitalist reform. A strategy looking to the ruling class itself as the instrumentality for change (in this case, through militant pressure) is incapable of overthrowing the ruling class. And the political consequence of looking to the rulers, however indirectly, is to deflect focus from the system of capitalism itself, therefore standing as an obstacle to effective struggle against American imperialism. The problem, of course, is that as long as capitalism is around, we'll continue to suffer through imperialist wars.

Workers, in a position where what they produce is appropriated by the capitalists for their own individual profit, have a unique historic interest in eliminating capitalist exploitation by overthrowing capitalist property relations. This renders the working class the *only* force with the potential power to smash capitalism. The real meaning of class war lies precisely in the mobilization of workers to that end. The only means to mobilizing such power is to fight against the false consciousness perpetuated by their present misleadership and win workers to a revolutionary program.

Protesters are to be commended for bringing an antiwar message to the ports, but the fact remains that nothing was shut down as a result of the protest. An instance of real class struggle would have come about if the dockworkers had taken the elementary step of shutting down the port in response to the cop attack. This did not happen. Why? Because their union, the ILWU, is misled by a bureaucracy whose allegiance is to the capitalist order. An illustration of this was the union leaders' determination to load military cargo last fall, thus facilitating the war drive against Iraq, even as the union was locked out by the shippers and under threat of government attack.

Any talk of class war or revolutionary struggle is utterly empty outside of a perspective that seeks to mobilize the social power of labor in a revolutionary direction. In the context of imperialist war, a central aspect in the struggle for revolutionary consciousness is the fight to rally the working class actively against the capitalist warmakers. That was the content of our fight for workers to take up the defense of Iraq against U.S. imperialist attack without offering the slightest bit of political support to Saddam Hussein, a position rejected by many anarchists. The most favorable outcome for the working and oppressed masses of the world in the recent conflict (and those looming ahead) would have been the defeat of U.S. imperialism. American workers could contribute to such a defeat only insofar as they employ class struggle tactics against American imperialism at home in siding with those in Iraq fighting against the invaders. Any refusal to fight for the defense of Iraq is nothing other than a capitulation to those whose "opposition" to war is subordinate to allegiance to the American ruling class—for example, those who preach that "peace is patriotic" or those who hail the "antiwar" Democrats that fight for American imperialist interests every bit as much as the Republicans.

To win workers to a class struggle perspective it is necessary to draw the direct connection between the rulers' war on Iraq, their "war on terror" and the biparti-



Young Spartacus
UC Berkeley, April 12: At united-front protest against ROTC military recruiters, SYC calls for break with Democratic Party of racism and war.

san attack on labor, blacks and immigrants. A concrete example is our recent campaign for union defense, in the Bay Area and elsewhere, of those activists arrested protesting the war. In advancing this campaign, we sought to win labor to take a side in the war. It is incumbent upon revolutionaries to tell the truth, to illuminate to the workers all of the malignancies of American capitalism—its inherent need for war, unemployment, poverty; its dependence upon women's subordination to the patriarchal family; its natural interest in restricting the level of mass education and culture. Our task is to organize workers to fight these malignancies.

In mobilizing the multiracial American working class, especially the heavily black longshore union, the question of

obstacle to a revolutionary working class lies in illusions of a commonality of interests between the workers and their exploiters. In the unions this is fomented by the misleaders' promotion of the Democratic Party as the "friends of labor." Democrats are continually pushed as a lesser evil, and union leaders have in the recent past cozied up to liberal Oakland mayor Jerry Brown, who repaid their support with projectiles. It is necessary to drive home the point that what's wrong with the Democrats is not so much that they generally advocate anti-working-class policies, but that they necessarily oppose workers' interests because they are a party of capitalism, of the class enemy. On February 9, 2002, a demonstration initiated by fraternal groups of the Spartacist League, and built in part by

Strike by longshoremen and seamen in 1934 shut down port, sparked San Francisco general strike. Unleashing power of labor requires class-struggle leadership of unions.



black oppression is central. This country has depended on black oppression from its inception, and the legacy of slavery, most obviously expressed today in the criminalization of the black population by the "war on drugs" and "war on crime," persists as a central characteristic of American class society. Black oppression is the bedrock of American capitalism. It is the crucial mechanism of the capitalists' divide and conquer strategy for domination over the whole of the working class. The multiracial working class cannot be mobilized in pursuit of its historic tasks unless it transcends racial and other divisions in *united class struggle* against black oppression and the capitalist order that sanctifies it. On the docks, given that many of the non-union port truckers are immigrants, this makes it necessary to struggle to organize port truckers and fight for full citizenship rights for all immigrants. There can be no class struggle as long as black oppression is not confronted head on—any silence on this question, which has been the rule at the recent antiwar demonstrations and direct actions, is a way of adapting to and reinforcing the existing consciousness with which the working class is bound to capitalism.

In this country at this time, the primary

the Spartacus Youth Club, rallied workers, including ILWU locals 10 and 6, to take up the defense of immigrant rights and protest against the U.S. government's attacks on working people. In a real way, this demonstration was the first that pierced through the "national unity" patriotism predominant since September 11, serving to advance working class consciousness by organizing an action where workers united across racial lines against their common class enemy. It's not a small point that it took the leadership of a revolutionary party to do this.

To break the chains binding workers to their oppressors will not always be flashy work. It entails taking every opportunity to point out the nature of the Democrats as a party of capitalism, racism and war. It takes persistent arguments among rank and file workers, and especially common action in struggle, for a clean break from the Democrats in favor of the political independence of the working class. And it will take a political fight against the bureaucratic union misleaders, the labor lieutenants of capital. Yet many on the left uncritically participated in the Democrat-sponsored antiwar rally on April 5 in Oakland, practically a get-out-the-vote rally for Barbara Lee, which was also endorsed by the ILWU. Tolerance of this class collab-

orationism only serves to cement labor's chains to the capitalist system! The Spartacus Youth Club intervened at the rally noting that the only quarrel with the war on Iraq of Barbara Lee and other "antiwar" Democrats was that it lacked the fig leaf of UN participation. We also actively fought for the defense of Iraq with placards and in arguments. Spartacist supporters at the April 7 action carried a sign saying "Break with the Democrats! Build a Workers Party that Fights for Socialist Revolution!"

DASW's open letter "To the People Who Live and Work in the City of San Francisco" expresses the direct action ideal of non-hierarchical organization: "We don't all subscribe to any one philosophy, and we certainly don't all think alike, nor do we have leaders." The idea that leadership is inherently undemocratic and therefore oppressive is basic to the outlook of anarchists. In the first place, on an organizational level, nothing happens without initiative; as long as action is being taken and ideas are being fought for, then a leadership is at work. And if that leadership is not *consciously* revolutionary, then the net effect can only be the perpetuation of bourgeois ideology and the capitalist system itself. It is manifestly evident that the working class has a leadership, the pro-Democratic union officialdom, that ties it to the capitalist order. This is recognized by all. Essentially, direct action, and the anarchist ideology it borrows from, offers "democracy in action" and "affinity groups" as a substitute for a concrete strategy (i.e., a program) to overthrow capitalist rule, which requires breaking the working class from its chauvinist leadership. Putting forward "no leadership" as the alternative to misleadership is nothing but a concession to the stranglehold of bourgeois ideology, mediated through the trade union leaders and the Democrats, on workers, blacks, immigrants and all the oppressed.

The point is that direct action, though avowedly radical, has no possibility of ending capitalist war because it contains no perspective of mobilizing real social power in struggle to end capitalism. What's needed is a concerted multiracial force, democratic in decision-making but centralized and decisive in action, that fights to win the working class not just to particular positions (e.g., "No War on Iraq" or "Defend Civil Liberties") but to a program of revolutionary struggle against exploitation and all forms of oppression, to rally and lead the other oppressed sectors of society in an irreconcilable struggle to overturn capitalism and build a socialist society. Anarchists may bristle at the words, but this requires a revolutionary vanguard party. The fight for such a party is the task ahead of the communists of the Spartacist League and Spartacus Youth Clubs, who struggle toward a time when all revolutionaries unite on the basis of a common program to defend and extend what comrades of the past have won and to drive forward in the fight to eliminate capitalism and its imperialist wars once and for all. ■

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Ireland...

(continued from page 3)

no more than €128 million (and much of that in the form of property already transferred to church-controlled charities!), while the total bill is likely to be between €500 million and €1 billion. Thus, through our taxes the working class will end up paying for the church's crimes! A particularly surreal example of the clericalist nature of the state was the mobilisation of the Irish Army in Spring 2001 to escort the alleged "sacred relics" of St. Therese of Lisieux around the country in a primitive ritual at the behest of the church. **For the separation of church and state!**

Catholicism has been one of the main defining aspects of Irish nationalism: historically, it was religion, more so than language or racial differences, which distinguished the Irish from their British colonial overlords. Religious reaction and sectarian division are key to the maintenance of capitalist exploitation and oppression throughout Ireland. The identification of religion with national identity was deliberately encouraged by the Irish bourgeoisie after independence in order to tie the working class to their exploiters and to regiment the population

it. Think Labour has changed? On the question of abortion, Labour's delegate conference in 2001 passed a motion for the "right to choose," but this position was overturned by the Labour leadership. In the leadership election last year, Eamon Gilmore (who lost) was the only one of the four candidates who claimed to have a "pro-choice" position.

Last year the government carried out a reactionary referendum on abortion, attempting to overturn the X Case. We called for a no vote because if the referendum passed it would have eliminated even the possibility of pregnant women who were suicidal obtaining abortions and it would have emboldened the reactionaries, making the fight for women's rights of any sort more difficult. Even though the referendum was defeated, abortion is still banned. At the same time, thousands of Irish women continue to travel to Britain at significant expense every year for abortions. And the health of many of these women is endangered by the abortions being carried out at a later stage of pregnancy.

The main leftist opposition to the referendum was the Alliance for a No Vote (ANV), led by Labour activists like Ivana Bacik and made up of reformists like the Socialist Workers Party (SWP),

the SWP recently revised their "Where We Stand" column, removing the section which called for "free contraception and free, legalised abortion and the right to divorce; the complete separation of church and state, an end to church control over schools and hospitals; an end to discrimination against gays and lesbians." For the SWP, building an alliance with the Catholic bishops, Labour and the Greens is more important than the fight for abortion rights and against women's oppression.

As we exposed in *Spartacist Ireland* No. 2 (Autumn/Winter 2002), "Socialist Party spits on abortion rights." Socialist Party leader Peter Hadden defended the Socialist Party's councillor in Omagh, Johnny McLaughlin, who voted for an anti-abortion motion in the council: "We have never insisted on support for a pro-choice position as a condition of membership of our party." Fighting against women's oppression, a strategic question for revolutionaries in Ireland, is of no importance for the Socialist Party.

The *Socialist Worker* review of *The Magdalene Sisters* (7-20 November 2002) further exposes their reformism. While referring to the relationship between women's oppression and private property and recognising the continued influence of the church in society, the SWP push the fantasy that the clericalist state can be purged of its cruel elements short of a socialist revolution and put forward the example of Portugal. "When the Catholic dictatorship fell in Portugal in 1974, there was a process of sanieamento to clear out all those who were implicated in the cruelty of the regime. We are still in great need of a sanieamento in Ireland."

In fact there was a revolutionary situation in Portugal in 1974, where the working class could have taken power. A revolutionary party was necessary to organise the working class independently of the bourgeoisie and to fight to take power in its own name, for socialist revolution. However, the workers were tied by their social-democratic and Stalinist misleaders to an alliance (popular front) with the "progressive" bourgeoisie and generals. One result of the blocking of the possibilities for proletarian revolution is that abortion is still banned in Portugal today. In January 2002 there was a mass trial in Portugal of women accused of being involved with a clandestine abortion clinic. The nurse who ran the clinic was sentenced to eight and a half years in prison. What is needed, in Ireland as in Portugal and elsewhere, is not merely reforming the worst excesses of the Catholic church and the state, but a socialist revolution which sweeps away the whole system of capitalist exploitation and oppression.

For Women's Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!

The Magdalene laundries were a cruel aberration, but they played a real role in

*I was an unmarried girl
I'd just turned twenty-seven
When they sent me to the sisters
For the way men looked at me.
Branded as a jezebel,
I knew I was not bound for
Heaven
I'd be cast in shame
Into the Magdalene laundries.*

* * *

*These bloodless brides of Jesus,
If they had just once glimpsed
their groom,
Then they'd know, and they'd
drop the stones
Concealed behind their rosaries.
They wilt the grass they walk
upon.
They leech the light out of a
room.
They'd like to drive us down the
drain
At the Magdalene Laundries*

—From "The Magdalene Laundries" by Joni Mitchell

society to reinforce and police the "rules and morals" of the Catholic church and bourgeoisie: that a woman's place is in the family as wife, child bearer and rearer; and that sex, forbidden for the unmarried, is solely for procreation. They provided an example that all those who went against the "morals" of the church would be punished. This is an example of how the church and the capitalist state work hand in hand to keep the working class and oppressed in line.

Organised religion is one of the props of decaying capitalism, diverting discontent away from the real cause of oppression and poverty—the capitalist system of private property—with the promise of a better life after death. Hand in hand with the capitalists and landlords, the churches of many persuasions serve to enforce bourgeois morality, to maintain the subjugation of women in the family, to relegate them to the home and exclude them from participation in political and social life. It also serves to regiment the population as a whole behind capitalism.

Karl Marx clearly described the role of religion among the oppressed:

"Religious suffering is, at one and the same time, the expression of real suffering and also the protest against real suffering. Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world, and the soul of soulless conditions. It is the opium of the people. "The abolition of religion as the *illusory* happiness of the people is the demand for their *real* happiness. To call on them to give up their illusions about their condition is to call on them to give up a condition that requires illusions."

—"Introduction to a Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right" (1844)

The hold of religion on the Irish working class is so pervasive that while some



no credit

Dublin, 1950s: Women from Gloucester Street Refuge escorted by cops during Corpus Christi religious procession. "Fallen women" were often forced by Catholic church and Irish state into seclusion.

with reactionary ideology, of which anti-communism was no small part. Thus, DeValera's 1937 constitution enshrined the church's "special position" in Article 44 (repealed only in 1972). The government considers itself entitled to deport the immigrant parents of children who are Irish citizens, thus tearing families apart when it suits the state, and this position was recently upheld by the Supreme Court. **We demand full citizenship rights for all immigrants! No deportations!**

Catholic Nationalism and Labourite Reformism

The Catholic nationalism of the Irish bourgeoisie is brought into the working class by the pro-capitalist Labour Party and trade-union bureaucracy. For decades Labour leaders were members of the sinister Knights of Columbanus. In the early 1950s, Minister for Health Noël Browne attempted to introduce a limited free health programme for children and pregnant women, the Mother and Child Scheme. This provoked outrage from the bishops and the church-run medical establishment. As Browne describes in his autobiography *Against the Tide*, Archbishop John Charles McQuaid "considered the health scheme an encroachment by the state on the church's role, which he considered to be, among much else, 'to determine and to control the social attitudes of the family in the Republic, especially in the delicate matters of maternity and sexuality.'" Within months the church crushed the scheme and Browne was hounded out of the government. Labour Party leader William Norton scandalously sided with the church against Noël Browne and the Mother and Child Scheme. The Irish Trades Union Congress initially supported the Scheme but retreated once the bishops denounced

Socialist Party and Workers Solidarity Movement. The ANV, taking their cue from Labour, consciously limited their demands to maintenance of the miserable status quo (a woman can theoretically get an abortion if her *life* is in danger...but good luck finding a hospital or clinic to perform one) and obscenely presented this as defending "abortion rights" in Ireland! After the defeat of the referendum, the SWP wrote:

"We need to keep the pressure on parties such as Labour and Fine Gael to make sure that they make good on their commitment to bring in legislation—legislation that gives a liberal interpretation of the X case judgement and introduces real access to abortion rights for the women who need it."

—*Socialist Worker*,
15-28 March 2002

While the SWP want to pressure the Labour Party (and the bourgeois Fine Gael no less!) to more "liberally" interpret the restrictive *anti-abortion laws* (as though this is the way to provide "real access to abortion rights"), it is necessary to break workers from Labourism and clerical nationalism. Our aim is to bring revolutionary consciousness to the working class, including making workers conscious of the importance of fighting for **free abortion on demand!**

Last year the SWP crawled at the feet of the Labour Party in the ANV and today they crawl to both Labour and the Catholic bishops as part of the class-collaborationist Irish Anti-War Movement. Just when the prestige of the Catholic hierarchy has hit a low ebb after the recent scandals, the SWP embrace the bishops as supposed opponents of imperialist war and thereby serve to reinforce the ideological chains binding Irish workers and oppressed to the church. In order not to offend the "antiwar" bishops,

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From Death Row, This Is Mumia Abu-Jamal



Uncounted Dead

"Our boys were sent off to die with beautiful ideals painted in front of them. No one told them that dollars and cents were the real reason they were marching off to kill and die."

—Gen. Smedley Butler, 1934

It is easy for millions of Americans to believe that the Iraq war, or for that matter, any other war this century, was fought for high-sounding ideals, like freedom and democracy.

It is easy. Yet it is wrong.

In the earlier half of the 20th Century, when the U.S. invaded the Philippines, it proclaimed its duty as bringing "civilization" to the benighted peoples of the islands. There, Filipino rebels were waging an independence war against the Spaniards and were on the verge of winning their freedom. Lo and behold, the U.S. stepped in, and proclaimed that they too were on the side of "freedom." Spain, reading the handwriting on the wall, rather quickly capitulated. Under the fog of "freedom," however, lay other motives, ones expressed openly by Indiana Senator Albert Beveridge, who announced:

"The Philippines are ours forever...and just beyond the Philippines are China's illimitable markets.... The Pacific is our ocean."

[Source: Howard Zinn, *A People's History of the United States* (1995), p. 306.]

The Filipinos clearly had other ideas, for they had just ended a war for independence, after all, with one waning empire. They were in no mood to join another. But the Americans, using their media and their politicians to promote "civilization" as their "mission," brought in troops, who were ordered to "Burn all and kill all." The U.S. military killed over 600,000 Filipinos to "civilize" them. The great American novelist, Mark Twain, so outraged by the Ameri-

can actions there, joined the Anti-Imperialist League, became its Vice-President, and would later exclaim:

"I have seen that we do not intend to free but to subjugate the Philippines and so I am an anti-imperialist. I am opposed to having the eagle put its talons on any other land.... I have a strong aversion to sending our bright boys out there to fight with a disgraced musket under a polluted flag."

[Source: Philip Foner, *Mark Twain: Social Critic* (1958), p. 260.]

For decades the U.S. supported the corrupt and brutal Marcos Regime in Manila, where freedom was a joke and democracy an illusion. It took a broad rebellion by Filipinos to remove him from power.

The native dead from the Vietnam War rarely enters American debate, even though some 2,000,000 men, women and children lost their lives. When U.S.-backed dictatorships unleashed their CIA-trained death squads on their own people, killing hundreds of thousands since the 1970s in Central America, who among us bothered to even count these peasants? When the U.S. bombed its way into Panama in 1989 to remove Noriega (and install their own kleptocracy), thousands of Panamanians were slain during the invasion. How many? The U.S. hadn't bothered to count.

During the first Gulf War, in '91, the U.S. killed an estimated 150,000 Iraqis. But like the Panamanians, the Central Americans, the Filipinos before them, they were faceless, nameless, and largely forgotten. In U.S. military parlance, they are "collateral damage."

So too, the bombing campaign of the most recent Iraqi war was brought to you by Raytheon, and Lockheed, and the imperial press corps, complete with uniforms. They can tell you how many bombs were dropped, where they were dropped, indeed how much each bomb weighed and cost. Yet who they hit, and

how many they killed is not news. As non-Westerners, as nonwhites, they are expendable; forgettable.

Do you really think that there will be a "democratic" Iraq?

What if a majority of Iraqis want to found an Islamic state? The U.S. Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld had already announced that such a polity would be "unacceptable." "Democracy" thus may really mean, "do what the Americans want you to do." For the better part of a century, the words, "democracy," "civilization," and "freedom" have been code words for something else indeed. They have been code words for Empire. And what is Empire? It is the looting and exploitation of the world for profit. Let us return briefly to Sen. Beveridge for the flavor of the Philippines invasion and slaughter, to reflect the real reasons for that war, as well as an inkling of the latest invasion of Iraq:

"...The Philippines give us a base at the door of all the East... No land in America surpasses in fertility the plains and valleys of Luzon. Rice and coffee, sugar and coconuts, hemp and tobacco.... The wood of the Philippines can supply the furniture of the world for a century to come. At Cebu the best informed man on the island told me that 40 miles of Cebu's mountain chain are practically mountains of coal....

"My own belief is that there are not 100 men among them who comprehend what Anglo-Saxon self-government even means, and there are over 5,000,000 people to be governed.

"It has been charged that our conduct of the war has been cruel. Senators, it has been the reverse... Senators must remember that we are not dealing with Americans or Europeans. We are dealing with Orientals."

[Source: Zinn, p. 306]

This greed, this pervasive racism fueled American colonialism at the beginning of the 20th century.

Unfortunately, if you look far enough, it is with us still.

27 April 2003

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Send urgently needed contributions for Mumia's legal defense, made payable to "SEE Mumia Free," to: Social and Environmental Entrepreneurs, 20178 Rockport Way, Malibu, CA 90265.

If you wish to correspond with Jamal, you can write to: Mumia Abu-Jamal, AM8335, SCI Greene, 175 Progress Drive, Waynesburg, PA 15370.

people who suffered in the Magdalene laundries and "industrial schools" rejected religion, many continued to cling to their faith.

Women's oppression is rooted in the institution of the family and is a feature of all class societies. Friedrich Engels explained in *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* (1884) that the development of patriarchy "was the world historical defeat of the female sex. The man took command in the home also; the woman was degraded and became a mere instrument for the production of children." The family is a key social unit for the maintenance of capitalism. For the capitalists the family provides the basis for passing on accumulated wealth, to raise the next generation of workers and to instil conservative social values and obedience to authority. It is the family—and the necessity to enforce monogamy on women to ensure that the man knows who his real heir is—which generates the "morality" codified in and reinforced by religion. As Peter Mullan noted to the Italian leftist newspaper *Il Manifesto* (8 August 2002), "The Catholic Church is not that different from the Taliban. It seems that every religion considers their enemy the young women, their sexuality, their vitality, maybe because they break the rules of patriarchal society." The Protestant fundamentalists in Northern Ireland vie with the Catholic church in reaction: the British 1967 act decriminalising abortion does not apply in Northern Ireland.

We fight to raise the consciousness of the working class to see the need to fight against all oppression—to build a Leninist party, a tribune of the people. Decisions about whether to marry or not, to have children or not or who one sleeps with are individual matters and none of the government's business. *State out of the bedroom! Full democratic rights for homosexuals! For a free secular health service and free abortion on demand*, so that working-class and poor women who don't have the money can have abortions.

For women to be liberated it is necessary to overthrow the capitalist system of private property and establish a socialist, planned economy. We look to the example of the Russian Revolution of 1917 led by the Bolsheviks. The very first pieces of legislation enacted by the new Soviet government were directed at the emancipation of women: women were given the right to vote; abortion and divorce were legalised and the power of the church to control marriages, legitimise births, etc. was abolished. Insofar as they were able under the conditions of poverty, inherited social backwardness and civil war, the Bolsheviks strove towards the replacement of the nuclear family as a social/economic unit by the socialisation of household labour. They established communal dining rooms, laundries and childcare facilities and promoted the equalisation of educational and vocational opportunities.

Many of the gains were reversed following the Stalinist political counterrevolution in 1924, but the gains provided by the existence of the collectivised economy could be seen in the vital statistics in the Soviet republics in the 1970s compared to Afghanistan on the other side of the border. On the Soviet side, women were no longer imprisoned in the veil, they were literate; on the Afghan side of the border they were largely illiterate and the statistics for infant mortality and life expectancy were dramatically different on the two sides of the frontier. With capitalist counterrevolution all the old crap has returned to the former Soviet republics, where women are the first and foremost victims of the economic devastation and political reaction which accompany capitalist restoration. Only the proletariat organised as the ruling class will begin to avenge the many victims of the Magdalene laundries, as well as the untold numbers of victims of the various churches and the capitalist system of exploitation, and provide a material basis for the full liberation of women. ■

NYC...

(continued from page 12)

As we wrote in our leaflet issued following the February 2000 acquittal of the cops who killed Amadou Diallo, "There will be no end to police brutality short of the destruction of the system of capitalist exploitation and racist oppression which the cops serve as armed guard dogs." It is the multiracial American working class that has the power to shatter the bloody rule of the most violent ruling class in history. *Those who labor must rule!*

There is, however, a roadblock on the way to this fight for workers power. The existing pro-capitalist union bureaucracy's role has been to maintain exploitation and oppression by the ruling class, which controls the wealth of this society that is produced by the blood and sweat of the working masses. Thus the union misleadership seeks to divert any struggle and outrage against the current and previous rounds of layoffs, cutbacks and tax increases. What the TWU's [Transport Workers Union] Roger Toussaint, the UFT's [United Federation of Teachers] Randi Weingarten, DC 37's Lillian Roberts and other labor bureaucrats all have in store are more calls for "reforming" the racist NYPD and pleas to vote Democrats into office in the next elections. This is echoed by black politicians like Al Sharpton, who, when the city seethed with anger over the cop killing of Amadou Diallo in 1999, rushed to divert this justified anger into building illusions that this inherently oppressive capitalist police system can be reformed.

The Labor Black League champions the cause of *all* the oppressed. The "war on drugs" is a war on black people, minorities and the poor; we call for the decriminalization of all drugs. Along with the Partisan Defense Committee, we have organized militant, integrated labor-centered mobilizations in defense of black, immigrant and union rights and successfully stopped the race-terrorists of the Ku Klux Klan from holding recruitment rallies here in New York in October 1999 and other major cities. We've also participated along with the Spartacist League and the Spartacus Youth Club in citywide protests against cop terror and helped build Revolutionary Internationalist Contingents in defense of Iraq in the recent mass antiwar demonstrations.

Our job is to finish the unfinished business of the American Civil War! For black liberation through socialist revolution! The killing of Alberta Spruill and other victims of cop terror is not an aberration but standard operating procedure for the thugs in blue; concussion grenades similar to those that killed Alberta were also used against antiwar protesters and longshoremen on the Oakland docks a few weeks ago. The cops' sole purpose is to terrorize minorities and working people and increase the repressive powers of the capitalist state. Working people need a party that is based on a program of class struggle—the understanding that the interests of the working class are irreconcilably counterposed to those of the capitalist class exploiters and their political parties, be they Democrats or Republicans. *Build a workers party to fight for a workers government!* ■

Join the Labor Black Leagues!

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France...

(continued from page 12)

strengthened the hand of the bourgeois state to launch a murderous rampage with thousands of soldiers in the Ivory Coast, troops Chirac now threatens to send to Congo. At home the government used national unity to increase its racist war on immigrants with the first "charter flights" of deportations in many years. Emboldened by its success in trampling over the rights of Africans at home and abroad, the capitalist ruling class now has the organized trade-union movement in its cross hairs.

This is the biggest strike wave in this country since the powerful December 1995 strike against the attack on pensions by the Gaullist government of Juppé. It is crucial that the working class draw the lessons of 1995. The strikes then did force the right-wing government to withdraw its attack, but this was channeled into bringing to power the Jospin popular front in 1997, where the CP and SP ruled in alliance with the capitalist Chevènementistes [followers of ultra-chauvinist politician Jean-Pierre Chevènement] and Greens. Like all popular fronts—governmental alliances between workers parties and capitalist parties which rule on behalf of capital—this one did its job in attacking the interests of the workers and serving those of the capitalists and in shifting the struggles from the factory to parliament. After five years of savage attacks and racist "security campaigns"



Young women of Muslim origin march in Paris against anti-immigrant repression and for women's rights on International Women's Day, March 8.

imperative that the union movement take up the defense of its most vulnerable sector, the immigrant workers. We demand: **Stop the deportations! Vigipirate means racist state terror against immigrants! Down with Vigipirate! Full citizenship rights for all immigrants!**

The power of the French proletariat is demonstrated in these massive strikes which have brought France to a halt, paralyzing transportation and disrupting the flow of profits into the bosses' coffers. Our class brothers and sisters in Italy, Greece, Spain, Germany and Britain have also engaged in powerful strikes to defend themselves from ruin. If militancy and self-sacrifice alone were sufficient to

revolutionary situation created by that strike immeasurably contributed to restabilizing the bourgeois order in West Europe in the early '70s. This in turn helped open the way to the new cold war of the 1980s against the Soviet degenerated workers state, unleashing the forces of capitalist counterrevolution which finally destroyed the USSR in 1991-92. This catastrophic defeat for the world working class ushered in a new world order of interimperialist rivalries and neo-colonial wars of depredation, in which the capitalist governments no longer feel constrained to maintain the "welfare state," centrally pensions and health care. To sweep away this capitalist system and to eliminate racism and war, a Leninist-Trotskyist vanguard party must be built to link together all forms of resistance to immiseration and oppression and to create an egalitarian socialist society here and internationally.

It is notable that in contrast to the December 1995 strikes contingents from the private sector have already come out in protest. However, the strike has remained concentrated in the public sector where the workers have citizenship rights and more protection against layoffs and victimization. This underscores that to bring out the private sector it is vital for the whole proletariat to take up the defense of its more vulnerable class brothers and sisters and their children. That means opposing the racist cops who daily terrorize the ghettos, not having police "unions" obscenely parade in workers demonstrations, as they did on May 13. The cops are not workers but the guard dogs of capitalist private property against any encroachment by the workers on the capitalists' rights to exploit us and oppress minorities. **Cops, prison and security guards, out of the unions!**

Although presently a small organization, the LTF has shown the way in exemplary actions in defense of immigrants. In a statement protesting the deportations, we warned that "this 'war on terror' is designed to marginalize the most vulnerable workers, to weaken the working class by dividing it between European and immigrant, the better to carry out assaults on the *entire* workers movement and its gains wrested through decades of class struggle." We said that the government

"counts on the time-worn 'divide and conquer' scheme of racism. We better prove them wrong! The powerful trade unions across Europe should stand by their most vulnerable class brothers and sisters. Give every man and woman in the hellish detention centers and squats a union membership card and mobilize the power of the organized working class in their defense!"

Left groups like the LCR who were busy saluting the "antiwar" credentials of the Chirac government did nothing to mobilize against these deportations. Today they are cynically yelling "general strike." A general strike, bringing the country to a grinding halt, poses the question of who shall rule: the workers or the capitalists. With their support for the Gaullist government these treacherous "leftists" have already cast their vote. In contrast, we have fought down the line against the reactionary "national unity" front. During the war we argued

for mobilizing the working class in class struggle against the French imperialist rulers as the way to defend Iraq against the neocolonial U.S. imperialist slaughter. We fight to organize the workers movement in this country against the predatory imperialist schemes of this ruling class abroad. **French troops out of Africa! U.S. and allied troops out of the Near East!**

Workers must beware of their present struggles being derailed again into a new popular front. This is the political perspective of the LCR. Behind its calls for a general strike stand the LCR's repeated statements that it is ready to be part of a so-called "government of the left," i.e., a new bourgeois popular front. (Indeed their comrades in Brazil have already done so with their own minister in the Lula popular-front government—an alliance with the arch-capitalist and racist party of textile magnate José Alencar Gomes da Silva.) The LCR, which mobilized a goon squad to defend Chevènement against the indignation of undocumented immigrants and anarchists in the March 5 Paris antiwar demonstration, has already shown in action that they are willing to do the dirty work necessary for such governmental positions.

In contrast to the rest of the left, Lutte Ouvrière stood out for its refusal to call for a vote to Chirac during last year's elections and also again during the war for not signing its name to chauvinist appeals to the Chirac government. But, as we noted during last year's elections, LO's opposition to both Jospin's "plural left" and later to voting for Chirac was vitiated by its refusal to oppose Vigipirate and its explicit support for reactionary cop mobilizations in November 2001. Today, LO has a strong implantation among the teachers in the Seine Saint-Denis district, which is heavily immigrant. These teachers have been waging strike action for weeks against the government's attacks on education, which if implemented would be particularly devastating for immigrant and minority youth. While LO argues that teachers must be mobilized against these attacks, it echoes the government as well as the SP and CP in their campaign to forcibly "assimilate" youth of immigrant origin by expelling young girls for wearing the *hijab* [Muslim headscarf] in public schools. One can hardly "assimilate" into a society that offers no jobs and only police repression!

The indifference of the French left and trade-union bureaucrats to racial oppression flows directly from their program of class collaboration. Despite its statements that workers' emancipation will be the work of the workers themselves, LO, far from offering a program for the workers to emancipate themselves from their traitorous misleaders, simply calls on the workers to be more militant in order to make the bureaucrats fight, arguing that "if part of the workers who were mobilized on May 13 continued the next day, it would put pressure on the union federations to continue" (editorial in LO's factory bulletins, 5 May).

Appealing to the justified anger of many workers against the reformist trade-union misleaders and their "far-left" supporters, the Confédération Nationale du Travail (CNT) claims to be building a new, "revolutionary" trade union. To substitute the idea of a "revolutionary union" or a "syndicalist party" only further fractures the labor movement. We need big, powerful, industry-wide unions which embrace the majority of the proletariat as a class. But to move beyond the framework of economic struggle at the shop-floor, to politically mobilize for the overturn of the inherently unjust capitalist order and to build a society where the workers rule requires forging a new and authentically communist party. The LTF is dedicated to building this party as a revolutionary *tribune of the people* which will fight every injustice, every act of discrimination, as part of a revolutionary internationalist struggle to bring the workers to power. Join us! ■



Paris: LTF at February 15 antiwar march with banner reading: "Down With Campaign of Racist Terror! For Class Struggle Against the French Capitalists! Defend Iraq Against Imperialist Attack!"

under Jospin, Le Pen's fascists got a massive vote and the Gaullists came back to power with a vengeance, and with an even more drastic assault on pensions.

Every gain the government wants to take back today is one the workers movement wrested through hard class struggle. It's going to take more such struggle and a *political* fight to hold on to past conquests and win new ones. Against the sectarian division of the working class we need to unite all the workers as one solid fist: **one industry, one union**. We need solid industry-wide strikes which **shut down production**. The government's challenge that our strikes are "illegal" is an ominous prelude to unleashing the forces of capitalist law and order against strikers and moving in scabs. We need **picket lines which mean "don't cross!"** Government experts whine that we don't understand the demographics and costs of the looming pension and social security crisis. We say, we've created the wealth of this society and we won't pay for the crisis of the inherently unjust capitalist system. The owners who have made millions in profits off our sweat should pay. We demand **a sliding scale of wages and hours: 30 hours work for 40 hours pay!** To combat the "divide and conquer" schemes which pit older workers against youth and French-born against immigrant, we must **organize the unorganized and the unemployed into the unions!** The cutting edge of the government's attempt to fracture the unity of the working class is the toxic anti-immigrant campaign. It is

combat the injustices of the capitalist system, then all of Europe and indeed the whole world would be a society of justice and equality. Instead it's a world of imperialist war, racism, sexism and attacks on the living standards of the working people by profit-gouging capitalists. The problem is essentially one of leadership. Even to secure the minimal needs of the workers posed by the strike (pensions, wages, employment), the point of departure is a clear understanding that the workers must stand politically independent from and in opposition to their class enemy. This demands a break from the treacherous misleaders who subordinate the workers' interests to the French bourgeoisie, from the misleaders who exploited the unions as their springboard to support Jospin and Chirac. We need to forge **a new, revolutionary, internationalist workers party**. This is what we stand for, as the French section of the International Communist League.

It is not only the spectre of the December 1995 strikes which brought down the Juppé government that haunts the Chirac government. In its wholesale assaults against the teachers unions, the government and its minister of education, Ferry, have been on a rampage to eradicate the "spirit of May '68" in the educational system. This is an ominous threat against women's rights like co-education, abortion and divorce, which were gained in the turbulent years of class struggle that followed the May '68 general strike. The sellout then by the French CP of the pre-

Immigrants...

(continued from page 1)

prevent a quorum in a key redistricting vote that would increase Republican control of the state House of Representatives, Republicans in Washington and Texas enlisted the Department of Homeland Security in an effort to drag them back to the state.

In March, a federal appeals court ruled that the 600 prisoners held at Guantánamo had no right to challenge their detention in American courts because Guantánamo is under Cuban sovereignty! One doubts that the U.S. would allow these prisoners to appeal to the Cuban courts for their freedom. Among the detainees are at least three youth between the ages of 13 and 15. Defense Secretary Rumsfeld sneers, "They may be juveniles, but they're not on a Little League team anywhere."

All immigrants are targeted, but those who speak out politically are especially in the government's cross hairs. Farouk Abdel-Muhti, a Palestinian activist arrested by the Justice Department's new Absconder Task Force over a year ago, led a hunger strike of detainees while imprisoned in New Jersey this winter. He now languishes in solitary confinement, locked down 23 hours and 15 minutes a day in a maximum security segregation unit's "iron box" in York County Prison in Pennsylvania. Róger Calero, associate editor of the Socialist Workers Party's Spanish-language publication *Perspectiva Mundial* and a staff writer for the *Militant*, has now finally had his removal proceedings terminated after numerous protests.

Dozens of immigrants and citizens have been locked up and interrogated under "material witness" warrants. Among them is Intel software engineer Maher (Mike) Hawash, who has now been slammed with "conspiracy" charges for allegedly attempting to provide material support to Al Qaeda. His Intel co-workers have launched a "Free Mike Hawash" campaign. As his former boss, Steven McGeady, noted of Hawash, an American citizen who was born in the West Bank, "Our friend has fallen into some kind of 'Alice in Wonderland' meets Franz Kafka." He added, "You hear about this happening in other countries and to immigrants and then to American citizens. And finally you hear about it happening to someone you know. It's scary." Free Mike Hawash! Free Farouk Abdel-Muhti!

American citizens Yaser Hamdi and Jose Padilla were pronounced "enemy combatants" by Bush, denied the right to legal counsel and locked away in a military prison where they may stay for the rest of their lives—without ever having the right to a trial. While a federal court ruled that Padilla can meet with an attorney, it also upheld virtually all of the government's claims, including the president's "right" to hold indefinitely anyone for whom there is "some evidence" of being an "enemy combatant." And Padilla has yet to meet his attorney because the government is appealing the court's decision.

The Bush administration maintains that the courts have absolutely no authority to review the president's "enemy combatant" declarations, and the deprivation of rights that comes with them. The proposed Domestic Security Enhancement Act of 2003 ("Patriot II"), which calls for stripping citizenship from Americans who "provide material support" to an organization which at some time may be deemed "terrorist" by the U.S. government, would institutionalize the treatment of Padilla and Hamdi in the criminal justice system. Bush, Ashcroft, Cheney & Co. haven't merely declared themselves to be above the law—they say they are the law.

What the government is implementing is a revision of the infamous Dred Scott decision of 1857; but rather than ruling that black people have "no rights which the white man was bound to respect," the government is declaring that citizens have no rights which the government is bound to respect. The government is



9 February 2002: Oakland labor-centered mobilization in defense of immigrant rights initiated by Partisan Defense Committee and Labor Black League.

developing the "right" to disappear people, just as the tinpot dictatorships that the U.S. imperialists have placed in power and supported around the world have disappeared hundreds of thousands of leftists and union activists.

The laws, measures and decrees being enacted by the Bush administration are ultimately no different from what a military dictatorship would use against its population—suspension of civil courts on presidential command, unlimited powers of police to arrest and detain indefinitely without cause, etc. The government is seeking to make measures that were first directed against immigrants, particularly those from predominantly Muslim countries, permanent fixtures of the American "justice" system. As early as last summer, the *New York Times* (16 July 2002) noted that "the government may now view ordinary trials as more trouble than they are worth." As *Washington Post* (1 December 2002) columnist Charles Lane pointed out, "The Bush administration is developing a parallel legal system in which terrorism suspects—U.S. citizens and non-citizens alike—may be investigated, jailed, interrogated, tried and punished without legal protections guaranteed by the ordi-



U.S. citizen Maher (Mike) Hawash, detained in "anti-terror" government witchhunt, with daughter Sarrah.

nary system, lawyers inside and outside the government say."

The laws and dictates of the Bush administration mark a qualitative diminution of democratic rights. The Democrats have largely supported Bush's war on dissent. Schumer, in the words of a *Village Voice* (16 April) headline, is "Ashcroft's New Ally." To the extent that they expressed opposition to the war on Iraq, the Democrats did so by screaming that it would divert resources from the "war on terror" and "homeland security."

Indeed, much of the groundwork for Bush was laid by the Clinton administration. As Gore Vidal put it, Clinton "set in place the trigger for a police state which his successor is now happily squeezing" (*London Guardian*, 27 April 2002). Most of the immigrants held by the government are detained not under the Patriot Act but under the 1996 Immigration Act. The Antiterrorism and Effective Death Pen-

alty Act, also signed into law by Clinton in 1996, sharply undermined the right of *habeas corpus*, allowed the government to deport immigrants based on undisclosed evidence and made it a crime to support even the lawful activity of an organization labeled "terrorist" by the State Department.

Long before Bush and Ashcroft sang this refrain, Clinton ranted that those who did not support his "anti-terrorism" legislation wanted to turn "America into a safe house for terrorists." Even before the Patriot Act, nearly 300 immigrants were being held for over three years without criminal charges. The militarization of the Mexican border, intensified under Clinton and even more so under Bush since 9/11, has meant a sharp increase in the deaths of Latin Americans trying desperately to enter the country, most recently demonstrated by the deaths of 19 people who suffocated in a sealed truck in southern Texas.

Labor: Defend Immigrant Rights!

The new laws and directives that target immigrants are also aimed at black people and the whole working class. Last week, New York City cops literally used weapons of the "war on terror," lobbing a concussion grenade into the apartment of Alberta Spruill, a black city worker, and killing her. When in February NYC mayor Michael Bloomberg, with support from the Justice Department, banned an antiwar march in the name of the "war on terror," the Partisan Defense Committee issued a protest statement (see "Protest Ban on NYC Antiwar March!" WV No. 797, 14 February), declaring:

"When the longshoremen's union on the West Coast was locked in a showdown with union-busting shipping bosses, the government intervened to threaten that any strike action by the workers would be a threat to 'national security' and then brought down the slave-labor Taft-Hartley law. When New York transit workers voted to go on strike, the media screamed that they were launching a 'jihad' and the strikebreaking Taylor Law was invoked. Firefighters who lost over 300 of their comrades trying to save people in the World Trade Center are declared a 'clear and present danger to the security of the United States' in a letter signed by Republican House majority leader Tom DeLay because they are unionized!"

How far the government was willing to go was amply demonstrated on April 7, when riot-equipped cops at the Port of Oakland opened fire on antiwar protesters, longshoremen and port truckers with wooden bullets, pellet-filled "sting bags" and concussion grenades. It was no accident that the cop attack took place in front of the facilities of Stevedoring Services of America, the lead company in the union-busting attacks on the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) and the one that has been rewarded by Bush with the contract for operating the port of Umm Qasr in Iraq.

As sinister as the new measures are, what the government is actually able to get away with will be determined by the level of social struggle. That was seen not only in the 1960s but in the tumultuous labor battles of the 1930s that, in the wake of an extended period of right-wing reac-

tion, won many of the union rights workers have today. It is in the direct interest of the working class to fight the government's draconian moves.

In February 2002, the Partisan Defense Committee and Labor Black League initiated a labor-centered united-front protest in Oakland, with longshoremen at the core, in opposition to the government's anti-immigrant witchhunt and the Patriot Act and Maritime Security Act, which mandates background checks aimed at purging the waterfront of blacks, Latinos and other immigrants and at undermining union power. As we explained in "Defend Immigrants! Defend the Unions!" (WV No. 775, 22 February 2002), "For many black longshoremen, acting in defense of immigrants—including the unorganized port truckers—represented a conscious break with widespread sentiment that immigrants and blacks are competitors, not allies—a lie cultivated by the capitalist rulers and their labor lieutenants in the trade-union bureaucracy." In mobilizing for the rally, we sought to win workers to the understanding that in defending immigrants, they were defending the whole working class.

Over the last two decades, America's capitalists have secured a fabulous increase in their riches and profits through increasing the exploitation of the working class and slashing virtually all social programs benefiting the poor, particularly the black ghetto masses. America's rulers hate and fear the people. And it is in the context of increasingly glaring social inequality—and the potential for an upsurge in social struggle—that the bourgeois state is reinforcing its arsenal of repression.

More than two million jobs have been lost in the past two years. Funding for school lunches is slashed to the bone; schools, libraries, museums and firehouses are closed for lack of funds. While Bush is pushing hundreds of billions of dollars in tax cuts to the rich, new IRS regulations make it virtually impossible for poor families to avail themselves of the paltry tax break supposedly offered by the earned income credit. In New York City, billionaire Bloomberg now proposes to force even the disabled who receive public assistance into the union-busting slave-labor "workfare" scam. The prison population, overwhelmingly black and Hispanic, now stands at over two million, the highest in the world.

The capitalists' campaign of "national unity" must be punctured by the struggle of the working people and the oppressed in defense of their rights and livelihoods. This requires a fight for the class independence of the proletariat from the capitalists and their political parties. Particularly through its support to the Democratic Party, the pro-capitalist AFL-CIO bureaucracy obstructs class struggle by pushing the lie that the workers and the capitalist exploiters share common interests. Indeed, much of the labor bureaucracy, from AFL-CIO head John Sweeney on down, has backed the "war on terror," with the ILWU International leadership even proposing that the capitalists make the union a partner in the "national security" war, including against other sections of dock workers who are heavily immigrant. At a meeting before a thousand members of the AFSCME city and state workers union in Iowa last week, AFSCME leader Gerald McEntee grotesquely cheered on the Democratic Party presidential hopefuls as they assailed the Bush administration's anti-terror credentials.

Critical to a class-struggle perspective is the mobilization of labor's social power to defend immigrant rights and to fight for full citizenship rights for all immigrants. In this country, the raw exploitation of labor has always come wrapped in the envelope of racial and ethnic hostilities fomented by the capitalist rulers. Black and immigrant workers are not just victims of capitalist repression but a vital component of the multiracial working class. We seek to forge the workers party that will lead the fight not for more crumbs from the capitalists but to overthrow the entire profit system. ■

Massive Strike Wave Sweeps France

**Down With Vigipirate!
Down With
Racist Expulsions!**

**For a Multiethnic
Revolutionary
Workers Party!**

MAY 19—A strike by up to two million workers last Tuesday brought France to a virtual halt as schools and government offices were closed and public transportation and air traffic were brought to a near standstill. French workers are fighting to beat back attempts by the government of conservative president Jacques Chirac to cut retirement benefits for public employees and increase their payments into the pension system. The union leaders meant the strike to be a one-day "show of force" to back up their negotiations with the government, but the workers were not following the bureaucrats' script. Workers at many locations, voting daily in general assemblies on the shopfloor, continued the strikes, keeping the country largely tied up throughout the week.

There has been considerable public support for the strikes despite the disruption that accompanied them. Lines of tied-up traffic around Paris totaled an estimated 200 miles; the streets of the capital were filled with people walking, skating or cycling to their destinations. It is widely understood that attacks on state employees' pensions are simply a prelude to attacks on everyone's pensions and other social benefits. But leaders of the main trade-union federations, fearful of the explosive anger among the ranks, have tried to put a lid on the situation. Leaders of the Socialist Party-led CFDT trade-union federation broke the united front of all the major union federations by signing a deal with the government and then despicably engaging in active strike-breaking against the workers who contin-



Reuters

Lille, May 13: French public employees march against attack on benefits on day of massive strike that shut down transportation and public services.

ued to strike. The division of the proletariat into separate unions run as political fiefdoms weakens the workers' struggles. Our comrades of the Ligue Trotskyiste de France fight for industrial unionism—one industry, one union—to maximize the workers' *unity* against the employers and the capitalist state.

Today, hundreds of thousands of strikers—primarily teachers, hospital personnel and postal workers—braved heavy rain to march in Paris and other cities. However, while public transportation was shut down in Marseille, most railroad, subway and other public transportation workers, who were key in tying up the

country last week, have returned to work. Calling for a nationwide demonstration on Sunday, May 25, the leaders of the Force Ouvrière and CGT union federations are cynically manipulating the combativity of the workers back into a parliamentary framework of "pressuring" the government.

While centered on public employees, last week's strikes mobilized a significant component of workers from the private sector. In the industrial city of Lyon, fully one-half of the strikers were in private industry. This is significant because the strategic component of immigrant workers in the French industrial proletariat is entirely concentrated in the private sector (racist French law bans non-citizens from public sector jobs). "Left" and right-wing governments alike have used racist attacks on minorities to divide and demoralize the working class in France, from racist discrimination in hiring, education and housing to the Vigipirate campaign of military and police terror against immigrants and minorities. Seizing on the terror attacks in Morocco last week, the French government announced that it is raising the Vigipirate "anti-terrorism alert" to "Code Orange," a threat not only to the country's besieged minority communities but to striking workers as well.

We reprint below a 15 May leaflet issued by the LTF, section of the International Communist League.

* * *

With the massive May 13 strikes and demonstrations, which continue today, the working class is ripping apart the reactionary national unity behind the Chirac government that was stitched together by the SP [Socialist Party], CP [Communist Party] and LCR (Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire) together with the trade-union bureaucrats. From their outright vote for Chirac last year "against Le Pen," to heralding the French imperialists as a force for "peace" against U.S. imperialism's colonial slaughter of Iraq, these traitors have done everything in their power to tie the working class to the class enemy. This

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Protest Cop Killing of Alberta Spruill!

New York City

We reprint below a 19 May leaflet issued by the New York Labor Black League for Social Defense.

Alberta Spruill was brutally killed on the morning of May 16 under the pretense of fighting "the war on drugs." A concussion grenade was thrown into her apartment by NYC police under cover of a "no-knock" search warrant. A dozen heavily armed thugs in blue stormed into the 57-year-old black woman's apartment on West 143rd Street in the very heart of

Harlem as she was preparing for work at 6 a.m. This was more like a gēstapo-style raid, Bush's "shock and awe" brought home and into the black working-class neighborhoods of the U.S. Alberta Spruill had a history of heart trouble and later died as a direct result of this sadistic act in which she was terrorized, handcuffed and forced to endure the horrendous explosion of this weapon.

Alberta Spruill was a proud union member of DC 37 Local 1549, a 29-year city worker with the Division of Citywide Administrative Services. And this killing happened on the exact same day that Mayor Michael Bloomberg rammed

through layoffs of at least 2,000 municipal workers.

We in the New York Labor Black League for Social Defense condemn this atrocity and call on *all* of the integrated labor movement to mobilize and protest against this racist police killing. On the day of Alberta Spruill's funeral, all of city labor should come out to commemorate their fallen union sister. No business as usual! This would give an organized political expression and social power to the just outrage of the inner city against cop terror, which has been rampant this year with execution-style shootings of blacks and Latinos.



NY Daily News

This cop terror is the domestic reflection of U.S. imperialism's war and present colonial occupation of Iraq and the bipartisan war drive against workers, blacks, minorities and immigrants.

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