

## Down With U.S./Japan Counterrevolutionary Alliance! Defend the Chinese and North Korean Deformed Workers States!

Japan and the United States issued a significant joint policy statement on 19 February avowing that Taiwan is "a mutual security concern." This is another ominous move by Tokyo and Washington to strengthen their security agreements and reposition their military forces, including placing antiballistic missile systems (ABM) in the region. These are dangerous provocations against the Chinese and North Korean deformed workers states.

### Joint Statement of the Spartacist Group Japan and Spartacist League/U.S.

The Spartacist League/U.S. and the Spartacist Group Japan, sections of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist), stand for the unconditional military defense of China and North Korea—as we do for the other remaining deformed workers states.

Vietnam and Cuba—against imperialist attack and internal capitalist counterrevolution. This includes the right of China and North Korea to possess and test their nuclear arsenals as part of maintaining a necessary deterrent against imperialist nuclear blackmail. China has

been criminally trying to get North Korea back to the six-party talks that aim to disarm North Korea. The illusion of the Beijing Stalinists that there can be "peaceful coexistence" with imperialism only undermines China's own defense.

The U.S. and Japan will not hesitate to crush any challenge in their drive to exploit the working masses of the region. Both Korea and Taiwan (Formosa) were  
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## Democrats Pander to "Family Values" Bigots

# Free Abortion on Demand!

March 8 is International Women's Day, celebrated by Marxists for decades as a time to honor the struggles of working women throughout the world. As we observed it this year, U.S. troops are continuing the imperialist occupation of Iraq, invading Iraqi families' homes at will and slaughtering Iraqis. At the same time, U.S. imperialist rulers are ever more shrilly shrieking about the "sanctity of human life" at home, oozing concern over the "rights of the unborn" in order to attack women's rights. We therefore observed International Women's Day this year with renewed determination to continue the struggle for women's liberation.

Today, the legal right to abortion dangles by a thread. Simple access to abortion has long been nearly impossible for poor, particularly black and Latino, women. Some 87 percent of U.S. counties have no abortion clinics, which are now outnumbered by "crisis pregnancy centers"—fake clinics set up by anti-abortion groups whose purpose is to subject pregnant women to anti-abortion propaganda and otherwise pressure them to carry the fetus to term.

Abortion is a politically explosive issue because it raises the question of women's equality. This simple and safe medical procedure provides women with some control over whether or not to have children. For this reason, it is viewed as a threat to the institution of the family, a crucial prop for the system of capitalist exploitation.

The attacks on abortion rights are part of a campaign of social reaction aimed at



Spartacists raise defense of abortion rights at 20 March 2004 demonstration in San Francisco against U.S. occupation of Iraq.

regimenting and intimidating the entire population—not only women, but black people, immigrants, gays and the working class as a whole. While the bigots in the Justice Department confer "civil rights" to fetuses and call themselves "pro-life," they relish the legal lynching of black men—the racist death penalty. The ruling class takes little notice of the AIDS epidemic as it ravages black ghettos, preaches abstinence to teenagers deprived of condoms and sex education, and keeps the safe and effective RU 486 "abortion pill" (as well as "emergency contraception" and, increasingly, birth control) out of reach.

Abortion and contraception should be available on demand as part of free, universal, quality health care. In order to effectively fight to defend and extend

abortion rights, activists must not look to Democratic politicians. The Democratic Party is the *other* party of American capitalism, which occasionally quibbles with, but more generally reinforces, the Republicans in carrying out capitalist rule. The role of both parties—as well as the courts—is to serve the interests of the wealthy, exploiting class. This will be achieved at the expense of those who are exploited and oppressed—working people, blacks, immigrants, women and gays. The reason there has been little to no protest against the increasing assaults on abortion rights is that throughout the 1990s, bourgeois feminist organizations *demobilized* protest, preaching reliance on the "pro-choice" Clinton administration, while looking to the courts and appealing to Congress.

What is needed is to fight to defend and extend women's rights, including the right to abortion, through the independent mass mobilization of the oppressed backed by the social power of labor. The struggle for women's liberation is integral to the fight for socialist revolution.

It is essential to forge a multiracial revolutionary workers party to lead the working class in a socialist revolution that sweeps away this system of capitalist exploitation and racial and sexual oppression. *For free abortion on demand! Break with the Democrats—For a workers party that fights for socialist revolution!*

### Democrats' and Republicans' "Family Values" Target Women

Ever since the 1973 *Roe v. Wade* Supreme Court ruling struck down anti-abortion laws, anti-abortion forces have sought to eliminate the right to this essential medical procedure. With the re-election of George W. Bush the anti-abortion forces have gone from chipping away to a full-scale assault. Fifteen states have laws that would

outlaw abortion throughout pregnancy (with two making no exceptions for health or rape): twenty-seven states outlaw abortion as early as 12 weeks with no exceptions for health; other states have been repeatedly considering such measures. While all these state laws are currently deemed by the federal courts to be unconstitutional and are therefore symbolic, they offer an ominous glimpse at the possible future and are a barometer of the times.

Other laws go far beyond symbolism and are genuinely eroding the legal right to abortion. Thirty-one states have passed laws against a seldom used but occasionally medically necessary second- or third-term abortion procedure known to doctors as intact dilation and extraction, disgustingly dubbed "partial-birth abortion" by  
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# British Imperialism and Diego Garcia

## Removing a People from History

We reprint below an article published in *Workers Hammer* No. 189 (Winter 2004-2005), newspaper of the Spartacist League/Britain, section of the International Communist League.

### WORKERS HAMMER

In one of the least known crimes of British imperialism, between 1968 and 1973 the people of the Chagos islands in the Indian Ocean were expelled from their homes, forced into ships' holds and dumped thousands of miles away in the Seychelles and Mauritius, where they were left to die in poverty. This racist atrocity against the 1,500-strong black population of the Chagos islands was prepared by the Harold Wilson Labour government in the service of the anti-Communist Cold War drive against the Soviet Union. Diego Garcia, the largest



Reuters

A group of islanders from Diego Garcia arrive at the High Court in London.

island, was leased as a military base to U.S. imperialism. Recently a group of Diego Garcia campaigners, fighting against the British authorities' refusal to grant them accommodation in Britain, pro-

tested in Downing Street, chanting "Tony Blair is a thief. Give us our islands back." *U.S./British imperialism out of Diego Garcia now! For the right of return and compensation to the islanders!*

Diego Garcia is located halfway between Africa and Indonesia, and encloses one of the largest deep-water harbours in the Indian Ocean. At the height of the Vietnam War, the establishment of a military base there was considered to be of strategic importance by the imperialists. In 1965, the British rulers created the "British Indian Ocean Territory," with Diego Garcia as the main island, including by annexing the Chagos islands from Mauritius before that country was granted independence in 1968. This annexation resulted from a secret deal to lease Diego Garcia to U.S. imperialism as a military base for the next 50 years.

Mark Curtis in his book *Web of Deceit* (2003) quotes recently declassified Foreign Office documents, suffused with racist imperialist contempt for the people of the Chagos islands, demonstrating that the depopulation was calculated to suit the aims of British and U.S. imperialism. One official wrote that the removal of the islanders "was made virtually a condition of the agreement when we negotiated it in 1965." In return, Britain would receive cut-price Polaris missiles.

The expulsions were brutal. Lizette Tallate, who was one of those expelled, told journalist John Pilger that by way of a chilling threat as to what would happen if the islanders did not acquiesce, over a thousand of their pets were rounded up and gassed using the exhaust fumes from U.S. military vehicles. "They put the dogs in a furnace where the people worked...when their dogs were taken away in front of them, our children screamed and cried." One islander, Lindsey Collen, describes the anguish of forced exile in her article "The Island of Diego Garcia, B52's and You and Me" (focusweb.org). Families who had lived on the islands for generations were "shoved into ships' holds against their will and transported to Port Louis and dumped on the quayside. Homeless and lost, mothers and fathers and grannies and children and grandfathers wandered into the slums of the Mauritian capital. By the thousand. The poor of Port Louis took them in. But many people from Diego Garcia died. Others ended up in prison. Children ate green mangoes and salt. That is rock-bottom poverty in Mauritius.

Emptiness in their hearts."

The Wilson Labour government went to extraordinary lengths to fabricate the lie that there were no local inhabitants on Diego Garcia. Curtis writes, "British policy was: after removing the islanders from their home, to remove them from history." However, for over thirty years the Chagossians have fought desperately for justice through the courts only to be denied time after time. Responding to a High Court ruling in 2000 that the expulsions were illegal and that the Chagossians could return to the outlying islands, the Foreign Office announced it would be impossible to abide by this ruling because of treaty obligations with Washington. Last June the Blair government invoked the archaic royal prerogative to crush the 2000 judgment, and a decree was issued that banned the islanders from ever returning to their homes.

The savage expulsion of the Chagossians from Diego Garcia was integrally linked to the imperialists' anti-Soviet Cold War drive, aimed at overthrowing the gains of the world's first workers state that remained despite its Stalinist degeneration. The establishment of a military base on the island was critical to U.S. imperialism's aim of securing hegemony over the Indian Ocean as a staging ground for control of the Indian subcontinent and Persian Gulf and as part of its military encirclement of the Soviet workers state. Similarly, their ambition to gain control of the strategically important deep-water harbour of Trincomalee in Sri Lanka was prepared through the removal of Tamil peoples from the area which in turn paved the road for the genocidal anti-Tamil pogroms in the mid 1980s.

Today, in the words of the U.S. State Department, Diego Garcia is an "all but indispensable platform" for the "fulfilment of defence and security responsibilities in the Arabian Gulf, the Middle East, South Asia and East Africa." It was a launching pad for the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq, the base from which U.S. B2 stealth bombers have flown thousands of miles and back to rain terror on the Iraqi peoples. Various sources also suggest that "terrorist" suspects are being interrogated there under conditions even more secret than those at Guantánamo, where sadistic torture and barbarism reign. And, just as they were assisted in securing Diego Garcia by an Old Labour government, U.S. imperialism continues to be served by the loyal toadies of Blair's New Labour government in the one-sided slaughter and colonial occupation of Iraq, and in the racist "war on terror" at home and abroad.

In 1983 our international tendency organised emergency protests around the globe against the terror against the Tamil people in Sri Lanka, writing in our urgent appeal for such protests: "The defense of the Tamils, now facing genocide, must be linked to a revolutionary socialist perspective, which alone can secure national justice for all the peoples of South Asia" (see "Stop Anti-Tamil Massacre in Sri Lanka," *Workers Vanguard* No. 335, 29 July 1983). So too, the defence of the right of the Chagossian people to return to their homeland or even to receive compensation for the countless lives that were shattered in advancing the interests of the imperialist rulers, is necessarily linked to a revolutionary internationalist perspective—one which fights to liberate all of humanity from the depravities of imperialist exploitation and oppression. ■

### The Bolshevik Revolution and Women's Liberation



TROTSKY

The 1917 Russian Revolution provided a vivid example of how workers rule would fight to eliminate all forms of social oppression. Understanding that women's social inequality is rooted in class society and the institution of the family, the leaders of the young Soviet workers state sought to undermine the material foundations of women's oppression. The Stalinist degeneration of the Soviet Union led to a retreat on the front of women's emancipation, as Bolshevik leader



LENIN

Leon Trotsky described. The Trotskyists recognized that complete social equality, as well as, more immediately, the survival of the revolution itself, required a world socialist society, to be achieved through the extension of proletarian revolution internationally.

The October Revolution honestly fulfilled its obligations in relation to woman. The young government not only gave her all political and legal rights in equality with man, but, what is more important, did all that it could, and in any case incomparably more than any other government ever did, actually to secure her access to all forms of economic and cultural work. However, the boldest revolution, like the "all-powerful" British Parliament, cannot convert a woman into a man—or rather, cannot divide equally between them the burden of pregnancy, birth, nursing and the rearing of children.

The revolution made a heroic effort to destroy the so-called family hearth—that archaic, stuffy and stagnant institution in which the woman of the toiling classes performs galley labor from childhood to death. The place of the family as a shut-in petty enterprise was to be occupied, according to the plans, by a finished system of social care and accommodation: maternity houses, child-care centers, kindergartens, schools, social dining rooms, social laundries, first-aid stations, hospitals, sanatoria, athletic organizations, moving-picture theaters, etc. The complete absorption of the housekeeping functions of the family by institutions of the socialist society, uniting all generations in solidarity and mutual aid, was to bring to woman, and thereby to the loving couple, a real liberation from the thousand-year-old fetters....

It proved impossible to take the old family by storm—not because the will was lacking, and not because the family was so firmly rooted in men's hearts. On the contrary, after a short period of distrust of the government and its child-care facilities, kindergartens and like institutions, the working women, and after them the more advanced peasants, appreciated the immeasurable advantages of the collective care of children as well as the socialization of the whole family economy. Unfortunately society proved too poor and little cultured. The real resources of the state did not correspond to the plans and intentions of the Communist Party. You cannot "abolish" the family; you have to replace it. The actual liberation of women is unrealizable on a basis of "generalized want." Experience soon proved this austere truth which Marx had formulated eighty years before.

—Leon Trotsky, *The Revolution Betrayed* (1936)

## WORKERS VANGUARD

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### Spartacist League/Spartacus Youth Club Forum

## Finish the Civil War! Harriet Jacobs: A Black Woman's Fight to Smash Slavery

Speaker: Carla Wilson, Spartacist League Central Committee

Saturday, April 16, 5 p.m.

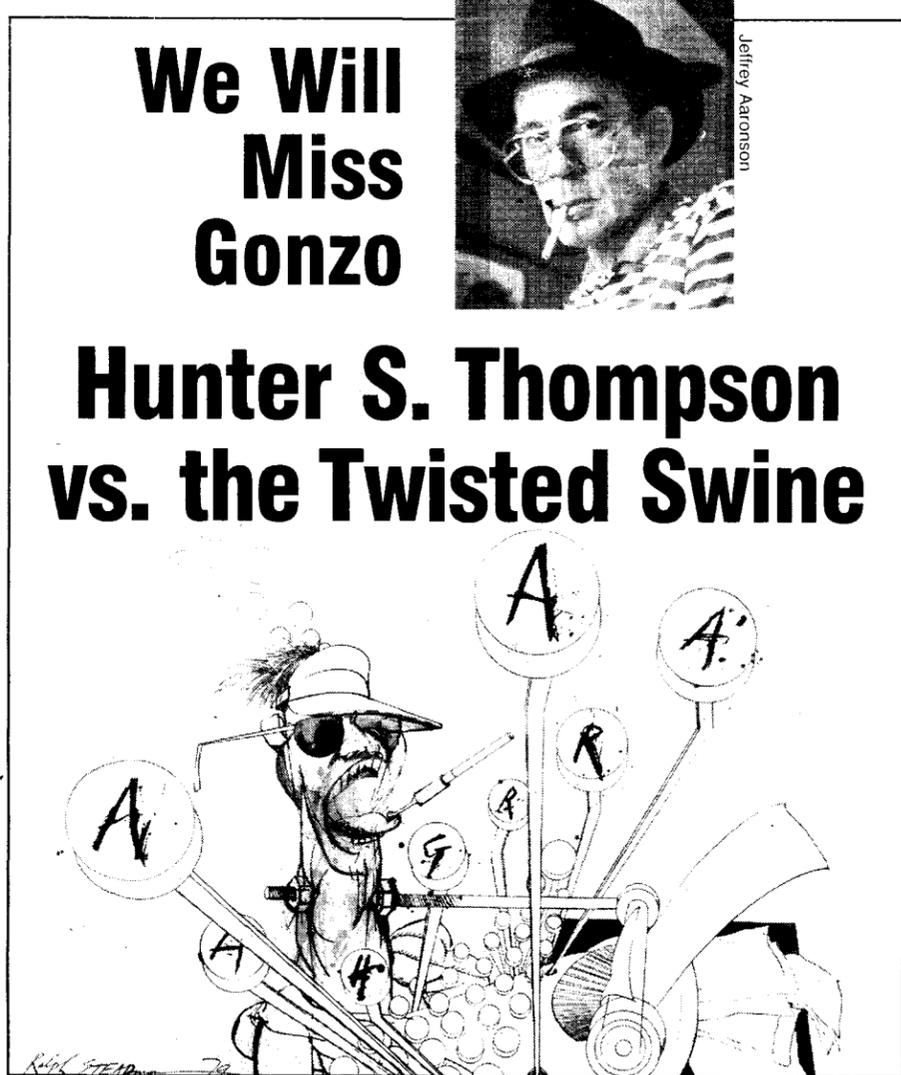
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CHICAGO

"We were somewhere around Barstow on the edge of the desert when the drugs began to take hold" is a classic line of American literature, like "Call me Ishmael," or "But I reckon I got to light out for the Territory ahead of the rest, because Aunt Sally she's going to adopt me and sivilize me and I can't stand it. I been there before." Hunter S. Thompson's 1971 *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas*, subtitled *A Savage Journey to the Heart of the American Dream*, like Melville's *Moby Dick* or Twain's *Huckleberry Finn*, explored the picaresque, chaotic and dark sides of the "American dream"—nightmare, more like Thompson, who died in February at age 67 after shooting himself, had a unique and savage voice. What he dubbed "gonzo journalism," his mixture of fact and revealing half-fiction, relentlessly skewered the corrupt politicians and media whores of his generation—he once described "gonzo journalism" as "a style of 'reporting' based on William Faulkner's idea that the best fiction is far more true than any kind of journalism." He rode with both the Hell's Angels and Richard Milhous Nixon (they discussed football in 1968) and lived to tell the truth about both. He died in his own Territory, un-"sivilized" to the end, and on his own terms.

Alexander Cockburn noted, in his appreciation of "American rough-housers," that "Thompson probably spawned more bad prose than anyone since Hemingway, but they all taught me that at its most rapturous, its most outraged, its most exultant, American prose can let go and teach you to let go, to embrace the vastness, the richness, the beauty and the grotesqueries of America in all its thousand landscapes" (*CounterPunch*, 23 February). Frank Rich of the *New York Times* (6 March) wrote that "Thompson was out to break the mainstream media's rules" with his "unruly mix of fact, opinion and masturbatory self-regard," noting Thompson's "diagnosis of journalistic dysfunction hasn't aged a day: 'The most consistent and ultimately damaging failure of political journalism in America has its roots in the clubby/cocktail personal relationships that inevitably [?] develop between politicians and journal-



ists.'" Rich quoted Thompson's savage assessment of the Edmund Muskie presidential campaign, that the then-front runner "talked like a farmer with terminal cancer trying to borrow money on next year's crop."

Nixon's the one, to be sure, with whom Thompson's political journalism will be forever entwined—the great white shark Thompson tirelessly chased with both fury and hilarity. Thompson was no socialist; he liked Gary Hart in 1987, he went for John Kerry in 2004. But he harpooned his share of filthy lying Democrats, too. In a 1967 piece, Thompson attacked Lyndon Baines Johnson's "Great Society":

"While the new wave flowered, Lenny Bruce was hounded to death by the cops. For 'obscenity,' Thirty thousand people (according to Paul Krassner) are serving time in the jails of this vast democracy on marijuana charges, and the world we have to live in is controlled by a stupid thug from Texas. A vicious liar, with the ugliest family in Christendom."

Of Hubert Humphrey, the old liberal witchhunter who made the deal with Chicago mayor Daley in 1968 as antiwar protesters were being beaten in the streets outside the Democratic Party convention. Thompson wrote:

"Any political party that can't cough up anything better than a treacherous brain-damaged old vulture like Hubert Humphrey deserves every beating it gets.

They don't hardly make 'em like Hubert any more—but just to be on the safe side, he should be castrated anyway."

When the Aspen, Colorado D.A. tried to get Thompson on drug and other lifestyle "violations" in 1990, we wrote an article in Hunter's defense: "Lifestyle Police Frame Gonzo Journalist—Defend Hunter S. Thompson!" (WV No. 501, 4 May 1990). "We appreciate especially Thompson's unrelenting pursuit of the truth about this corrupt American empire," we wrote. "The best of the gonzo journalist's essays are cheerfully apocalyptic and pessimistic prognoses, with an elegant and honest quality something like George Orwell on acid, or maybe Gore Vidal on speed." We appreciated the prescience of the man. When he spoke before a Columbia University audience in April 1990 about the witch-hunt against him, he said that America was entering the era of the "retroactive warrant": "They search your house without cause, and if they find anything to charge you with, the courts will uphold it as a proper search.... The bastards are out to get us." After the college crowd's applause, Thompson continued: "What do you know of these things? You come from a generation that thinks rain is poison, sex means certain death and anything that's fun will give you cancer."

Alexander Cockburn quoted a "sour and prescient paragraph written in 1972" by Thompson, which stands as a pretty good assessment of the putrid condition of American capitalist politics:

"How many more of these goddam elections are we going to have to write off as lame but 'regrettably necessary' holding actions? And how many more of these stinking double-downer sideshows will we have to go through before we can get ourselves straight enough to put together some kind of national election that will give me and the at least 20 million people I tend to agree with a chance to vote for something, instead of always being faced with that old familiar choice between the lesser of two evils? I understand, along with a lot of other people, that the big thing, this year, is Beating Nixon. But that was also the big thing, as I recall, twelve years ago in 1960—and as far as I can tell, we've gone from bad to worse to rotten since then, and the outlook is for more of the same."

Like everyone who despises the deadly American empire, we'll miss Gonzo. ■

## Editorial Note

# Bankruptcy "Reform": Ripping Off the Poor

The depravity of America's rulers knows no bounds. On March 10, the U.S. Senate voted up Dickensian bankruptcy "reform" legislation, the first sweeping overhaul in over a quarter of a century. The bill, which was written for and by credit card companies, would impose more than a hundred new constraints on families who may look to bankruptcy as their last shot at escaping the vise of creditors. Up to 20 percent of those who dissolve their debts in bankruptcy each year could now be disqualified.

While Bush & Co. tour non-stop to convince you to put your final years in the hands of Wall Street parasites ("privatizing" Social Security), the bourgeois state is ratcheting up its attacks on working people's living standards. Last month the Congress made class-action suits against corporations more difficult, and three days before the bankruptcy vote, the Senate rejected raising the minimum wage by a paltry couple of dollars. The Senate wouldn't even pass a proposed exception to the new bankruptcy law for the elderly who file bankruptcy in order to allow them to keep their homes. As *New York Times* columnist Paul Krugman noted in an 8 March piece, what we're seeing is "a steady erosion of the protection the government provides against personal misfortune, even as ordinary families face ever-growing economic insecurity."

The banking industry loves to conjure up the proverbial "deadbeat" debtors frivolously buying BMWs and luxury homes

while they plot to go bankrupt. Reality is far and away something else. Krugman further notes: "To the extent that there is significant abuse of the system, it's concentrated among the wealthy—including corporate executives found guilty of misleading investors—who can exploit loopholes in the law to protect their wealth, no matter how ill-gotten."

According to Elizabeth Warren, a bankruptcy and commercial law expert at Harvard, parents with children at home are nearly three times more likely to file bankruptcy. A single woman raising a child is nearly four times more likely to file bankruptcy than a woman alone. About half the families who file are those who cannot pay for prescription drugs or meet other medical costs—people who have catastrophic expenses due to cancer or heart attacks, for example. And 75 percent of these people *have* health insurance. Seniors are victims of lenders trying to repossess their homes. Two-thirds of filers have lost their jobs. Divorce is another big factor. The impact of the new laws guarantees that the credit card bills of a single parent's former spouse will be paid before child support. *More than 90 percent of all families filing for bankruptcy fall into one or more of three categories—job loss, medical problems or family breakup.*

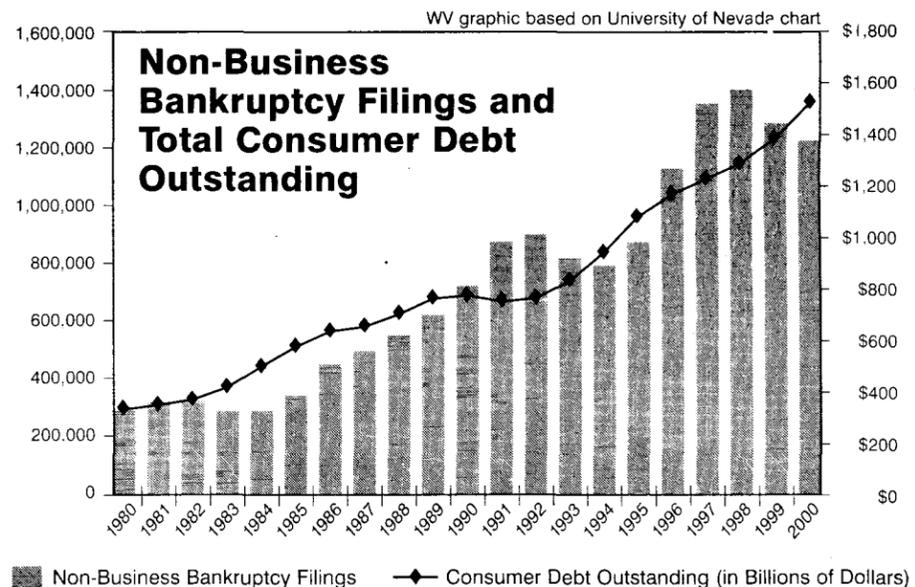
As a spokesman for the millionaire capitalist politicians who roost in the halls of the U.S. Senate, Republican Bill Frist proclaimed, "This legislation restores

personal responsibility," and Democratic Senator Joseph Biden assured all that there was a bipartisan consensus despite the need for some window-dressing. The ruling class views workers' attempts to get some relief from mountains of debt as a challenge to their prerogative of untrammelled exploitation. The working class must be disciplined and controlled. Friedrich Engels wrote in 1887 regarding mortgage debt: "Workers...become completely the slaves of their employers; ...they are compelled to put up with whatever working conditions are offered them." For example, workers are less likely to go

on strike lest they miss that next payment and put their families in jeopardy.

Elizabeth Warren told PBS *Frontline* (which aired on 23 November 2004) that the credit card pushers consider people who regularly pay on time a real drag on their profits. The banks make the big bucks on the people who always live on the edge of bankruptcy, who will dutifully be paying as their late fees pile on and interest rates triple, plunging them hopelessly deeper into debt. In the 1980s and '90s, usury laws that had historically capped interest rates to protect individuals

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We print below the third part of an educational given by Spartacist League Central Committee member Joseph Seymour at the Twelfth National Conference of the SL/U.S. held last summer. Part One appeared in WV No. 840 (21 January) and Part Two in WV No. 842 (18 February).

Marx was born in 1818 in the city of Trier in the German Rhineland bordering on France. It was the region of Germany most directly affected by and sympathetic to the French Revolution. It was the main concentration of German radical democrats ideologically akin to the French Jacobins. The French revolutionary army occupied the Rhineland a decade before Napoleon occupied the rest of western and southern Germany. So the French Revolution was extended to this region in its more radical and democratic phase. Marx grew up in a city in which many bourgeois notables had been ardent revolutionary democrats in their youth, and some retained a sentimental attachment to their old ideals.

In the earlier session, I cited Freud's aphorism that the child is the father of the man. But the father is also the father of the child who is the father of the man. And Marx revered his father throughout his life. A boyhood friend of Marx and later his brother-in-law, Edgar von Westphalen, described Heinrich Marx as a "real eighteenth-century Frenchman, who knew his Voltaire and Rousseau inside out."

Heinrich Marx was a leading figure in the Trier liberal social club. On one occasion he and some other members had a little too much to drink, and they started singing the "Marseillaise," the anthem of the French Revolution. This was rather like singing the "Internationale" at a local Democratic Party headquarters. News of the scandal got out, and the Trier liberals involved were strongly denounced by the Prussian authorities, including the crown prince. Fortunately, nothing worse came of it for Marx's father.

So Marx was raised in the spirit of rational humanism. And this can be clearly seen in an essay he wrote titled, "Reflections of a Young Man on the Choice of a Career" (1835), upon graduating *gymnasium* at the age of 17:

"History calls those the greatest men who ennoble themselves by working for the universal. Experience praises as the most happy the one who made the most people happy...."

"When we have chosen the vocation in which we can contribute most to humanity, burdens cannot bend us because they are only sacrifices for all. Then we experience no meager, limited, egotistic joy, but our happiness belongs to millions, our deeds live on quietly but eternally effective."

—quoted in David McLellan, *Marx Before Marxism* (1970)

So Marx began as a liberal idealist wanting to better the condition of humanity. Broadly speaking, his outlook

## How Marx Became a Marxist

### PART THREE

BY Joseph Seymour



at 17 was similar to my own at that age and probably to most of yours at that age. It's also similar to most of the student youth we encounter in, say, the "anti-globalization" protests at least in the U.S.

Marx then went to the University of Bonn in western Germany for a year. So far as we know, there was no significant change in his intellectual outlook in this period. But an incident occurred which illuminates Marx's personal character and also the character of German society at the time.

The university had the equivalent of today's fraternities in the form of tavern clubs or drinking societies. These were organized on geographical and, to a certain extent, class lines. Marx joined a tavern club of students from Trier who were mainly of bourgeois and professional backgrounds like himself. There was also a tavern club of young Prussian aristocrats—Junkers—who despised and constantly baited Rhenish bourgeois types like Marx.

And on one occasion one of these young Junkers provoked Marx into a duel with sabers—real sabers, not with tipped points and blunted blades. Marx held his own and got a permanent scar above his left eye. For the rest of his life he was immensely proud of that scar as a

wound gotten in honorable class combat. "See this—I got this in a saber duel with some young Junker creep in my university days."

#### Origins of the Hegelian Left

The following year, Marx transferred to the University of Berlin. He arrived there at the very moment that it was becoming the main center of the main left-radical intellectual current in Germany: the left Hegelians, sometimes also called the Young Hegelians although some of them were a good deal older than some right Hegelians. This current was the product of two mutually reinforcing developments: the rightward motion in Prussian ruling circles, especially as it affected academic and intellectual life, and the internal contradictions of Hegel's philosophy.

During the so-called "wars of liberation" against the Napoleonic regime, a strong rightist tendency cohered, centrally within the Prussian nobility, which combined Christian fundamentalism—it was called Pietism—with backward-looking German nationalism conveyed by the expression "*blut und boden*"—blood and soil. A very good book on the emergence of the Hegelian left by an American academic, John Edward Toews, commented in this regard: "These young Junkers had experienced the war against Napoleon as a kind of Christian-German crusade against French rationalism and liberalism" (*Hegelianism: The Path Toward Dialectical Humanism, 1805-1841* [1980]).

In opposition to Christian fundamentalism and romantic German nationalism, Hegel sought to mediate at the intellectual level between the era of the French Revolution and the post-1815 period of reaction. He maintained that Prussia, as a result of the reforms undertaken during the Napoleonic period, had become a modern, rational state—a *rechtsstaat*, a state of law. Hegel considered himself a good Christian of the Lutheran persuasion. He maintained that Protestant Christianity expressed in terms of symbols and allegories fundamental truths about God which philosophy, that is, his own philosophy, apprehended through reason.

The Christian right of the day regarded

Hegel's moderate liberalism as containing the seeds of dangerous radicalism in both politics and religion. Granted, Hegel himself maintained that the laws and policies of the Kingdom of Prussia represented the highest interests of the German community. But from the same theoretical premises someone else could maintain that those interests required the overthrow of the Prussian monarchy and its replacement by a democratic republic.

The Pietists were even more virulently hostile to Hegel's views on religion than to his politics. Christianity, they insisted, must be based on faith in an unknowable God. Hegel's contention that man through reason could understand God and his works was blasphemy. One of the leading Pietists, Heinrich Leo, exclaimed that Hegel's philosophy would lure "the children of the German nation into Satan's watchtower where they would 'die from hunger and thirst for the word of the Lord'" (quoted in Toews, *Hegelianism*).

In the 1820s, the top level Prussian bureaucrats in charge of academia were relatively liberal and favored the Hegelians over the Christian rightists. However, in the 1830s the balance of political forces in Prussian ruling circles was reversed. The more liberal Hegelians were now regarded and treated as dangerous radicals. They were thwarted in their academic careers. As a consequence, some of them moved to the left as they intersected and influenced a new generation of young liberal idealists like Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, who eventually would become truly dangerous radicals.

In their own way the Christian rightists recognized the potentially radical implications embedded in Hegel's philosophy. Hegel maintained that the broad sweep of history expressed the progressive development of the absolute spirit. But he didn't consider that this was true of everything that happened. He allowed for historical accidents. And he recognized that many institutions and cultural attitudes were dead remnants of the past devoid of spiritual vitality. As Protestants, Hegel and his followers consigned Roman Catholicism to the latter category as an outmoded superstition.

Hegel thus differentiated between existence, the German word being *dasein*, and reality, the German word being *wirklichkeit*. *Dasein* was the totality of that which existed empirically. *Wirklichkeit* represented those particular aspects of existence which corresponded to the historical development of reason. But how was one to know what was merely existent and what was really real? The answer is—one couldn't.

Thus even in Hegel's lifetime there were very significant political differences of a left-right character among his followers. His best-known protégé was Herbert Gans, a secularized Jew. Like Marx's father, Gans had to legally convert to Lutheranism in order to hold a professorship at the University of Berlin where he lectured on law and political philosophy. Perhaps because of his Jewish background, Gans was much more critical of the Prussian government from the left than was Hegel. The crown prince once complained to the minister of education that Gans was turning his students into revolutionary republicans. Incidentally, Gans was still at the University of Berlin when Marx arrived there, and he attended Gans' lectures. The old left Hegelian died a few years later. Basically, a very good guy.

The contradiction at the core of Hegel's philosophy was implicit in his most famous aphorism: what is real is rational and what is rational is real. The first implies that the world as it currently exists is perforce rational; the second that what is irrational is soon fated to disappear and be replaced by what is rational.

You may recall from the earlier session that Moses Hess listed six thinkers

Young Spartacus graphic: drawing of Marx by H. Bach



Diets Verlag Berlin

Portrait of Friedrich Engels as a young man. The title page of *The Holy Family* (1845), the first joint work by Marx and Engels, which argues that "history is nothing but the activity of man pursuing his aims."



who influenced the young Marx. Only one of these was an older contemporary, Heinrich Heine, who was the best-known German writer of the day of radical leftist sympathies. Heine studied under Hegel in the 1820s though he was never a Hegelian. He later settled in Paris where he met Marx in 1844-45, and the two became good friends. At this time Heine commented on the rise of the Hegelian left in his usual wise guy style:

"We now have monks of Atheism [he's referring to the likes of Feuerbach and Marx], whom Mr. Voltaire, because he was an obstinate Deist, would have broiled alive. I must admit that this music does not appeal to me, but it does not frighten me either, for I have stood behind the Maestro [that is, Hegel] while he composed. To be sure, he composed with indistinct and elaborately adorned notes—so that not everyone could decipher them. Occasionally I observed how he anxiously looked about in fear that he might have been understood. He liked me very much because he was convinced that I would not betray him; I even thought him servile at that time. Once, when I expressed displeasure with the phrase 'Everything that is, is rational,' he smiled strangely and said, 'One could also read it as "everything which is rational must be"'"

—Toews, *Hegelianism*

## The Influence of Bruno Bauer and Ludwig Feuerbach

A year after arriving at the University of Berlin, Marx joined the left Hegelian circle which was organized around the Doctors' Club. Its leading figure was Bruno Bauer, and Marx became one of Bauer's main protégés over the next few years. There's some anecdotal evidence that Marx collaborated in writings which Bauer published in his own name and also in writing an anonymous pamphlet Bauer brought out. Marx himself did not publish anything in his own name until his doctoral dissertation on ancient Greek philosophy in 1841. However, since Bauer treated him as a protégé, one can reasonably assume Marx's ideas at the time were broadly similar to Bauer's.

Basically, what Bauer did was to jettison the metaphysical, semi-religious aspects of Hegel's philosophy while retaining its idealist conception of historical development. He also took the rationalist implications of Hegel's doctrines to their extreme, even absurdist, logical conclusion. Bauer maintained that what Hegel had called the absolute spirit was really the collective self-consciousness of mankind or, to use more conventional terminology, the prevailing cultural attitudes.

Many years later in a brief sketch of his own intellectual development, Marx wrote: "My inquiry led me to the conclusion that neither legal relations nor political forms could be comprehended whether by themselves or on the basis of a so-called general development of the human mind" (*A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* [1859]). The idea that legal and political institutions express the general development of the human mind was that of Bruno Bauer, which Marx shared for a time and then transcended.

Like Hegel, Bauer viewed the history of European civilization as a progression from lower to higher levels of thought. Applying this conception to the present, Bauer maintained that by theoretical criticism he was dealing the Prussian Christian monarchical state a decisive blow against which its empirical reality could not long resist. He wrote to Marx in 1841: "The terrorism of true theory will clear the field.... Theory is now the most effective practice and we cannot yet predict in what a great manner it can become practical" (quoted in Toews, *Hegelianism*). Once an institution was condemned in theory as historically outmoded, its fate was thereby sealed.

Bauer considered himself a revolutionary, indeed an extreme revolutionary. But the arena in which the revolution was to be made was that of ideas, indeed academia. In a letter to Arnold Ruge, Bauer exclaimed: "My blasphemous spirit would be satisfied only if I were given the

authority of a professorship to teach publicly the system of atheism" (quoted in Toews, *Hegelianism*). If only Bauer could preach atheism from a university lecture hall, thrones would be toppled across Europe from Portugal to Russia. Christian churches would be closed down for lack of believers.

Marx and Engels' first joint work, *The Holy Family*, written in 1845, was centrally a polemic against Bauer. Here's the crux of it:

"History does *nothing*, it 'possesses no immense wealth', it 'wages no battles'. It is *man*, real, living man who does all that, who possesses and fights: 'history' is not, as it were, a person apart, using man as a means to achieve *its own aims*: history is *nothing but* the activity of man pursuing his aims." [emphasis in original]

In the 1860s, a friend and admirer gave Marx an old copy of *The Holy Family*, and he reread it probably for the first time since it had been originally published. Marx wrote to Engels, "I was pleasantly surprised to find that we do

*The Young Hegelians and Karl Marx* [1969]). A few years later Feuerbach carried his view that the behavior of man in society was governed by his biological make-up a step further. He maintained that the actions of individuals and groups were strongly influenced by their diet, by the kind of food they ate. One can understand why this idea would have a special appeal for a German intellectual. In German, the third person singular of the verb "to be" and "to eat" is a homonym: *Man ist was man isst*. One is what one eats.

Feuerbach was a materialist in terms of man and nature. But he was an idealist in terms of man and man, of man in society. Like Bauer and other left Hegelians, he believed in the liberating power of ideas. Once men recognized that they themselves had created God as an all-powerful entity, they would reappropriate the powers which they had alienated to an imaginary deity. Thus he wrote: "To enrich God, man must become poor; that God may be all, man must become nothing." But a recognition of the illusory character



Lithograph by L. Sebbers

Georg Hegel

macy of material self-interest and class divisions in society. How so?

The rightward motion in the Prussian ruling classes not only propelled some liberal Hegelian intellectuals to the left; it also resulted in a more oppositional mood among some elements of the liberal bourgeoisie. In late 1841, Moses Hess convinced a number of wealthy liberal businessmen in the Rhineland to finance a newspaper whose contributors and staff would be heavily drawn from left Hegelians. One of the main backers, Ludolf Camphausen, later became Prussian prime minister during the Revolution of 1848. The paper was called the *Rheinische Zeitung* and subtitled "For Politics, Commerce and Industry." Politics was a code word for liberal reform, which was linked to the progress of commerce and industry.

Given Marx's reputation as a left Hegelian and protégé of Bruno Bauer, he could not get an academic appointment. So Bauer suggested he contribute to the *Rheinische Zeitung*, which he did. He soon became *de facto* and then official editor of the paper. According to Marx's own later testimony, it was as a result of his involvement with the *Rheinische Zeitung* that he began to develop a materialist understanding of society.

As an academic intellectual, Marx had been concerned almost exclusively with questions of philosophy and history. He had little if any interest in current events. He was far more knowledgeable about the different schools of ancient Greek philosophy than about the different political tendencies in the Germany of the day.

But as editor of a newspaper, Marx had to think about and make judgments on current events. That was his job. Shortly after becoming editor, Marx wrote an article strongly critical of a proposed law imposing harsher penalties on the theft of dead wood from privately owned forests. This was an important source of heating fuel for poor people in the countryside. Along similar lines, the paper ran a series on the economic distress of farmers in the Moselle valley who grew grapes and made them into wine.

Marx came to recognize that differences over laws protecting property, differences over the causes and solutions to poverty did not express differences over abstract concepts of justice or economic doctrine. Rather they expressed conflicting material interests, ultimately conflicting class interests. As Marx later wrote:

"In the year 1842-43, as editor of the *Rheinische Zeitung*, I first found myself in the embarrassing position of having to discuss what is known as material interests. The deliberations of the Rhine Province Assembly on thefts of wood and the division of landed property; the official polemic started by Herr von Schaper, then Oberpräsident of the Rhine Province, against the *Rheinische Zeitung* about the condition of the Mosel peasantry, and finally the debates on free trade and protective tariffs caused me in the first instance to turn my attention to economic questions."

—"A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy" (1859)

continued on page 7

Dietz Verlag Berlin



**Allegorical drawing representing the censorship of Rheinische Zeitung. Marx, depicted as Prometheus, is chained to a printing press while the eagle, symbol of Prussia, eats his liver.**

not need to be ashamed of this work, although the cult of Feuerbach produces a very humorous effect upon one now."

What was it about Feuerbach's ideas at this juncture that had such an immediate and powerful impact on Marx, Engels and other left Hegelians? Feuerbach argued that Hegel's concept of absolute spirit and its derivative, Bauer's idea of the general development of the human mind, shared the same basic premise as traditional Christianity and other religions. An imaginary entity created by men's minds was elevated above real, living human beings. Men came to believe that they were dominated by what was in fact the product of their own thoughts. As Engels later explained:

"With *one* blow it [Feuerbach's *Essence of Christianity*] pulverised the contradiction, by plainly placing materialism on the throne again. Nature exists independently of all philosophy. It is the foundation upon which we human beings, ourselves products of nature, have grown up. Nothing exists outside nature and man, and the higher beings our religious fantasies have created are only the fantastic reflection of our own essence." [emphasis in original]

—Feuerbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy (1886)

Feuerbach himself summarized his ideas in this way: "The new philosophy deals with being as it is for us, not only as thinking, but as really existing being.... It is the being of the senses, sight, feeling and love" (quoted in David McLellan,

of God does not imbue man with latent powers of which he was previously unaware. It does not increase the material wealth and productive forces of society. Rejection of religion removes an important ideological barrier to progressive social struggle on the part of the exploited and oppressed. But atheism does not in itself constitute such social struggles.

Furthermore, one can be an atheist and also believe in, so to speak, cynical self-interest. "There's no God. There's no heaven or hell. I'm going to get mine here and now. Screw the rest of the world. I'm looking out for number one."

Here we come to the second major aspect of Feuerbach's idealism, his concept of the "religion of humanity." Man, he argued, was a social animal. The well-being and happiness of an individual depend upon his cooperation with the fellow members of his species, on their respect and affection for him. Thus he wrote: "Only community constitutes humanity.... That the thou belongs to the perfection of the I, that men are required to constitute humanity" (quoted in Toews, *Hegelianism*). However, society not only unites individuals for their common interests; it also divides them into classes and other groups based on conflicting material self-interest.

## Marx Becomes a Communist

Even in this period when Marx was most strongly influenced by Feuerbach, he was beginning to understand the pri-

# Harvard: Too Much *Veritas!* Anti-Woman Bigot Summers Spills the Beans

Another sexist at Harvard caused a national stir in recent weeks by insinuating what the American ruling class has believed all along: When it comes to math, hard sciences or any "high-powered" academic career, a woman's place is in the kitchen or at a secretary's desk. This time, the bigot in question is Harvard president Larry Summers.

Summers rose to acclaim through his ability to take centuries-old, racist views and pass them off as "novel." As chief economist of the World Bank, an imperialist institution dedicated to looting the Third World, he advocated in a 1991 memo: "I think the economic logic behind dumping a load of toxic waste in the lowest wage country is impeccable and we should face up to that." Soon after he took the job at Harvard in 2001, Summers took it upon himself to drive black intellectual Cornel West out. And now, Summers has hit the headlines after "speculating" at a January 14 economics conference that "in the special case of science and engineering, there are issues of intrinsic aptitude" (read: genetic inferiority) of women. Exposing his all-sided bigotry, he also managed to posit that genetic differences account for the varying representation of Catholics and Jews in particular fields and for white men in basketball!

Following massive public outcry, the sexist pig gave a groveling apology, vowing to leave all pseudo-scientific speculation to the real "experts." There has been no shortage of reactionary intellectuals who have in the past picked up this stinking corpse of a "hypothesis" for racial or sexual inferiority and run with it. Take Harvard's Charles Murray, co-author of *The Bell Curve: Intelligence and Class Structure in American Life*, who peddles the racist lie of genetically determined black inferiority, or Harvard professor Steven Pinker, who denies that lack of women in the sciences is proof of discrimination—this despite documented evidence of bias in every aspect of academic life (Harvard *Crimson*, 19 January).

But Summers' cynical apologies were not enough to stop the angry protests of many Harvard faculty, staff and students alike. Members of the Boston Spartacus Youth Club participated in a February 22 student protest at Harvard calling for Summers' resignation. We discussed with students how this is not about one man with sexist ideas, but rather someone who let slip out in a rather crude way a certain aspect of what Harvard—and indeed this capitalist society as a whole—is all about.



Jim Winslet

Harvard president Larry Summers speculating on "intrinsic aptitude" of women for science?

Women's oppression, rooted in the family, is embedded in class society. The institution of the family serves to regiment the population to abide by the norms of the ruling class. Women are drawn into the workforce as needed by the bosses and face persistent discrimination there, while still bearing the burden of childcare.

Harvard is a prime purveyor of the reactionary ideology, including anti-woman chauvinism, of capitalist society. Women and black students at this protest spoke to us of the horribly oppressive atmosphere they face on campus. As the foremost think tank of the most powerful and ruthless ruling class on the planet, Harvard has always had a special mission to develop ideological justifications for capitalist tyranny, to say nothing of its plethora of links to the CIA. We say: Nationalize Harvard! For open admissions and no tuition! Throw open the gates of this "ivory tower" to the black youth of Roxbury! It's not just Summers who should get the boot; the whole administration should be abolished and replaced by worker/student/faculty control. ROTC, CIA, Harvard cops off campus!

## Harvard: No Ivory Tower

The water boys of Socialist Alternative (SAIt) busied themselves handing out leaflets that treated Summers as an "embarrassment" to Harvard's good name! A February 22 leaflet by the "Coalition for an Anti-Sexist Harvard"—of which the Harvard SAIt branch is a co-signatory—reads in part: "As the head of a university with so much international prestige, the president of Harvard should play a special role in advancing the cause of women in higher education." Are we talking about the same Harvard that brought us the Klitgaard report. Harvard's "modest proposal" for an Aryan university? The leaflet goes on to say, "We are...outraged that the Harvard Corporation unabashedly supports his continued tenure." SAIt really pushes this myth of Harvard as an ivory tower, calling to "democratize" the second richest "non-profit" institution in the world next to the Catholic church! To think that "The Corporation"—that insufferably arrogant, racist, anti-union and sexist institution that runs Harvard—would do anything *but* unabashedly support this man's politics is truly beyond naive.

The Coalition demands that "Harvard support justice and human rights campaigns by divesting from corporations like Unocal and PetroChina" because these companies invest in Burma and Sudan. The problem with calls for divestment is that they are premised on the view that there are good corporations vs. bad corporations. Presumably, Harvard should invest in corporations that do business only with "democratic" countries, companies that are in fact no less exploi-

tative than any others. Furthermore, the campaign against the state-owned Chinese oil company, PetroChina, is a years-long anti-Communist campaign that *pre-dates* the recent atrocities in Darfur and is aimed at mobilizing sentiment behind the imperialist goal of restoring capitalism in China. We are for the unconditional military defense of China, a deformed workers state, against capitalist counterrevolution, and for political revolution to oust the Stalinist bureaucracy. The supposed "Trotskyists" of SAIt have shamelessly signed on to this pro-imperialist campaign against China, joining forces that are opportunistically exploiting outrage over Sudan to push for counterrevolution.

Such actions are not surprising coming from Socialist Alternative, the American section of the Committee for a Workers' International (CWI). Just look at its open fraternization with the "National Bolshevik" fascists in the former USSR. In Germany, the CWI section has banned our comrades from their meetings because of our position defending the right of consensual sex and opposing the U.S. state vendetta against Michael Jackson. The hallmark of the CWI is its craven capitulation to the lowest depths of whatever national (or campus!) milieu it finds itself in.

The Coalition's call for the administration to "create gender neutral social space" is a call on the administration to regulate student life—to harass and ban minorities and leftists, from The Seneca all-women's group to communists on campus. We oppose the administration's

regulation of student life *in any form!*

The Spartacist League and SYCs fight for an egalitarian society that can only be won by abolishing capitalism through socialist revolution. Women in the Soviet Union were productive, franchised, literate members of society with full equality before the law...nearly 50 years before Harvard allowed women to set foot into its Lamont Library! Despite the degeneration of the workers state under Stalinism, Soviet women were trained to be top engineers, fighter pilots, doctors, mathematicians and physicists in *vastly* greater numbers than American women ever were or have been since. Does this speak to the "intrinsic" superiority of Russian women over American? Hardly. This was the direct product of the October 1917 Bolshevik Revolution that swept away capitalism in Russia. The revolution brought literacy and access to higher education to all the sons and daughters of the workers and peasants throughout the Soviet Union. The Bolsheviks sought to replace the functions of the family and make childcare and household duties the collective responsibility of society. Only when women are freed from household drudgery and double oppression of work and family can their true capacities be realized. For free, quality health care and childcare, maternity and paternity leave and equal pay for equal work!

Through our fight for political revolution and against capitalist restoration in East Germany in 1989-90 and in the USSR in 1991-92, the International Communist League uniquely fought to defend the gains of the Russian Revolution and to extend those gains worldwide. Counterrevolution has had devastating effects on women and workers. Our proud record stands in stark contrast to the fake Trotskyists of the CWI who also were in Moscow, *on the same side of the barricades* as the Russian Pamyat fascists—in opposition to women's liberation and in support of the Yeltsin-Bush counterrevolution!

The Boston SYC is looking for a few class traitors who, like American Communist John Reed (class of 1910), are fed up with this hideously repressive capitalist society and want to fight for its overthrow. For a multiracial workers party that fights for socialist revolution! ■

## Defend CCNY Protesters! Military Recruiters, ROTC Off Campus!

We reprint below a March 14 protest letter sent by the New York Spartacus Youth Club to the president of the City College of New York and the district attorney of New York County.

We are writing to protest the outrageous arrests of Hadas Thier, Nick Bergreen and Justino Rodriguez, students at City College of New York (CCNY), and Carol Lang, a staff member at CCNY. The three students were detained and brutalized on March 9 in the course of a protest against military recruiters. They are now facing misdemeanor counts of assaulting an officer, resisting arrest and disturbing the peace. Carol Lang was arrested on Friday at her office in connection with the March 9 protest and has

now been charged with second-degree assault, disorderly conduct and obstructing governmental administration. The Spartacus Youth Club demands that all charges be dropped immediately.

We protest this attempt to quash opposition to military recruiters, who don't belong on campus in the first place. Their aims are to recruit especially working-class youth and students as fodder for bloody U.S. militarism, like the brutal occupation of Iraq. The arrests of Thier, Bergreen, Rodriguez and Lang at CCNY as well as others across the country who have been victimized, represent an attack on everyone's right to protest. There must be no reprisals! Drop all the charges now!

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# The RCP and the Cult of Chairman Bob

Strange things have been churning out of the press of the Revolutionary Communist Party (RCP) of late. In the lead-up to the January 20 counter-inaugural protests, the RCP issued a leaflet titled, "The Battle for the Future Will Be Fought from Here Forward!" The statement—which the RCP advertised in the *Chicago Reader* and launched a special campaign to distribute—proclaims a new era in the U.S. where "Bush and his people aren't just ordinary Republicans. And they're not ordinary Christians either. They are Christian Fascists." And...gulp, the only solution is the "vision" of the RCP's "precious leader," Bob Avakian. The leaflet asks, "Which vision will prevail: that of George W. Bush? Or of Bob Avakian?" If these were really our only choices, we suppose we would have to go with Avakian. But as Marxists we understand that the real choices are between capitalist imperialism and international workers revolution. And Avakian's vision has nothing to do with workers revolution.

The RCP has always promoted the cult of Avakian. But lately in their paper, *Revolutionary Worker*, it's been Avakian galore, whether printing his speeches, articles, interviews, or reviews of his books or promoting his new, *eleven-hour* DVD. The increasing, fetishist raving over Avakian is one of the more bizarre expressions of liberal despair by the RCP, coming off the spectacular deflation of the antiwar movement and the re-election of Bush. In an absurdist attempt to revive the fervor of the Mao cult during the height of the Chinese Cultural Revolution, the leaflet contains a box with its own headline, "Who Is Bob Avakian?" which declares: "There IS a leader, the likes of which this country has never seen before.... It may seem ironic...but the more that people wrestle with and follow his leadership, the greater will be their creative spirit, initiative, and activity." This sounds like lifestyle guru Deepak Chopra in Maoist form.

The Revolutionary Communist Youth Brigade (RCYB), the RCP's youth group, issued a leaflet titled, "Are You Saved?" Filled with religious imagery, the leaflet is a pathetic attempt to polemicize against religion. "Straight up," we are told, "religion does not have answers" for the questions facing the masses. The RCP's answer? Don't follow Jesus; don't follow Bush; follow Bob, the new messiah: "Bob Avakian is the leader who gives a vision of a radically different world, and points the way forward through all the challenges that we will face." The leaflet concludes: "We love the people and serve the people, there is no greater love than that!"



WV Photo

## Mao Less Than Ever

As humorous as the RCP's adoration of their megalomaniacal leader is, it is not just some quirk, but proof of their rejection of a Marxist program and methods of organization. It flows from the RCP's rejection of the Marxist understanding that the working class, through whose labor wealth is created, is the *only* class that has the objective interest and social power to overthrow the capitalist order. Instead, they prattle endlessly about "resistance" by the "people." For them the main issue is promoting Avakian's "vision" for the people versus Bush's.

Cultist leadership is antithetical to Marxist revolutionaries, for whom the indispensable tool to successfully carry out a socialist revolution is a party that bases itself on a revolutionary program. That program can be defended and developed only through the participation of a thinking, critical membership on the basis of Leninist democratic-centralism, that is, full internal democracy in arriving at decisions and centralism in carrying out the decisions of the party majority in a disciplined manner. In contrast, the cultish leadership borrowed from Stalin and Mao by groups like the RCP requires unthinking fools for the rank and file, whose job is to simply receive "the word" from their leader and carry it out.

The RCP would have you believe that "Christian Fascism" is here. While the current right-wing fanatics in the White

House are most certainly reactionary bible-thumpers, their attacks on civil liberties and democratic rights have been carried out within the framework of *bourgeois democracy*. "Democracy" under capitalism is the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie over the working class and oppressed—enforced through the cops, courts and prisons that make up the capitalist state. Fascism is based on the mobilization of the crazed petty bourgeoisie, whipped into a frenzy by the capitalist rulers in times of social crisis to physically destroy the mass organizations of the working class. Today, the real face of fascism is seen in the Ku Klux Klan, neo-Nazis and white-supremacist militias. The Spartacist League has a long history of organizing labor/black mobilizations to stop the fascists from organizing for racist terror.

So, what does the RCP mean by "Christian Fascism"? In the mouths of Stalinists and Maoists like the RCP, "fascism" is a code word to promote an "anti-fascist" popular front to unite the working class and oppressed with their capitalist class enemy in the garb of a "progressive" bourgeoisie. In the name of "anti-fascism," the Stalinized Communist Party (CP), under the class-collaborationist program of the popular front, urged its members and the working class to support the Democratic Roosevelt administration. Later, the same doctrine led the CP to

throw its support behind the U.S. imperialist war machine in the second interimperialist war, World War II. In the current scenario, the RCP is proclaiming the threat of "Christian Fascism" in order to corral radical youth and activists into a classless movement of the "people" against the Republicans. As with the CP, the RCP pushes illusions in the Democratic Party. Throughout the antiwar movement, the pacifist RCP-initiated Not In Our Name (NION) coalition was based on a class-collaborationist program of reforming imperialism. Thus they built platforms for Democratic Party politicians: the RCP should be held accountable for promoting the "Anybody but Bush" claptrap that helped to prevent the emergence of class and social struggle. In the lead-up to last fall's presidential elections, *Revolutionary Worker* (29 August 2004) gave its blessing to a vote for the Democrats, advising: "Go ahead and vote for Kerry if you feel you really have to, but put your efforts toward recasting this polarization."

You won't find any mention of the trade unions in these leaflets, and *Revolutionary Worker* rarely writes about strikes or other issues in the U.S. labor movement. In contrast, Marxists understand communism as the fight for *workers revolution*, premised on the political independence of the working class from the capitalist class and its agencies. That means fighting within the labor movement to oust the pro-capitalist, pro-Democratic Party trade-union bureaucracy and for a class-struggle leadership of the unions, as part of the struggle for a revolutionary workers party. Such a party would lead all the oppressed behind the social power of the working class to sweep away the capitalist order and establish a socialist society that will end all exploitation and oppression. The RCP claims to be really revolutionary, but RCP youth ought to check out that really cool book on revolution, the *Communist Manifesto*, in which Marx and Engels wrote: "Of all the classes that stand face to face with the bourgeoisie today, the proletariat alone is a really revolutionary class." ■

## Marx...

(continued from page 5)

Marx's growing recognition of the primacy of material interests and class divisions in society did not lead him immediately and directly to communism. He remained within the political mainstream of the left Hegelian movement. The extreme left wing was represented by a coterie of intellectuals in Berlin who called themselves *die Freien* (The Free). Among them were a young Russian nobleman, Mikhail Bakunin, and the son of a wealthy western German textile manufacturer, Friedrich Engels. *Die Freien* combined a bohemian lifestyle with anarcho-communist political posturing.

In a letter to Arnold Ruge, Marx joked that he had thrown out more contributions from *die Freien* than had the official government censor. He described them as "scrawls pregnant with world revolutions and empty of thought, writ-

ten in a slovenly style and flavoured with some atheism and communism (which these gentlemen have never studied)." Marx did not reject and oppose communism at this time. Rather he was not convinced of its theoretical and practical validity as expounded in the mainly French communist literature of the day.

Even without contributions from *die Freien*, the *Rheinische Zeitung* was too radical for the Prussian authorities to tolerate, and the paper was suppressed in early 1843. The following autumn, Marx moved to Paris, having just married his childhood sweetheart, Jenny von Westphalen. They lived in a housing complex with other German leftist radicals, among them Georg Maurer, who was a leader of the Paris branch of the League of the Just. This was a group of German communists, mainly artisans, who were closely tied to their French counterparts. A few years earlier, the League's cadre had participated in a failed insurrection led

by Auguste Blanqui, the foremost representative of Jacobin communism in that era.

For the first time in his life, Marx now socialized with communist and socialist workers—French as well as German—whose political views were as advanced as his own, if not more so. And it was then that Marx became a communist. He might well have arrived at communism in Germany through a purely intellectual path, as had Moses Hess and Engels before him. But the fact is that he didn't. In the notebooks he kept at the time, he expressed his deep admiration for the communist workers he had come to know. One gets the impression that this experience dispelled an element of intellectual elitism in Marx's outlook. He recognized that workers with little formal education, not only intellectuals like himself, could be deeply committed to the struggle for a future world free of oppression and exploitation.

[TO BE CONTINUED]

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Information and readings: (510) 839-0851  
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 Information and readings: (416) 593-4138  
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Tuesday, March 22, 5:30 p.m.  
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# Palm Island, Australia

## Aboriginal Community Explodes Over Racist Cop Killing

We reprint below an article, slightly edited, from *Australasian Spartacist* No. 189, Summer 2004/05, newspaper of the Spartacist League of Australia, section of the International Communist League. The December 11 Brisbane protest march referred to in the article was up to 2,000-strong and attracted Aboriginal people from throughout Queensland. Although some organizers attempted to make this march a silent protest, it was, to the contrary, a loud and angry demonstration against police killings and for Aboriginal rights. Spartacist supporters who joined the protest in solidarity with the besieged Aboriginal community were warmly received as they distributed this article together with a leaflet in defense of the Redfern Aboriginal militants.

**Australasian  
SPARTACIST**

DECEMBER 6—Early on the morning of 19 November, 36-year-old Aborigine Mulrunji Doomadgee, a happy-go-lucky guy and one of Palm Island's top hunters, was out crabbing on the island located 65 kilometres north-east of Townsville, in Queensland's north. Hours later, after having been arrested by police for singing on the street, Doomadgee lay dead in the police lockup with horrific injuries including four broken ribs and a ruptured liver, portal vein and spleen. Doomadgee's mother Doris, who is dying of cancer [she passed away on 16 December 2004], said, "I loved my son so much and now I have lost him and I can't understand how he could die while in custody. He was a quiet and gentle son" (*Koori Mail*, 1 December 2004).

Days later, in dramatic events reminiscent of the heroic defensive struggle against racist police terror by Aborigines in Redfern last February (see "Defend Redfern Aborigines—Mobilize Union Power!" WV No. 823, 2 April 2004), the Aboriginal people of Palm Island exploded in grief and rage after a whitewash corner's report supported the police story that Doomadgee's death was caused by a "scuffle" at the local watchhouse. Some scuffle! In fact two other prisoners said they saw police assault Doomadgee. Islander Roy Branwell, who was in an adjoining cell, stated he saw police sitting on Doomadgee's chest, punching him and calling out, "Have you had enough now Doomadgee, have you had enough?" (*Australian*, 26-27 November 2004).

Hundreds of long-suffering Aborigines, outraged at the cover-up and speaking of Doomadgee's cold-blooded murder, decided enough was enough and

torched the hated local police station, police residences and courthouse, institutions of racist state repression. For once on the receiving end, the cops fled and barricaded themselves in the nearby hospital. Others fled the island altogether.

The Peter Beattie state Labor Party (ALP) government immediately flew in 80 gun-toting Tactical Response Group cops by Chinook helicopter. They occupied the local school and set about terrorising the 4,000-strong Aboriginal community, the majority of the island's population. Armed with semiautomatic

station. With the ever-increasing number of cop killings of Aborigines, this is nothing less than a racist provocation and an incitement to further deadly racist violence. Only days later, Aboriginal youths faced Klan-style terror at the hands of white farm workers near Goondiwindi, with two youths tortured and at least one of them dragged by a rope that was tied in a noose around his neck. Meanwhile the Aboriginal populations of northern Queensland have been confronting Ku Klux Klan terror in Klan-infested rural areas around Townsville.



9 December 2004: Elizabeth Doomadgee (second from left) leads 1,200 marchers in Townsville, Australia protesting cop killing of her brother.

weapons and dressed in full battle armour, they stormed homes, kicking down doors, using stun guns, making summary arrests and holding children at gunpoint. Reminiscent of imperialist-occupied Iraq, vehicle loads of armed police patrolled the streets. One Aboriginal leader described how police acted like stormtroopers: "They deliberately closed off the island while they practised their terrorist drills on unarmed Palm Islanders" (*Australian*, 29 November 2004). *The Palm Island militants must not be left to stand alone! Trade-union power must be brought to bear—for a class-struggle fight for Aboriginal rights! There needs to be working-class-centred mobilisations in the major cities to demand: Police occupation forces out of Palm Island! Down with racist state terror!*

Twenty-six people have been arrested in Palm Island and shipped off to Townsville where they face charges including riot, serious assault and arson. One solicitor described how a conviction of riot that includes destruction of a building could equate to a life sentence.

A spokesman for the police has demanded that attempted murder charges be laid against those who torched the police

But Aboriginal communities in Palm Island, Townsville, Brisbane and elsewhere have not been cowed by this vicious state repression and fascist terror. Militants are seething about this latest cop killing. The Brisbane Aboriginal community is planning a march at 10 a.m. on Saturday, 11 December, at Roma Street Forum. *Trade-union contingents, leftists and immigrant groups must be there in solidarity with Aborigines against police terror. Free the Palm Island Aboriginal militants—drop the charges now! Drop the charges against the Redfern black militants!*

It is the same capitalist state—the cops, courts and prisons—which has systematically killed and dispossessed Aborigines for more than two hundred years, which today also targets immigrants, workers pickets and trade-union militants, such as the recently imprisoned union leader Craig Johnston. In February 1993, 350 striking workers picketed Australian Meat Holdings near Townsville and faced down scabs and strikebreaking cops for three weeks to win the reinstatement of Aboriginal stockman and unionist, Eddie Alley. This powerful strike of an integrated workforce gave a glimpse of the potential social power of the multiracial organised labour movement to champion the rights of the specially oppressed Aboriginal people suffering under racist Australian capitalism.

At a mass meeting in Brisbane on 1 December, the Murri indigenous community responded to events on Palm Island with a series of demands, subsequently supported by the reformist Socialist Alliance. These demands rightly call for the release of the Palm Island militants and the dropping of charges against them. However, the fifth and final demand places trust in the United Nations, including asking it to send an investigative team to examine the evidence. While this is seen as a way to place the horrendous oppression of Aborigines under an international spotlight, we nevertheless warn that the UN is

no friend of subjugated peoples.

To the contrary, the UN is essentially a den of imperialist thieves, that is, a bunch of John Howards and Peter Beatties, and their servants in the neocolonies—like the Papua New Guinea (PNG) government which has just accepted racist Australian cops into PNG. It has served since its inception as a "legal" fig leaf for imperialist slaughter and oppression. For example, a UN intervention force into the African state of Somalia in 1993, supposedly to provide aid, resulted in U.S. helicopter gunships massacring hundreds of black residents in the capital, Mogadishu. It is now well known that more than a decade of UN sanctions on Iraq left up to one-and-a-half million people dead. Working-class militants and anti-colonial fighters around the globe rightly hate the UN. Thus the struggle to mobilise workers around the globe—the true international allies of all downtrodden peoples—in solidarity with struggles for Aboriginal rights is undercut by UN involvement. Furthermore, the truth of racist police violence in this country has been repeatedly written in blood for more than two centuries and does not need to be further verified. What is needed is mass union/black/minority mobilisations to oppose racist state terror. *For international working-class protests in defence of Aboriginal people!*

### Palm Island: Racist Terror and Resistance

For almost a century Palm Island has epitomised the genocidal impulse of the white Australian capitalist rulers against the continent's original inhabitants. Before the white invasion of northern Queensland the island belonged to the Manbarra people. Then in 1918 the Queensland government decreed that Palm Island would become a place to confine "uncontrollable" Aborigines and Islanders. Over the next two decades, approximately 1,600 people from more than 40 different tribal and language groups across Queensland were snatched from their homes and families and imprisoned on the island.

For decades the island was run under apartheid-style laws. Blacks and whites lived in different areas. Aborigines were not allowed to speak their own languages, or drink alcohol in their homes. Those Aborigines that got work had their wages stolen. Indeed, until the 1950s, residents slaved for no pay at all! No one could leave the island without a permit from the superintendent who also censored mail. While notorious laws enshrining such conditions have been modified, the institutionalised racism very much remains. Today, the unemployment rate for the island's Aborigines is 90 percent and life expectancy is around 50 years. Islanders have had to fight for the most elementary rights. Racist government rule on Palm Island has twice been punctured by courageous strike actions; the first in 1957 against a wage cut and brutal treatment of Aboriginal women, and the second in 1974 against the sacking of the local community council.

We Marxists of the Spartacist League fight for the revolutionary mobilisation of the multiracial working class, standing at the head of all the oppressed, to confront racism and all manifestations of capitalist repression. But to unleash this force requires breaking workers away from the racist, pro-capitalist ALP, which preaches loyalty to the capitalist system, and forging a class-struggle leadership of the unions linked to an authentic communist party. The path to elementary justice, for Aboriginal people and all the oppressed and exploited, will be opened when industry and agriculture is expropriated from the profit-hungry capitalists through workers revolution.

We will not forget Mulrunji Doomadgee, who now joins the long list of Aborigines—from Eddie Murray to Daniel Yock—killed at the hands of the capitalist state, and the countless other victims of White Australian imperialism from Vietnam to Iraq. *Defend the Palm Island Aboriginal militants against racist state terror! For union actions now!* ■

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# Iraq...

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the "Anybody but Bush" sentiment, serving to reinforce illusions in the capitalist Democratic Party. **Break with the Democrats! For a revolutionary workers party! Only socialist revolution can end imperialist war!**

## Near East Quagmire

Expectations that a new elected government in Iraq might quell the insurgency have been dashed. Iraq is not a nation but a patchwork of different peoples and ethnicities carved up out of the former Ottoman Empire by the British at the end of the First World War. Thus, shifting fortunes for one or another group within Iraq have an effect elsewhere in the Near East. Under U.S. auspices in Iraq today, the Shi'ites and Kurds came out on top. Both are bickering over who gets the presidency, premiership and key ministries. The Sunnis, who dominated under Hussein (and earlier), came out the big losers under "democracy" U.S.A.-style. The Kurds also want a greater share of oil revenue and the inclusion of the oil-producing area of Kirkuk—which has a substantial Turkmen population—in Iraqi Kurdistan. This agitates Turkey, not least because it does not want to see any economic basis for an independent Kurdish state, as such would encourage the Kurdish minority in Turkey that is ruthlessly repressed.

The struggle of the Kurdish people for self-determination—i.e., to form their own state—is a just struggle, requiring the overthrow of four capitalist states: Iraq, Iran, Turkey and Syria. We call for a Socialist Republic of United Kurdistan! But the Kurdish leadership in Iraq has staked its claim with the U.S. imperialists, thus subordinating themselves and the struggle for Kurdish self-determination in Iraq today to the American-led occupation forces. The struggle for Kurdish independence can only go forward through intransigent opposition to the U.S. occupiers and the Kurdish nationalists who collaborate with them.

A perceptive article by Seamus Milne (London *Guardian*, 10 March) notes:

"What has actually taken place since 9/11 and the Iraq war is a relentless expansion of U.S. control of the Middle East, of which the threats to Syria are a part. The Americans now have a military presence in Saudi Arabia, Iraq, the UAE, Kuwait, Bahrain, Oman and Qatar—and in not one of those countries did an elected government invite them in. Of course Arabs want an end to tyrannical regimes, most of which have been supported over the years by the U.S., Britain and France: that is the source of much anti-western Muslim anger. The dictators remain in place by U.S. license, which can be revoked at any time—and managed elections are being used as another mechanism for maintaining pro-western regimes rather than spreading democracy."

In fact, democratic rights for all the peoples of Iraq and the Near East more broadly cannot be achieved under capitalism, but require the overthrow



AFF

**Giuliana Sgrena, freed Italian hostage who was wounded by U.S. fire as she was driven to Baghdad airport.**

of bourgeois rule in the region and the establishment of a socialist federation of the Near East. This is the Trotskyist program of permanent revolution, combining the struggle against imperialism with a struggle against all manner of bourgeois nationalism and religious fundamentalism. Our perspective is revolutionary, proletarian and internationalist. It is essential that the struggles on behalf of the working people of the Near East link up with struggles in the wealthy centers of world imperialism.

In so far as the opposition forces in Iraq aim their blows against the imperialist occupiers—and not in criminal sec-

tionary violence against other sectors of the population in Iraq—we stand for their military defense. The defeat of U.S. forces in Iraq would be an important win for working people of the world. At the same time, we are intransigent political opponents of the bourgeois-nationalist and reactionary woman-hating clerical forces that are behind much of the so-called Iraqi resistance.

The overwhelming military might of the American imperialist behemoth underscores the importance of the struggle here at home to defeat U.S. imperialism through workers revolution. By this we do not mean promoting Democratic Party politicians who seek to cut U.S. losses and position themselves out in front of potential social struggle. What we need is *class struggle* at home to fight against U.S. imperialism, and to defeat the war on civil liberties and minorities that the "war on terror" has wrought on the home front.

In the present period of fear and reaction, this is an uphill struggle, but no less essential. The miserable labor misleaders who tie the working people to the capitalist Democratic Party are a major obstacle to social struggle in this country. The Spartacist League fights to build a revolutionary multiracial workers party to fight for socialist revolution. The Spartacus Youth Clubs seek to win students and youth to a lifetime of partisanship with the workers in this struggle. **Defeat U.S. imperialism through workers revolution!** ■

# Joint Statement...

(continued from page 1)

colonized by Japan around the turn of the 20th century through the end of World War II. In 1937, Japanese imperialism was responsible for the Rape of Nanjing and during the war it enslaved the *ianfu* (comfort women). In 1945, the U.S. became the only power ever to use atomic weaponry, causing the death of several hundred thousand civilians in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. These bombings served as a warning to the Soviet degenerated workers state. During the Korean War in the early 1950s, U.S. imperialism was responsible for the death of some three million Koreans. China's heroic sacrifices defended the North Korean deformed workers state, stopping "United Nations" forces led by General Douglas MacArthur from grabbing the entire Korean peninsula and turning it into a neocolony of the U.S. During the Vietnam War, which ended in 1975, more than three million Vietnamese were murdered by U.S. imperialism's losing attempt to smash the social revolution there. We fight to build revolutionary workers parties and a Leninist-Trotskyist international to lead the proletariat and oppressed in the overthrow of both rapacious imperialist powers. Reforge the



Ommanney/Contact

**President Bush with Japanese prime minister Koizumi.**

Fourth International!

Following a war of conquest against China in 1895, Japan colonized Taiwan and later used it as a staging area for assaults on southern China, the Philippines and Southeast Asia during World War II. After the defeat of Japan, the Chinese nationalists were given Taiwan. The counterrevolutionary Nationalist Army and the Chinese bourgeoisie fled there after the victory of the People's Liberation Army in the Chinese civil war. Since the 1949 Chinese Revolution, from which the Chinese deformed workers state emerged, Taiwan has been an outpost for U.S. imperialism's counterrevolutionary schemes, military threats and interference in Chinese internal affairs through the puppet Chinese bourgeoisie. Taiwan has been since ancient times a part of China, and we Trotskyists will stand with China in the event of any military conflict with imperialism over Taiwan.

The overturn of capitalist property relations freed China from imperialist subjugation and resulted in the construction of a collectivized economy. Though deformed by the rule of a parasitic, nationalist Stalinist bureaucratic caste, this victory meant enormous social progress for workers, women and peasants, such as the right to a job, housing, education, childcare, social insurance and medical care. We do not minimize the danger posed to the Chinese deformed workers state by the capitalist economic penetration to which the Stalinist bureaucrats have opened the Chinese economy. However, the core of China's economy remains the collectivized state industries. We are opposed to the Stalinists' plan of

reunification with Taiwan embodied in "one country, two systems." Instead, we advance a program for the revolutionary reunification of China, which requires a workers political revolution against the Stalinist bureaucracy on the mainland, a proletarian socialist revolution in Taiwan to overthrow and expropriate the bourgeoisie, and the expropriation of the Hong Kong capitalists.

The anti-Communist military alliance between Japan and the United States was, during the Cold War, directed primarily against the former Soviet Union. China's criminal alliance with U.S. imperialism against the Soviet Union, begun under Mao Zedong in the early 1970s and continued under Deng Xiaoping, contributed to the eventual counterrevolutionary destruction of the USSR in 1991-92. Capitalist counterrevolution in the Soviet Union and across East Europe created a "unipolar" world of unbridled military aggression by U.S. imperialism abroad, as seen today in the bloody occupation of Iraq. This has been coupled with more savage attacks on workers, women, minorities and immigrants in the imperialist centers and greater plundering of all the colonial and semi-colonial countries. As in the Soviet Union, the destruction of the Chinese deformed workers state would lead to widespread impoverishment of the population as the imperialists scramble for the spoils. The fate of China and the fate of workers the world over are inextricably

linked, economically and politically.

Sixty years ago, Japan and the U.S. fought a bitter interimperialist war. At this juncture, their imperialist rivalry is subordinate to their anti-China/North Korea alliance. Over the past decade, the Pentagon has strengthened its military deployment in the Pacific Rim region and, with its incursion into Afghanistan and Central Asia, has thus significantly strengthened its military vise around China. In signing on to the U.S.-led "war on terror," Beijing has only encouraged U.S. imperialism in its counterrevolutionary drive.

Japanese imperialism is determined to throw off the constraints of the "defeated nation" syndrome with which it emerged from World War II and to boost its military might. To accomplish this, the ruling class needs to impose a domestic policy of economic austerity, whip up nationalist poison and reinforce the oppressive apparatus needed for the maintenance of capitalist law and order. In the U.S., under the guise of the "war on terror," the rulers have further reinforced their arsenal of repression, union-busting and immiseration of the working class and oppressed. Revolutionary workers parties, leading the struggle against Japanese and U.S. imperialism, must necessarily have an internationalist program and perspective. Smash the counterrevolutionary U.S./Japan alliance through workers revolution on both sides of the Pacific!

13 March 2005

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# Abortion...

(continued from page 1)

anti-abortion demagogues. The banning of this rare procedure has been used to go after abortion rights more generally. In the state of Kansas, anti-abortion attorney general Phill Kline has issued subpoenas demanding the complete medical records of scores of women and teenage girls who have had abortions after 22 weeks, at which point Kansas law restricts abortion access.

This breathtaking assault on privacy is being justified with the transparently lying claim that it is necessary to "fight child abuse": since the age of consent for a girl in Kansas to have sex is 16, a girl under that age who has an abortion is deemed to have been "raped." In fact, teenagers have consensual sex, whether the anti-sex police like it or not, and largely due to the ignorance about birth control that anti-abortion bigots deliberately foster, teenage girls often get pregnant and are in need of an abortion.

For decades, anti-abortion forces have utilized the puritanical hysteria in this country around issues of young people's sexuality to pass deadly "squeal laws" mandating that girls get their parents' consent before getting an abortion. That "child abuse" is a lying pretext to gun for abortion is revealed by the fact that the attorney general's subpoenas encompass late-term abortion patients of all ages. Criminal reprisals are posed against doctors who provide late-term abortions. Two clinics are the focus of the Kansas subpoenas—serving also to intimidate women from getting abortions. Already, fewer doctors every year agree to be trained in and perform abortions, and such anti-abortion witchhunts can only accelerate that trend.

The sinister events in Kansas have a national precedent. In November 2003, Bush became the first president since *Roe* to criminalize an abortion procedure by signing the Federal Abortion Ban, which restricts late-term abortions. The ban, which passed Congress with bipartisan support the previous month, is a federal version similar to the one in Kansas. Although three federal courts ruled the federal ban unconstitutional, then Attorney General John Ashcroft took advantage of the opportunity to issue subpoenas—also stopped by a federal court—of the medical records of hundreds of women who had obtained late-term abortions. In pursuing this witchhunt, Ashcroft relied on a clause in the ban inserted by "pro-choice" Democratic lawmakers that the procedure can be performed if deemed "medically necessary" to safeguard the health of the mother. Thanks to the "medically necessary" provision, Ashcroft had a pretext to launch his anti-woman snooping expedition in order to determine whether the procedure was actually "medically necessary."

## Break with the Democrats!

Ever since Bush won the November election in large part on the basis of his appeal to religious "moral values," the Democrats have been falling over themselves to prove they're the party Jesus would join. In January, House minor-



Scull/Newsweek

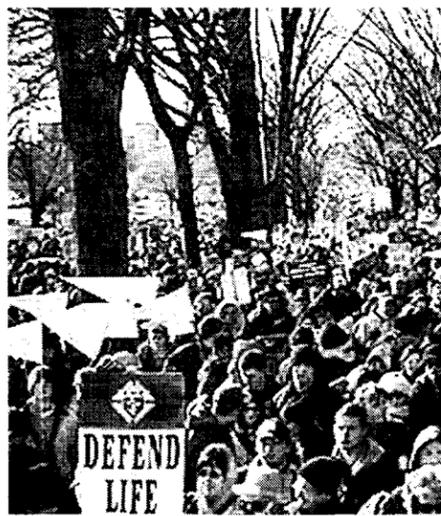
"Born-again" president Bush sent message of solidarity to January 24 anti-abortion demonstration in Washington, D.C.

ity leader Nancy Pelosi created a "Faith Working Group," appointing representative James Clyburn, a preacher's son from South Carolina, to help the Democrats recast their issues in "faith-based terms" with appropriate allusions to the Bible.

Howard Dean, the new chairman of the Democratic National Committee (DNC), in a desperate attempt to shed his image as a patron of supposedly irreligious, latte-drinking, gay-marrying liberal Vermonters, is on a "red, white and blue" tour designed to win over the "red states." In Jackson, Mississippi, Dean prayed for American troops and invoked the Bible, braying to the residents of the former Confederacy, "The South will rise again, and when it does, it will have a D after its name" (*Sun Herald*, 2 March). Dean is appealing to a particular American heritage here: the Democrats in the South, the Dixiecrats, were the historic party of slavery, the Jim Crow South and the Ku Klux Klan. In his own way, Dean is demonstrating the fact that anti-woman religious reaction and racist bigotry go hand in hand, while women's rights and black rights are entwined.

The Democrats find themselves in a bind. On the one hand, they've historically enjoyed support from black people, as well as women, as the party that, at least for the past few decades, has ostensibly defended civil rights for black people and abortion rights. On the other hand, appealing to religious sentiment necessitates that they rid themselves of unwelcome associations like civil rights and abortion rights. One result is that virtually all the leading Democrats are now ostentatiously welcoming anti-abortion bigots into the party.

Presidential loser John Kerry has called to bring "right-to-life Democrats back to the Democratic Party." Hillary Clinton, in a speech to abortion rights supporters, intoned, "I for one respect those who believe with all their heart and conscience that there are no circumstances under which abortion should be available" and called for opponents and defenders of abortion rights to come together on "common ground" like promoting abstinence. Howard Dean emphasized, "I don't have any objection to someone who is pro-life, if they [are] really dedicated to the welfare of chil-

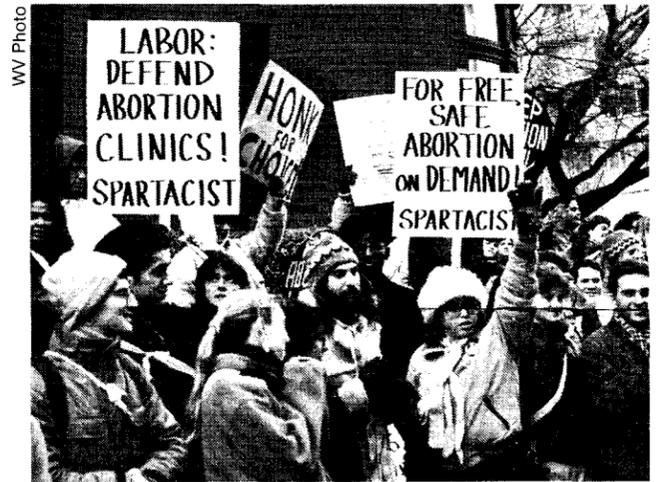


Penn for Life

dren." Among other Democrats, Dean's former opponent for DNC chair, Timothy Roemer—who ran with the support of "pro-choice" Democrat Nancy Pelosi—has always been against abortion rights. So is Senator Harry Reid of Nevada, a Mormon former police officer who is now the Senate minority leader.

History shows that the advancement in the 1960s and early 1970s of women's rights, including the right to abortion, took place not because it was spontaneously and generously granted by either capitalist party, but due to tremendous social upheavals. The civil rights movement that began in the mid 1950s with the fight against racial inequality, as well as

Spartacist League joined 2,000 others in defending local abortion clinics in Washington, D.C. against anti-abortion terrorists of Operation Rescue, January 1992.



WV Photo

later protests against the Vietnam War, together ushered in a period of extra-parliamentary struggle and social reform that benefited the working class and oppressed in general. It is useful to remember that it was no less a reactionary than Richard Nixon who was compelled in 1970 to sign into law Title X, which funds family planning assistance to poor women. The reform was a product not of the politicians, but of the social struggles of the time. *Roe v. Wade* three years later similarly reflected these struggles.

With the end of the civil rights movement, and as protests against the Vietnam War disappeared with the withdrawal of U.S. troops and the end of the draft, the pendulum began to swing to the right, and the reforms that had just been won were subject to attack. The first significant assault on abortion took place under the administration of Democrat Jimmy Carter, the country's first "born-again Christian" president, who in 1977 sneered, "There are many things in life that are not fair" as he signed into law the Hyde Amendment which eliminated abortion coverage from the Medicaid health plans of 23 million poor women. The Hyde Amendment emboldened the anti-abortion zealots to attack birth control, slashing Title X funds for family planning, and gave renewed steam to the movement to roll back abortion.

The Reagan years and those of Bush Senior were dark ones for defenders of abortion rights, but the subsequent Clinton years offered little respite. Clinton carried out a war on poor and black women which went virtually unopposed by the feminists as long as abortion remained legal and accessible to more privileged, particularly white, women. In 1996 Clinton signed the Personal

Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA), which authorized additional state control over the personal and sexual lives of welfare recipients. In language that echoes today's "moral values" climate, the act proclaimed that "marriage is the foundation of a successful society" and enabled states to use their Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) funds to promote marriage and reduce the incidence of out-of-wedlock pregnancies. The House version of the act had explicitly racist overtones, citing crime and rising "illegitimacy" rates among blacks. The passage of PRWORA was one episode in Clinton's carrying out his vicious pledge to "end welfare as we know it."

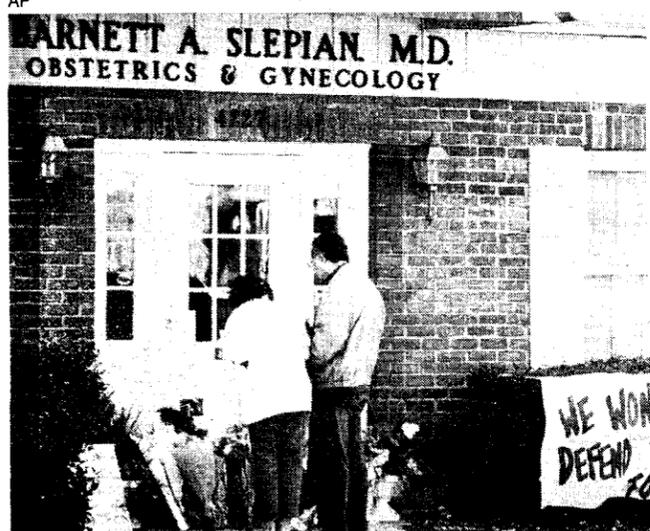
The Democrats and Republicans demonstrate their common interests as parties of capitalist rule through, among other things, upholding the sanctity of the family. The deep-seated oppression of women is rooted in the institution of the family which arose with the advent of private property as a mechanism for passing property from one generation to the next—the monogamous wife ensures the paternity of the heirs. The role of the family is to instill respect for authority and act as a conservatizing force. Together with religion, the family serves to instill a morality that proscribes anything that deviates from the family ideal—from premarital to gay sex. The institution of the family reinforces, as Friedrich Engels put it, "the supremacy of the man over the woman, and the individual family as the economic unit of society" (*The Origin*

*of the Family, Private Property and the State*, 1884). Thus, the burden of raising the next generation of workers rests on the family. Women's liberation mandates a socialist revolution to end capitalist rule and lay the material basis for the replacement of the family through socializing domestic responsibilities, opening the door not only to legal equality but to social equality.

## The War on Abortion Rights

With the ascendancy of "moral values," reactionary ideologues have been gunning for abortion as fast as they can. On 20 November 2004, Congress passed the Federal Refusal Clause, as part of a spending bill, that permits any health provider—health insurers, HMOs, public or private hospitals, clinics, and pharmacists as well as doctors and nurses—to refuse to be involved in abortion, up to and including refusing to inform a woman where to get one. Similar measures exist in nearly all states, allowing individuals like pharmacists to refuse to dispense not only emergency contraception—which prevents pregnancy if taken within 72 hours of having unprotected sex—but even standard birth control pills. Two new anti-abortion bills being considered in Congress are the Child Custody Protection Act, which would make it a federal crime for anyone other than a parent or guardian to take a minor across state lines for an abortion, and the Post-Abortion Depression Research and Care Act. The cynicism of the capitalist class never ceases to amaze: they expect us to believe that in this country, where poor women and their children are thrown off welfare and onto the streets, the rulers are concerned about "protecting children" and women's "depression research and care"!

Mourners place flowers before Amherst, N.Y. clinic of Dr. Barnett Slepian (inset), murdered in 1998 for his courageous commitment to women's right to abortion.



WIVB-TV

Among those who will be considering the bills are new Senators John Thune of South Dakota, who made opposition to abortion a central theme of his campaign, and Tom Coburn of Oklahoma, who has called for the death penalty for abortion doctors—in the name of being “pro-life”!

Coburn’s call is no idle threat. Seven abortion doctors and their staff have been murdered by “right-to-life” terrorists in the past 12 years, while clinics and doctors who courageously continue to provide their services have been fire-bombed, stalked, and threatened. One of the most prominent of these is Dr. George Tiller of Kansas, who has defied repeated mobilizations of the anti-abortion movement by providing late-term abortions to women who would otherwise have nowhere to go, and whose clinic is undoubtedly the main target of the Kansas attorney general’s subpoena of abortion records. He has adamantly defended his patients’ right to confidential medical care against not only the anti-abortion bigots, but now the state as well.

We honor the doctors and staff who continue to provide abortions despite real physical danger. The courage and basic human decency of such individuals was recently movingly depicted in the movie *Vera Drake*, which tells the story of a woman in 1950s Britain who defied the ban on abortion to carry out what she saw as her elementary duty to help women in need. The anti-abortion bigots want to bring back the days when abortion was illegal and untold numbers of women were butchered or mutilated by back-alley or self-induced abortions. Nearly 1,700 women died in 1940, and, though the number of deaths declined afterward due to the introduction of antibiotics in the 1940s, by 1965 nearly 200 women were still dying each year. And these are official figures; reality was far worse.

Unwanted pregnancy is often the result when sex education is replaced with ideologically driven “abstinence only” propaganda—a favorite project of both the Republicans as well as Democrats like the Clintons. Today, 58 percent of all schools in the U.S. have “abstinence only” education, and that percentage is increasing. The programs deliberately foster fear—of AIDS, STDs, pregnancy, cancer, poverty, loneliness, depression, infertility and suicide, among other things—in a futile attempt to get young people to abstain from sex. One “abstinence only” video queries: “What if I want to have sex before I get married?” and answers: “Well, I guess you just have to be prepared to die. And you’ll probably take your spouse and one or more of your children with you.”

And the anti-abortion zealots are inflicting their ignorance and anti-woman arrogance on the rest of the world. Bush observed his first day in office on 22 January 2001 (*Roe’s* anniversary) by reimposing Reagan’s global “gag rule,” which bans family planning funding to overseas



Civil rights protest in 1960s. Mass struggle for black rights opened road for other gains, such as abortion rights.

groups that provide abortions or referrals, even if they do so with non-U.S. funds. The Bush administration pushes “abstinence only” propaganda on programs like the United Nations Population Fund and the Reproductive Health for Refugees consortium. The result is to cause death through AIDS as well as unwanted pregnancies among huge numbers of poor women throughout the world, by callously and deliberately depriving them of birth control devices and condoms.

### For Women’s Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!

To varying degrees, feminist organizations like NARAL Pro-Choice America and the National Organization for Women have barely uttered a peep of protest over the decades as abortion and other reproductive rights were all but eliminated for poor and black women. This fact reflects their *class* nature as spokesmen for mostly white, successful, petty-bourgeois women. Most recently, NARAL Pro-Choice America has cravenly dropped its opposition to a grotesque anti-abortion measure being put forward in Congress, dubbed the “Unborn Child Pain Awareness Act,” which would require doctors to offer anesthetic for the fetuses of women seeking abortions after 20 weeks of pregnancy!

Such capitulation to anti-abortionists is not new. *Newsday* (9 February) reported, regarding the passage of last April’s “Unborn Victims of Violence Act,” that “when anti-abortion groups praised the decision to charge Scott Peterson with murdering his unborn son, abortion rights advocates stayed quiet. Though the move clashed with their conviction that a fetus is not a person, they let the issue pass, apparently fearing a backlash.” Squeamishness in the face of the anti-abortion assault was conveyed piquantly in 2003, when NARAL Pro-Choice America observed *Roe v. Wade* by officially dropping the unpalatable word “abortion” from its

name. It reflects the current prevalence of anti-science, anti-woman bigotry that even those who claim to defend abortion shrink from speaking its name.

The International Socialist Organization (ISO), whose *Socialist Worker* has carried a couple of articles recently centered on “how to defend the right to choose,” is calling to take to the streets to defend abortion rights. One such article, “Have Democrats Surrendered on Abortion Rights?” (4 February), concludes that the “anti-choice” forces can be beaten



27 August 1970: Spartacist contingent at “women’s liberation movement” march, New York City.

back through actions to defend the clinics, such as took place in the 1990s. We Spartacists took part in such clinic defense, which for a time helped forestall assaults on access to abortion.

Our opposition to the Democratic Party is based on the fact that it is a capitalist party, by definition hostile to the interests of working people and the oppressed. In contrast, the ISO opposes merely the current policies of the Democrats. Thus, while bemoaning the Democrats’ rightward plunge on abortion rights, and the

feminists’ accommodation to that plunge, the ISO’s propaganda lacks a call to *break* with the Democrats. The ISO’s calls to take to the streets amount to nothing more than a more militant version of the tactic of pressuring the Democrats. In fact, aiming to push the Democrats to the left is in effect the ISO’s program. This is evidenced, for example, by their support to the capitalist politician Ralph Nader for president in 2000 and 2004. Nader’s stated purpose in running was to convince the Democrats to move to the left. He called the fight for women’s equality “gonadal politics” and raising specific demands against racial discrimination “divisive.” In keeping with its desire to appeal to what “pro-choice” Democrats deem possible, the ISO limits itself to calling to “defend the right to choose”—in utter disdain for the fact that this right is meaningless if women have no access to clinics or ability to pay.

The fight for abortion rights mandates that we build a revolutionary workers party, waging a political struggle to break working people from the Democratic Party. The working class has the social power necessary to mobilize in defense of not only women, but all the oppressed. We have no illusions that it will be easy to convey to many workers that they have a stake in defending abortion rights. In this religious country, many workers have been equivocal at best about women’s right to abortion. In today’s reactionary “moral values” climate it is even more difficult to win workers to the under-

standing that abortion is not a narrow “women’s issue” but a *class* issue: an essential democratic right, the removal of which would redound against *all* working people. As we have so often remarked, democratic rights either go forward together or fall back separately. The status of women is inextricably linked to that of the working class, which is uniquely situated to bring capitalist rule, and the basis for women’s oppression, to an end. *For women’s liberation through socialist revolution!* ■

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

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

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

### Boston

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

### Chicago

Box 6441, Main PO  
Chicago, IL 60680  
(312) 563-0441

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

### Los Angeles

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

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

### New York

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

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

### Oakland

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

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

### San Francisco

Box 77494  
San Francisco  
CA 94107

## TROTSKYIST LEAGUE OF CANADA/LIGUE TROTSKYSTE DU CANADA

### Toronto

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

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Box 2717, Main P.O.  
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(604) 687-0353

## Bankruptcy...

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from loan sharks disappeared, and the deregulated credit industry exploded. It has been a free-for-all feeding frenzy for creditors, where loan terms can be anything the banks want, and they are free to change the rules at any time. In 2003 the credit card companies mailed out five billion credit card solicitations.

American capitalism is characterized by a cold and relentless drive to invent yet new ways of wringing more from the working class, especially as the economic situation gets worse. At the same time, capitalist ideologues declaim that poverty is a personal failure, a crime. America was built on indentured servitude and black chattel slavery, and of the original immigrants to this country, many came fleeing creditors in Europe. In 1730, James Oglethorpe, one of the founders of Georgia, made plans to send imprisoned or re-

leased debtors from England to populate the new colony. In the early 19th century, public auctions were held to offer the poor to landowners who bid on them for a period of indentured servitude. As Krugman put it in his column:

“Warren Buffett recently made headlines by saying America is more likely to turn into a ‘sharecroppers’ society’ than an ‘ownership society.’ But I think the right term is a ‘debt peonage’ society—after the system, prevalent in the post-Civil War South, in which debtors were forced to work for their creditors. The bankruptcy bill won’t get us back to those bad old days all by itself, but it’s a significant step in that direction.”

As revolutionary Marxists, we fight to get rid of this decaying capitalist system and build a new society where the working class that produces all the wealth will rule. In a future communist society, young people will read in schools about the brutal nature of the long-gone capitalist-imperialist system, and how it tried in its epoch of decay to prop itself up by squeezing it out of the hides of the poorest. ■

# WORKERS VANGUARD

## U.S. Hands Off Syria!

# Down With the Occupation! U.S. Out of Iraq Now!

By now, most intelligent people know that if George Bush starts talking about bringing freedom and democracy to your hometown, you just made the endangered species list. Just ask the former residents of Falluja, which was reduced to rubble, left without any essential elements of modern infrastructure, from potable water to electricity. Two-thirds of the population fled in the face of threats by the imperialist "liberators."

What does "sovereign" and "liberated" Iraq look like? On a slow day, about 40 people are killed either by the U.S. military or by suicide bombers in mosques and in the country's urban streets. People are rightly afraid to leave their homes, and the violence is reflecting sectarian and ethnic divisions that have been reinforced by the war and American occupation.

Meanwhile, the Bush administration has seized on the assassination of former Lebanese prime minister Rafik Hariri to advance U.S. and Israeli objectives against Syria, including Syrian withdrawal from Lebanon. With Orwellian audacity, Bush proclaims, "The Lebanese people have the right to determine their future free from domination of a foreign power." Already, Syria has begun withdrawing some troops from Lebanon. Over the past several weeks, Lebanon has been rocked by demonstrations demanding Syrian withdrawal, and by counterdemonstrations organized by Hezbollah. A central demand raised at the anti-Syrian protests has been for an "international investigation" into Hariri's assassination. We denounce any and all U.S.



"Democracy" under imperialist occupation: U.S. soldiers in Mosul search Iraqis lined up to vote in January.

and United Nations meddling in Lebanon and demand: *U.S. hands off Syria!*

In Iraq, U.S. forces recently murdered Italian secret service agent Nicola Calipari as he escorted Giuliana Sgrena, a journalist for the leftist *Il Manifesto* newspaper, to freedom. In a report on her ordeal in *Il Manifesto* (6 March), Sgrena recalled the last words of the kidnapers who held her for 28 days: "Be careful, because the Americans don't want you to return." Prior to her kidnapping, Sgrena provided photographic evidence of the use of cluster bombs and the wounding of children

during the American siege of Falluja.

Giuliana Sgrena's case made the news because she is a Western woman and journalist, and the murdered Nicola Calipari was a very highly placed Italian state agent. But what happened to them happens to men, women and children in Iraq every day. Yet they remain nameless, faceless victims. So deeply do the American and British governments care for the people they "liberated" that they don't even count the mounting civilian corpses. A recent study by Johns Hopkins University conservatively estimates 100,000 civilian

deaths since the invasion of Iraq.

Imperialism is, as Bolshevik leader V. I. Lenin described, the highest stage of capitalism, the product of the inevitable scramble for spheres of economic influence and domination. It cannot be reformed. To end imperialist war, the working class must overthrow the profit-driven capitalist system through a series of thoroughgoing socialist revolutions. Capitalist society is divided into two fundamental classes: those who own the wealth and control the political system and those who are forced to sell their labor-power to survive. It is only the latter, the proletariat, that has the objective interest and social power to sweep away capitalism. If this perspective appears remote or utopian in these reactionary "death of communism" times, pragmatic and empiricist readers should note: the 1917 proletarian socialist revolution in Russia, carried out in the midst of the carnage of the First World War, was the *only* antiwar movement that ever worked.

It is precisely this understanding that the organizers of the antiwar and anti-occupation protests reject, from Workers World Party and its International ANSWER coalition to United for Peace and Justice. Obscuring the necessity for socialist revolution, they push the illusion that mass demonstrations can pressure capitalism and imperialism to serve the interests of the oppressed and exploited. Flowing from their rejection of the need to get rid of the whole capitalist system, they organized protests that fed

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## Fight Convictions of Lynne Stewart, Mohamed Yousry, Ahmed Abdel Sattar!

Leftist lawyer Lynne Stewart, her translator Mohamed Yousry and paralegal Ahmed Abdel Sattar were convicted on February 10 in federal court on all counts in a government frame-up "anti-terrorism" trial. Stewart and Yousry could face decades behind bars; Abdel Sattar could face life imprisonment. This is an outrage and dangerous provocation against civil rights and liberties for *everyone*. These convictions must be overturned or the right to an attorney, the right to dissent, the right not to be disappeared by the U.S. government will be in fact vitiated in this country.

Stewart was the court-appointed attorney for the blind Egyptian Sheik Omar Abdel Rahman (imprisoned for life on charges stemming from the 1993

World Trade Center bombing). She zealously defended her client and defied the government's attempt to hold him incommunicado as if he were a "ghost detainee" in Abu Ghraib, Guantánamo, or some other U.S. torture center. Government-approved translator Mohamed Yousry—a popular York College professor (fired by the craven CUNY administration upon his indictment), doctoral candidate at New York University and opponent of Islamic fundamentalism—was convicted of...doing his job, translating. Abdel Sattar, a supporter of the sheik, was convicted of conspiracy to kill and kidnap persons in a foreign country—and the conspiracy was such a secret that the government prosecutors couldn't say which persons

in what country, yet admitted not a single act of violence resulting from this alleged "conspiracy" occurred!

The Spartacist League and Partisan Defense Committee, a legal and social defense organization in accordance with the views of the Spartacist League, urge everyone to energetically take up this case. Get your union or organization to publicly go on record against this ominous precedent and organize to overturn the convictions! Fight the frame-up! Send donations to the Lynne Stewart Defense Committee, 350 Broadway, Suite 700, New York, NY 10013. (For more information, see "Government Conspiracy Against All Our Rights!" in *Workers Vanguard* No. 842, 18 February.)



February 10: Lawyer Lynne Stewart outside courthouse denounces her conviction in government frame-up.