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(COMMUNIST ORGANIZATION FOR THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL)*

*Re-Create
the Fourth International*

Global Mass Opposition Demands Revolutionary Leadership!

U.S. Takeover of Iraq Threatens World

The U.S. invasion and occupation of Iraq has nothing to do with liberating the Iraqi people from a brutal tyrant. Washington backed Saddam's rise to power. It armed and trained his dictatorship and supported its bloodiest crimes, including the mass murder of Iranians and Kurds with chemical weapons. The U.S. ruling class turned against Saddam only when he stepped on its toes by invading Kuwait in 1990.

"Operation Iraqi Freedom" is an imperialist war of mass murder and economic pillage. It is about enforcing the enslavement of the peoples of Iraq, the Middle East and the world. It aims to dramatically tighten the American ruling class's already powerful grip over the world economy, against both the masses it exploits and the capitalists it competes against for the spoils. It also means a stepped-up war against the working classes in the imperialist countries themselves.

The U.S. invasion and occupation of Iraq is not just the "policy choice" of the Bush administration. With good reason, large sections of the U.S. ruling class are worried that Bush has embarked on an adventure that could create more problems than solutions. But these critics have no real alternative. The White House policy is an answer to fundamental needs of the international capitalist system and to urgent needs of American capital in particular.

As capitalism's global economic crisis deepens, bloody wars will only be repeated on a larger scale. This war signals increasing imperialist aggression against the "third world." It also points to growing rivalries among the competing world powers which, if



Cairo, Egypt, March 21: Ten thousand protested U.S. invasion of Iraq and fought police. The struggle against imperialism continues: U.S. Out of Iraq Now!

not halted by revolution, will inevitably condemn humanity to a Third World War.

But there is an alternative. From this horror, a new world free of exploitation and oppression can be built. Working-class revolutions that overthrow imperialist capitalism around the world can clear the way for the building of a communist society of freedom and plenty.

The march of history is speeding up. Never before has the task of building an authentic revolutionary communist party to lead the struggle been so urgent. The banner of a re-created Fourth International, the Trotskyist world party of socialist revolution, was raised against the horrors of Stalinism; it alone offers the way forward to the defeat of imperialism. It must become the organizing point for all revolutionary-minded workers today and rally

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LRP/COFI Report

RWO-UKRAINE JOINS COFI

The Communist Organization for the Fourth International (COFI) took a significant and inspiring step forward at its 3rd International Conference held March 14-16 in Warsaw, Poland, as the Revolutionary Workers Organization (RWO) of Ukraine formally joined COFI.

COFI and its U.S. section, the League for the Revolutionary Party (LRP), have been engaged in close collaborative work with the RWO-Ukraine for a few years already. Through that work, both parties have become convinced that we share the same fundamental proletarian revolutionary Marxist world view, and have close agreement on details of our program and method.

The decision to formally unite our forces in COFI will greatly strengthen the fight to re-establish the genuine program of Marxism, Leninism and Trotskyism against those who have dragged those banners through the filth of capitulation to capitalism, reformism and Stalinism for over half a century. Our program, as Trotsky stated, can be summed up in two words: socialist revolution.

The LRP-U.S. and RWO-Ukraine as well as supporters in KOVI-BRD (Germany) and RWO-Russia confirmed our fundamental agreement on this program in unanimously adopting the updated COFI Political Resolution, which we will publish in the near future. The conference also unanimously adopted a declaration against U.S. imperialism's war on Iraq, which began just days after the conclusion of the conference. (See page 3.)

The RWO-Ukraine independently developed the same key positions as the LRP-U.S. on the vital workers' struggles in the former Stalinist states: absolute support for the workers' struggles against the Stalinist regimes, in particular the world-shaking battles of Polish workers against Jaruzelski in 1980-1981 and of Soviet workers against Gorbachev in 1989-1991 – combined with absolute opposition to forces like Walesa and Yeltsin who betrayed these struggles.

Through long, serious and productive political discussions, our organizations have also come to common agreement on the understanding that the USSR and the rest of the Stalinist states were statified capitalist in their class character. They have been so

ever since Stalin completed the social counterrevolution by destroying the proletarian character of the Soviet state at every level in the late 1930's, beginning with the anti-soviet Constitution of 1936 ("the juridical liquidation of the dictatorship of the proletariat" – Trotsky) and concluding with the completion of the mass purges ("a pre-emptive civil war" against the working class – Trotsky) and consolidation of the de-proletarianized regime in 1939. The RWO-Ukraine played an important role in making clear the significance of understanding the nature of the Stalinist regimes as "regent classes" for the bourgeoisie, preparing the way for its return.

We further have agreement on the counterrevolutionary role of such actions as the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, which held back and put a brake on the revolution there under the guise of "defending" it. That legacy, complete with the false cover of "opposing fundamentalism," lives on in Russia's devastating war on Chechnya.

The comrades of the RWO have taken a courageous and principled stand in defense of the Chechen people and against all forms of chauvinist support for Russia's genocidal invasion. They have taken on the fake-left Stalinist chauvinists who dominate the left movements, boldly advancing our internationalist position with leaflets and slogans at demonstrations and other events. And they condemned the chauvinist stand of the Kiev "permanent anti-war committee" formed around the February 15 protests, whose Stalinist leaders forebade any slogans in defense of Chechnya or against Russia's invasion as a condition of taking part in the committee. Shamefully, the biggest and most cravenly opportunist fake-Trotskyist groups in Ukraine, the CWI and LRCI sections there, joined the committee despite this chauvinist requirement. The RWO continues to play an active role in all anti-war demonstration and events, but not under the Stalinist yoke of this contemptible bloc.

The RWO-Ukraine has also made a name for itself over the past several years with its consistent and successful work supporting and often leading struggles of workers at important industrial workplaces in the Kiev area. The RWO has played a key role in defending workers and helping them organize small but significant independent unions. In the former Soviet Union, unlike the West, most of the official union organizations are nothing but state or company unions, which forces revolutionaries to adopt different strategies.

While recognizing the need under these conditions to set up
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Declaration on the Coming War Against Iraq

Adopted by the 3rd Conference of the Communist Organization for the Fourth International
Warsaw, Poland, March 14–16, 2003

As we meet, the world is again on the brink of a devastating imperialist war. The imminent American attack on Iraq is yet another ugly episode in the long, blood-stained history of capitalism.

As revolutionary proletarian communists, we openly stand for the military defense of Iraq and for the defeat of American aggression. We are heartened by the fact that masses in every part of the world are forcefully demonstrating their hostility to the coming war. We will do everything we can to turn the opposition to war from patriotic and pacifist conceptions to a firm class-conscious fight against imperialism.

Our military defense of Iraq does not mean any political defense or support to the Iraqi bourgeois dictatorship headed by Saddam Hussein. The American superpower is seeking to punish Saddam, its former subordinate ally. In the eyes of his former masters, his crime was not the tyranny he visited upon the Iraqi people but that he tried to maximize his own power against the interests of imperialism by attacking Kuwait. The first Gulf War, the murderous U.N. sanctions and the currently planned war were designed to warn the other subordinated rulers in the neo-colonial world – the other Saddam Husseins, the other Milosevics, the other Noriegas of the past and the future – that they must faithfully obey Washington or face obliteration.

The war has an even greater aim. The workers of Asia, Europe, Africa, Latin America and the Middle East are rising up and fighting back against deepening exploitation. The coming attempt to devastate Baghdad and massacre more thousands and thousands of innocent Iraqi workers is a warning that the American ruling class will use all its might to enforce its avarice.

The opposition of the French and German imperialists stems in part from the fear that the war will provoke greater upheavals in the Middle East and at home. However, their opposition is primarily a reaction to the United States' open and aggressive unilateralism in its foreign policy, whose immediate aim is to control Iraqi oil and thereby tighten America's chokehold over their oil supplies as well as its military domination of the Middle East.

Long ago, at the height of the Cold War, our political tendency alone predicted that the next world war – if not prevented by socialist revolution – in all probability would not be between the U.S. and the USSR but among the U.S., Germany/West Europe and Japan. We also saw that the U.S.'s enemies of that moment, Russia and China, would inevitably be enlisted as junior partners of one or the other of these antagonistic major imperialist blocs. The coming attack on Iraq has brought this developing inter-imperialist rivalry to the surface of world events, as the West European imperialists have been forced to challenge American imperialist hegemony.

The U.S. rulers face added dangers in pursuing their headlong drive toward war. Cracks are already beginning within the capitalist class itself. While these may be subordinated if the war proves to be immediately successful, they could open up widely if the war machine falters during the invasion or as a consequence. However, the world capitalist crisis

and its internal impact have already impelled the U.S. capitalists to press their attack further on the American working class. This, combined with the war, could provoke an upheaval by the workers if the war is not concluded quickly. The potential impact on anti-war actions would be enormous.

Clearly the working-class presence within the struggle against the war has been more forceful in West Europe. Trade union action is a sign of how deep working-class hostility runs in these countries, accelerated by deteriorating economic conditions.

The genuine hatred of imperialism and its arrogant exploitation of masses everywhere is producing explosive demonstrations against America's adventure in Iraq by workers and other oppressed people across the world. They see the links between their desperation, the U.S.'s power play in the Middle East, and the continuing imperialist oppression and inhuman violence against the Palestinians and Chechens.

In the context of the floundering world capitalist economy and the growing signs of a massive worldwide depression, the potential for unity between the anti-war and the economic struggles and protests is being heightened by the moment. Within the growing anti-war movement in the various parts of the world, we communist revolutionaries pledge ourselves once again to fight for working-class leadership of all the oppressed and exploited masses, of all the anti-war fighters, of all the demonstrators who seek a world without war and poverty.

We emblazon the truth upon our banners: only the re-creation of the Fourth International as the proletarian world vanguard party can lead the socialist revolution, the only hope for now-suffering humanity.

*League for the Revolutionary Party, U.S.
Communist Organization for the Fourth International
(KOFI-BRD), Germany
Revolutionary Workers Organization, Ukraine
Revolutionary Workers Organization, Russia*



London, March 22: 500,000 denounce U.S.-British war against Iraq.

Movements, Misleaders and the Role of Revolutionaries:

Spartacist Anti-LRP Polemics Backfire

The Spartacist League (SL), rather than argue over the many fundamental political differences they have with the League for the Revolutionary Party, finds it easier to distort or totally invent our positions without answering our actual arguments. Lately the Spartacists have embarked on a stepped-up campaign against us.

At the January 18 anti-war demonstration in Washington they hawked a misnamed “LRP Truth Kit,” made up of back issues of their paper with anti-LRP articles. The January 17 *Workers Vanguard* article on the then impending Iraq war included a section subheaded “LRP: ‘United Front’ with Imperialist Liberals,” along with a separate attack at us for raising the demand on Arab states that they arm the Palestinians at the time of Israel’s bloodiest offensive last year. On January 31 they ran a two-page article, “LRP: Apologists for Arab Nationalism.” And in early February, they finally accepted our challenge to debate them publicly, face to face, a demand they have rejected for many years. The debate will take place in New York City on May 10.

Why this unusual attention? We have for years punctured their mind-boggling claim to be Trotskyists, demonstrating that Spartacist politics have nothing in common with the steadfast opposition to imperialism taught by Lenin and Trotsky. In the past year our polemics have powerfully struck home. Our criticism of their convoluted position on the Israel-Palestine question last fall in *Proletarian Revolution* No. 64 devastatingly exposed their effectively Zionist (and therefore pro-imperialist) line. And our work in the New York Transport Workers Union, which came close to a shutting down the capital of world imperialism with a strike this past December, contrasted sharply with the Spartacists’ cowardly refusal to advocate a strike or do anything else in the union, despite their having a number of supporters in its ranks.

For years, as opposed to the SL, the LRP has been able to predict the general line of development of the international class struggle. Likewise, our well-known leadership in struggles within trade unions, our activism and the fact that our views are getting a wider hearing stand in stark contrast to the pessimistic, cynical

Spartacist League, which abstains from the real class struggle and increasingly turns to an insular political life sustained by nasty slanderous attacks on left-wing opponents. No wonder they are lashing out at us.

WHOSE “OPPORTUNIST APPETITES”?

Here we will take up only their attacks on our anti-war position and aspects of the Palestinian struggle. We have fully answered their other charges elsewhere. (See the box on page 7.)

On the anti-war movement, their January 17 polemic quotes *PR* as follows:

The task of genuine revolutionaries is not just to “build the movement,” although we are of course in favor of the largest and strongest anti-war protests possible. We need also to fight for them to be built as genuine united fronts, where all voices are heard, including that of revolutionaries – not just those who support the Democrats and other pro-imperialist liberals. We also fight within the movement for revolutionary proletarian leadership, so that it points to a lasting challenge to capitalist attacks and imperialist war.

To which the SL replies:

By its own admission, the LRP promotes an alliance with the class enemy – “Democrats and other pro-imperialist liberals.” The idea of building a “revolutionary leadership” out of such a cabal is downright absurd; however, it is a measure of the opportunist impulses that animate the LRP. There cannot be a common movement and a common program against imperialist war with representatives of the very capitalist class in whose interests such wars are waged.

Any honest reader of our paragraph would know that when we said that we “fight within the movement for revolutionary proletarian leadership,” that means fighting *against* the Democrats and liberals. Indeed just paragraphs before that part of our article the SL selectively quoted from, we attacked “liberal imperialist” Democrats Jesse Jackson, Cynthia McKinney and Al Sharpton, who “denounce ‘Bush’s war’ to push the fraud that Democrats in power would act differently.” The Spartacists apparently have short attention spans, as well as utter contempt for their own readers.

As for “opportunist impulses that animate” socialists to imagine building a revolutionary leadership with pro-imperialist liberals, while this is a slanderous characterization of the LRP, it accurately describes the SL at times, depending on what position they think offers them some short-term gain. When the SL is confronted with coalitions and movements they can’t control, they adopt a sectarian posture: they stand outside the struggle and hurl condemnations from the safety of their newspaper office. But when they get a chance to run a coalition with liberal Democrats themselves, the Spartacists can adopt a thoroughly craven posture. Readers of *PR* may remember that in 1994, when Democratic Party liberals



LRP marching with defenders of Palestine and Iraq in New York City, March 22.

decided to participate in a protest against the Ku Klux Klan in Illinois, Spartacist praise was positively effusive. *Workers' Vanguard* (Feb. 4) raved:

The role played in this mobilization by black Democrats, especially by Cook County Commissioner Danny Davis but also the other black politicians, both in Chicago and in the state legislature, was really unusual. ... These Democrats who want to struggle have a very big contradiction: black people need a party that will fight for their interests. It is currently abundantly clear that this cannot happen within the Democratic Party. If a workers party with some social weight existed, some of the more serious of these black Democrats would very likely come over to such a party.

What's so unusual? Liberal Democrats are always fearful of being exposed as agents of the ruling class. They fake left and pose as champions of the oppressed in order to prevent their supporters rejecting them in favor of an independent and militant struggle. It will happen more and more as the class struggle heats up. Joining them in struggle in order to expose them as fakers is crucial; that is the issue in the SL's polemic against us in the anti-war movement today.

While the SL adopts a sectarian posture today, it is only preparing future opportunist backflips like the one quoted above, where they promote the "absurd" idea that pro-capitalist liberals can advance the revolutionary cause. As Trotsky said, a sectarian is merely an opportunist afraid of the sight of his own shadow. The SL's short memory (really the hiding of opportunist maneuvering under a mountain of lies) apparently applies to themselves as well.

THE ANTI-WAR MOVEMENT

The problem of pro-imperialist liberal Democrats faking left to prevent their supporters from breaking with the Democratic Party is posed point-blank, as the Spartacists like to say, in today's anti-war movement. The dominant "socialists" in the various coalitions invite the Democrats to speak at their rallies and promise in return that not only will they say nothing to embarrass them, but that they will police the movement and make sure nobody else exposes them either. These coalitions thus attract the participation often of thousands of people with illusions in these Democrats. Instead of helping them overcome these illusions, they help the Democrats reinforce them.

That is why we are opposed to all the major anti-war "coalitions" in the U.S. today: United for Peace and Justice, Not In Our Name and ANSWER. (See *PR* 66.) Rather than simply opposing the war, they all embrace pro-imperialist liberal reformist political programs. Since the liberal Democratic sentiment dominates the movement's platforms, we want the anti-war protesters to also hear the voices of revolutionaries challenging the pro-imperialist line. That would require genuine united fronts where all have the same democratic right to make their voices heard, as opposed to the populist political coalitions that now police the movement. The liberals are there whether we like it or not; the point is to combat them, not leave them unchallenged or run away from the actions they mislead.

In the coalition planning anti-war demonstrations in Chicago, LRP supporters successfully argued against the adoption of liberal reformist slogans; there was already agreement against openly imperialist positions like support to the U.N. When the coalition decided to invite Jesse Jackson and other liberals to share its platform, leaders of the International Socialist Organization (ISO) moved to ban the LRP from speaking. But we won the majority of coalition members to defend the right of all to have their voices heard. As we report on page 11, we used our opportunity to speak from the platform to not only call for the

defeat of U.S. imperialism in the war but also to denounce the war-mongering Democratic Party as no alternative.

In the end Jackson and other Democrats didn't show – perhaps they'd been warned that revolutionaries would be speaking. They certainly couldn't have been worried about the Spartacists, who boycotted the coalition and could only stand idly by at the demonstration as the crowd listened to us. Had the SL had its way, the platform would have been safe for the Democrats.

"STUPID ULTIMATISM"

The SL says that "there cannot be a common movement and a common program against imperialist war" with representatives of capital. At first glance this assertion might seem to be true, but it actually buries elements of truth in a ridiculous muddle designed to hide rather than reveal the road to defeating imperialism. The only political program that truly opposes imperialist war is that of world communist revolution. Between the revolutionary program of ending imperialist wars by overthrowing imperialism, and liberal programs that dream of maintaining the system without its inevitable consequences, there can indeed be no common ground. Revolutionaries consistently *counterpose* their program to that of pro-capitalist politicians of every stripe.

But at this time, only a handful of people in this country regard themselves as revolutionary opponents of capitalism. This allows liberal representatives of the ruling class to move left and rhetorically oppose imperialist war. By doing so they can attract the support of tens of thousands of people who oppose imperialist war and mistakenly think that the liberals offer an alternative. Thus participation in *movements* against imperialist war with representatives of capital *is* possible. The problem is that the domination of the movement by capitalist politicians guarantees that such movements will never really challenge imperialist war.

Revolutionary Marxists have always distinguished any *movement* from the *program of its leadership*, but the Spartacists' analysis deliberately confuses these two things. Lenin and Trotsky argued that revolutionaries should pursue a *united front* struggle with the pro-capitalist leaders the masses look to, in order to expose those leaders and their program in practice. For them, united fronts had nothing to do with common political programs with non-revolutionaries. They mean *joint actions* against common enemies, where the participants have the right to disagree over program. Bolsheviks openly use this tactic as a *weapon* to expose capitulatory leaderships in order to win away their supporters.

The SL once paid lip service to this method. In an article "On the United Front Question," Spartacist theoretician Joseph Seymour boasts of the SL's past joint work in organizations that included bourgeois types like Senator Ted Kennedy and the Roman Catholic hierarchy. To demand their exclusion, Seymour wrote, would be "stupid ultimatism, ... an obstacle to our struggle for leadership over the class." Exactly.

"UNITED ARAB MASS STRUGGLE"

A similar attitude towards mass struggle (and the truth) appears in the Spartacist polemic on Arab nationalism. They write:

Instead of seeking to win the proletariat to a political perspective of class independence, the LRP enthuses over the need for "unity of all Palestinians in the struggle" and "united Arab mass struggle." This is a recipe for unity of Arab workers and peasants with the oil sheiks and bonapartist despots, for unity of leftist Palestinian militants with the cutthroat reactionaries of Hamas and Islamic Jihad. (*WV*, Jan. 31.)

This is classic Spartacist falsification. The quotations in this

passage come from our article in *PR* 64, where we in fact observed that the Palestinian people follow Arafat because they “want unity of all Palestinians in the struggle.” Our article went on immediately to point out that this is a dream: “However, Arafat’s politics are in fact a barrier to united Arab mass struggle.” And we summed up the need to break with Arafat:

The necessity of defending Arafat against Israel now must not blind Palestinians and their supporters to the need to defend themselves from him as well. Because he in fact does not defend the Palestinian masses or fight to restore more than shreds of the Palestinian homeland, he can only sabotage and betray the unity that the fighters yearn for.

We went on to condemn the Islamists and the Arab rulers as well, at length, as traitors to the struggle.

We are proud of the fact that we solidarize with the Arab masses’ desire for unity against imperialism, any genuine revolutionary does. But far from calling for unity of Arab workers and peasants with their rulers, as the Spartacists lie, we did just the opposite: we explained that the ruling-class figures who the masses’ mistakenly think are on their side are in fact so tied to imperialism that they inevitably betray the mass struggle. Once again equating capitalist leaders with the masses who are misled by them, the SL sneers at popular desires for a united struggle against imperialism in the way that only armchair critics in the imperialist centers can.

On the perspective of Arab workers’ revolutions overthrowing their local rulers in the course of the anti-imperialist struggle, our article concluded:

In the interests of imperialism, the Middle East is divided into a series of interdependent prison-states: Arab dictatorships in the service of imperialism, with Israel the maximum security core. ... All regional bourgeois forces, both Israeli and Arab, depend on it against the threat of the masses’ struggles.

The Palestinian masses alone cannot defeat Israel – they do not have the strength to overcome this state that has the full backing of imperialism. But through their heroic struggles they can become the vanguard of the Arab masses’ revolutionary overthrow of imperialism. The road to Palestinian freedom really begins with unchaining the Arab working classes of the region from their bourgeois leaders and opening a revolutionary struggle against their neo-colonial Arab rulers. ... Socialist revolutions by the Arab working classes can overthrow the current capitalist dictators and put the working class in power. ... revolutionary states in which the working class is armed and organized to defend its interests would be able to realize the Arab masses’ already burning desire to aid the Palestinians’ revolutionary struggle to overthrow Israel.

Some “recipe for unity ... with the oil sheiks and bonapartist despots”! As U.S. imperialism conducts its brutal “Operation Iraqi Freedom,” the ruling class has turned lying into the nation’s number-one spectator sport. It is tragic that would-be revolutionaries searching for an alternative must fight their way through more lies to get to the truth.

SPARTACISTS DISARM WORKERS’ VANGUARD

In an article, “Marxism, War and the Fight for Socialist Revolution,” (*WV*, Jan. 17), the Spartacist League argues that the League for the Revolutionary Party’s demand raised in *PR* 64 for the arming of the Palestinian masses by Arab states was a gross violation of Marxist principles. In reality, the SL’s arguments go far beyond Palestine. They amount to throwing out the whole arsenal of Bolshevik tactics, including the Transitional Program

of the Fourth International and other powerful weapons designed to expose the bourgeois state.

In the case of Palestine, the SL methods, if actually employed, would not only leave the beleaguered Arab masses disarmed but would amount to the unilateral disarmament of the “workers’ vanguard” the Spartacists claim to represent. They argue that:

As a rule, it’s very rare that Marxists raise positive demands on a capitalist state – demands that the capitalist state do something; usually we stick to negative demands – demands that the capitalist state stop doing something. The problem is that if you ask the capitalist state to do something, you might actually get it. Except that you’d get it on their terms.

This is made as a general theoretical statement of the Marxist position and is not just a slap against the LRP.

First, let us deal with the overall method. The cocksure claim that Marxists rarely raise positive demands on the capitalist state is complete nonsense. Revolutionaries, and even pseudo-revolutionaries like the Spartacists, raise such demands all the time. For example: the demand to free Mumia Abu-Jamal and all political prisoners, and demands for eight-hour day and minimum wage laws. A union of public employees like the transit workers makes positive demands on the capitalist state whenever it has a contract campaign.

In fact, the Spartacists have made a big deal out of the fact that they defended U.S. court decisions to integrate schools and called on judges to extend busing for integration to suburban schools. When they ran an electoral campaign in New York City years ago, they called on the state to “Triple Welfare” benefits, among other reform demands. The SL, as usual, makes up eternal rules to lie about its opponents one minute and then does the opposite the next.

Moreover, the Spartacists appallingly once raised “a positive demand on a bourgeois state” to send not just arms but an army! In 1983 in Sri Lanka, when the Tamil minority was suffering communalist massacres, the SL called for the army of Sri Lanka’s much larger neighbor India to protect the Sri Lankan Tamils. Their excuse? This would have been “a practical and probably not



Palestinian youth hurling rocks at Israeli occupiers. Arab rulers failure to arm the Palestinians exposes their loyalty to imperialism.

too deleterious possibility.” (*WV*, March 30, 1984.) The SL’s short memory is in evidence again.

It is not just how many times demands are made on the state; it is a question of fundamental method. The SL swears by Trotsky’s Transitional Program, written for and adopted by the Fourth International, even if they have no understanding of its meaning. Yet the Transitional Program is chock full of demands made upon the bourgeois state: public works, expropriation of key branches of industry and the banks, the statification of the credit system, full employment, etc. The point of such demands raised by vanguard workers is to show the mass of politically less advanced workers, with whom we fight side-by-side against the bosses, to see that: “every serious demand of the proletariat and even every serious demand of the petty bourgeoisie inevitably reaches beyond the limits of capitalist property relations and of the bourgeois state.”

The mass of militant workers, when they go into struggle, fight for gains from the bosses and from the bourgeois state, because they do not yet accept the communist view that real and secure gains can only come through revolution and a workers’ state. Trotsky refused to give such workers an ultimatum that they must wait and agree with us before they can fight. Trotskyists therefore make demands on the bourgeois state while constantly pointing out that in our opinion they can only be effectively realized under a revolutionary proletarian state. We claim that the struggle will prove that our openly revolutionary leadership is right, and that it will expose both the bourgeois state and the reformist leaders who preach its ability to meet mass needs. That is the method of Leninist tactics, which the Spartacists blindly reject.

“ARMS TO THE PALESTINIAN MASSES”

Now for the question of what this means in Palestine today. The SL is desperate to prove the LRP guilty of “capitulation to Arab nationalism.” Doing so requires their usual method of selective quotation and outright fabrication. To quote from the section of the *PR* article where we made the offending demand:

To aid the Palestinians and expose the present illusions in Arafat and the Arab rulers, proletarian revolutionaries demand of them: provide arms to the masses! The Saddam Husseins, Mubaraks, and Abdullahs talk big about the poor Palestinians. The Arab masses must challenge them to put up or shut up – send arms to the Palestinians!

The street protests in support of the intifada are vital, but they need to be joined by massive general strikes in Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Jordan, Iraq, Lebanon, and the other countries of the Middle East demanding arms for the Palestinians. Once workers realize their power to shut these states down, their own additional demands for jobs, a decent income and an end to imperialist superexploitation will lead them to question which class should have state power at home. ...

[T]he Palestinian intifada has inspired the Arab masses into struggle and threatens the Arab bourgeois ruling classes of the region. Mass struggles for real solidarity with Palestine and for the social and economic needs of all Arab workers could promote a huge leap in class consciousness. With the active participation of a revolutionary communist political party, millions could embrace the chance to overthrow hated dictatorships and establish their own workers’ states. Such a revolutionary onslaught could tip the balance of forces in favor of the Palestinians and enable them to finally overthrow their Zionist oppressors.

The arms demand is clearly posed on the Arab states in order to expose their fake claims of sympathy for the Palestinians and

clear the way for revolution. We did not expect that the demand for the mass arming of the Palestinians would really be granted by the bourgeois states and we said so. We argued that the combination of this demand with the intervention of genuine revolutionary propaganda and agitation would help educate broader masses to the need to overthrow such states.

Why is this necessary? Surely the history of military confrontations between Israel and the Arab states shows, as we have put it, that the “Arab ruling classes prefer weakness and defeat from without to the threat of armed resistance from within.” (*PR* 53, Winter 1997.) Surely the politically advanced workers in the region are aware of this history and know that such demands are very unlikely to be won. We pose the exposure demand in order to show the advanced workers the way to make what is obvious to them become obvious to the less advanced. The task of the vanguard is not to rest content and self-satisfied with the knowledge of the truth, but to find the best means of making that truth self-evident to the masses in the course of practical struggles, the real “classroom” through which consciousness develops.

In our earlier 1997 article (which bore too much resemblance to the SL’s abstract propagandist approach), we rejected such an exposure tactic, writing: “Therefore revolutionaries do not actually call on such brutal enemies of the working class to carry out these demands.” The mass protests in solidarity with the Palestinians that swept the Arab states, burdened by illusions in their rulers’ potential opposition to imperialism, showed us that we were mistaken on this point.

When the *PR* 64 article now under the Spartacists’ attack was written last year, Arab masses were in the streets demanding that their governments send arms to the Palestinians and open their borders to allow volunteers to fight alongside the Palestinians. Yet the forces leading such mobilizations, themselves largely nationalist and Islamist, could not fundamentally challenge and expose the local capitalist rulers because of their own bourgeois nature.

LRP Articles on the Spartacists

“The Spartacist School of Falsification” in *PR* 55 deals with several aspects of racism in the United States: their idiotic charge that “the LRP should have opposed the Northern Union forces in the Civil War,” that we tail Black nationalism by pointing to the need to defend even Louis Farrakhan from the capitalist state, and that we “solidarize with white racism” by opposing the bourgeois plan that shut down schools in Black neighborhoods in Boston.

“New York Transit: No New Direction” in *PR* 57 and “Overturn in New York Transit Union,” *PR* 63, dissect the Spartacists’ abstention from united-front tactics in TWU Local 100. In “Left Strikes Out in TWU Struggle” (*PR* 66), we take up the Spartacists’ refusal to fight for a strike when the class line was drawn this past December.

“For Arab Workers’ Revolution to Smash Israeli/U.S. Terror!” in *PR* 64 takes up at length the Spartacists’ pro-Zionist line on the Palestinian struggle.

“Spartacist Chauvinism on Immigration, Palestine” in *PR* 65 discusses the Spartacists’ blatant defense of imperialist “national identity” in respect to immigration.

A thorough analysis of the Spartacists’ middle-class and anti-working class version of socialism and their admiration for the Stalinist Soviet system was published in an early issue, *Socialist Voice* No. 4: “The ‘Marxism’ of the Petty-Bourgeoisie: The Spartacist League and the USSR.”

All these issues are available from the LRP.



Palestinians demonstrate in defense of intifada.

The masses are well aware of the rulers' failures to defend the Palestinians but do not yet attribute this to their bourgeois character. They don't yet accept the need for socialist revolution, and they don't see that revolutionary proletarian states in the region would be the best defense the Palestinians could get. They believe that if the present regimes were less corrupt, more honest, braver or more subjected to mass pressure – and, as unfortunately increasing numbers seem to think, more Islamic – maybe more aid would be sent. Tragically, this is how the masses in the region have been misled. Yet they want the Palestinians to be armed and reinforced before thousands more are killed.

A communist leadership would combine the exposure tactic with propaganda clearly attributing the leaders' failures to their bourgeois politics; it would fight for methods of struggle like the general strike, which can increase the working class's self-confidence. That is why we used the words, "To aid the Palestinians and expose the present illusions in Arafat and the Arab rulers" The masses are desperate because of their own exploitation as well as identification with their Palestinian and Iraqi brothers and sisters. The bourgeois Islamists and nationalists can give no good answer for these needs once the masses go into struggles where they can learn from their own experience. Pontifical lectures will not destroy the appeal of bourgeois nationalist leadership and ideology, whether secular or Islamic; revolutionary leadership in the practical struggles can.

Had there been a tendency on the ground following the Spartacist method, abstaining from the struggle for military aid to the Palestinians on the grounds that it made "positive demands on the bourgeois state," it would have discredited itself immediately and have been justly accused of not caring whether the Palestinians lived or died. Islamic fundamentalists could ask for nothing better from alleged communists.

Unfortunately, there was no political tendency we know of that used such Bolshevik tactics. The Palestinians remain virtually unarmed and subject to Zionist slaughter. Last spring's pro-Palestinian struggles in the neighboring states have petered out, and in the absence of a communist vanguard, the lessons learned from it by most workers were false ones of cynicism and impotence. Now, however, with the American assault on Iraq, masses are again in motion and hopefully, better alternatives will offer themselves.

In the absence of specifically pro-Palestinian mobilizations, the usefulness of "Arms to the Palestinian Masses!" as a tactical exposure slogan in Egypt and Jordan at this moment is doubtful.

In Syria – and Lebanon, which Syria largely controls – it may well still be necessary, given the regime's continued posturing as the only "front-line" state which supposedly has not capitulated to Zionism. And it certainly retains its usefulness against the Palestinian leadership in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, which continues to hoard all available arms for itself, hoping for the day it can re-establish its role as subcontractor for Israeli repression.

TAKE A SIDE! STOP ISRAELI GENOCIDE!

The SL is afraid of what might result if the Palestinians had greater means of fighting against Israel, and afraid of what might result from the tumultuous struggles in neighboring states necessary to bring it about. They sympathize with the Palestinians only as victims, not as fighters, and their defense of "self-determination for the Hebrew-speaking people" has led time and again to criminal indifference to Israel's worst crimes.

Thus not only did the SL take a neutral stance on the 1967 war, in which the West Bank and Gaza Strip were put under Israeli military occupation; they even retrospectively took the side of Israel in its 1948 war of ethnic cleansing, in which 500,000 Palestinians were put to flight. (*Spartacist*, March-April 1968). They later "corrected" their stance on the 1948 war – to the same neutrality as in 1967.

Pseudo-revolutionary phrase-mongering is the Spartacist cover for their underlying opportunism. In recent anti-war demonstrations, the SL's "Revolutionary Internationalist Contingents" have taken to chanting, "Take a side! Stop Israeli genocide!" Yet at the most genocidal moments in the history of the state of Israel, the wars of conquest and cleansing, the SL refused to take a side. No wonder they refuse to endorse the steps necessary to help the Palestinians actually defend themselves from Israeli genocide.

Finally, the SL condemns us even for the headline of our article:

But the LRP's purpose is not to sweep away the neo-colonial Arab bourgeoisies but rather to chain proletarian struggle to the yoke of "national unity" with those bourgeoisies. In its headline, the LRP calls "For Arab Workers' Revolution" – not to smash the Arab capitalist states but "To Smash Israeli/U.S. Terror!"

Just imagine the situation in Palestine when our words were written. The Israeli blitzkrieg was slaughtering Palestinians, demolishing Yasser Arafat's government headquarters and surrounding him with tanks and snipers. At that point, the SL apparently thinks we should tell the Palestinian workers that their main enemy is Arafat and not Sharon: we should say "smash the Arab capitalist states" in preference to "smash the Israeli/U.S. terror!" No! The job of revolutionaries is to side with the Palestinian struggle against the Zionist attack and warn the workers, as we did, that the bourgeois Arafat government was actually capitulating to Israeli and U.S. imperialism. Thus the masses could learn that if they were to defeat imperialism, they would have to break the shackles of the Arafat statelet too.

There is method to the Spartacists' political gobbledygook. Mirroring the way they equate pro-capitalist leaders with the misled masses, they increasingly equate the oppressed with the oppressor. In the imperialist countries it leads to criminal abstention from the class struggle; in the "third world" it leads to a repulsive indifference to the persecution and struggles of the oppressed. No wonder the Spartacists lie so much! ●

Letter:

On the “Hebrew-Arab Workers’ Revolution”

We print below an excerpt from a letter by the editors of Permanent Revolution magazine, a new Trotskyist publication projected to appear soon in Palestine. It criticizes the article, “Defend the Palestinians! LRP: Apologists for Arab Nationalism,” in Workers Vanguard, Jan. 31, 2003.

The Arab labor movement is seriously oppressed by the Palestinian bourgeoisie, but there are more than hints that Arab workers are beginning to unite around Marxist ideas to resolve the crisis. Many workers and youth in Palestine, and we include Israel in “Palestine,” are trying to find their way to genuine socialism by joining parties which speak for socialism but represent the opposite. The role of authentic revolutionaries is to provide them a political home.

The League for the Revolutionary Party, and the Communist Organization for the Fourth International, are standing steadfastly with the Palestinian mass struggle for liberation. The leadership crisis in occupied Palestine can only be resolved by creating a section of a re-created World Party of Socialist Revolution, the authentic Fourth International. Creating a revolutionary Palestinian workers’ party is not just another slogan; the Palestinian society within the Occupied Territories (all of Israel) has a serious tradition of providing support to socialist ideas of internationalist working-class unity. The Stalinist parties, corrupt but still rooted among the masses, won the support of important and large layers within the Arab workers and youth.

Proponents of Zionism, covert as well as overt, offer no way forward for the Arab masses but capitulation to Zionism under the threat of Israel’s nuclear arsenal. Abstract formulas and wishful thinking cannot hide the fact that there are important sectors of the Arab working class who are now actually fighting imperialism and that some are adding to their struggle by studying the heritage of Marxism. Our role is to provide them leadership based on Trotskyism, not to mislead them by proposing revolutions which will remain *Workers Vanguard’s* sweet dream. Thousands of Arab workers and youth marched in Nazareth during the beginning of April against the war, waving red flags, expressing internationalist stands against the war, carrying pictures of Karl Marx and Vladimir Lenin.

Meanwhile, no significant section of the Jewish working class is fighting imperialism and Zionism; in fact, there is a serious lurch to even more right-wing positions among Jewish workers now. The labor aristocracy, a very thick layer of the Jewish working class, will not join any workers’ revolution although it is very active within Israel’s “peace movement.” In spite of its “peacenik” activity, we should not forget that this labor aristocracy motivated the Palestinian bourgeoisie to sign on to the Oslo agreements, and today it is carrying forward the idea of “international intervention” inside the Occupied Territories of 1967. In the meantime, it opposes the right of return.

Gila Svirsky, leading figure in Israel’s peace movement, replied to the question, “has it occurred to you that the country has slipped out of your hands, that it no longer belongs to you?”: “Absolutely not. I’m not only a Zionist, but a proud Israeli. This country doesn’t belong to [Prime Minister] Arik Sharon and his friends, but to the central stream, which is for the most part fed up with the violence. I’m proud of the country, but not of its establishment, and it’s a big mistake to consider the two identical.”

(Interview in *Haaretz*, April 4, 2003). Thus, every realistic revolutionary knows very well that in spite of their peacenik activity, Svirsky and her friends will defend their privileged status as Jewish citizens in settler-colonial Zionist state. The fact that they pledge loyalty to Zionism and try to defeat Sharon by social-patriotic slogans means that they will not join any genuine revolution which will put an end to the Zionist regime. The only political power capable of carrying out the anti-capitalist revolution is the Arab working class, and Fourth Internationalists are striving to provide leadership to the Arab workers, peasants and refugees by presenting the Leninist program for liberation. The small but important advanced section among Israeli-Jewish workers will join them and help build the Palestinian workers’ republic, which will arise as a part of the workers’ revolutionary struggle that will engulf every Middle Eastern country. The future in the region belongs to an internationalist socialist federation of workers’ states.

To raise the slogan of a “Hebrew-Arab workers’ revolution” in today’s situation would be the equivalent of raising a “French settler-Algerian workers’ revolution” slogan during the Algerian struggle or “White-Black workers’ revolution” during the anti-apartheid struggle in South Africa. Abstract formulas of “Hebrew-Arab workers’ revolution” and separate states in Palestine (the position of the Spartacist League), the similar “two socialist states” idea (of the British Shachtmanites in the Alliance for Workers’ Liberty and the reformists of the former Militant Tendency’s splinters) or “one democratic and secular republic” (the openly bourgeois view of the Workers Party led by Pierre Lambert in France, for example) present nothing but roads to defeat.●

THE LIFE AND DEATH OF STALINISM

A Resurrection of Marxist Theory by Walter Daum

The Marxist analysis of Stalinism that makes today’s events understandable and shows the working-class way forward.

A thoughtful, and indeed in many ways, an ideologically exciting book. Whether you accept its main thesis or not, and ... this reviewer does not, it will still challenge your presuppositions and force you to rethink your ideas from top to bottom in the most rigorous way. And unlike most would-be Marxist texts these days, it is written in intelligible English, which is no small gain as well.

Al Richardson, Revolutionary History

\$15 from SV Publishing Co.,
P.O. Box 769, Washington Bridge Station
New York, NY 10033

LRP/COFI Report

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new independent unions as an elementary act of workers' self-defense, we by no means rule out the possibility of future work with or within the official unions if there is the potential of shaking the bosses' grip on them. The RWO's union work has led to both recruiting some of the most advanced workers as full supporters and to developing a periphery of worker-contacts who look to the RWO for leadership and political analysis and discussion.

The RWO has maintained political work among youth and students as well, including the organizing of a discussion group at a major Kiev university where our comrades have played a leadership role and also engaged in debate with left-centrist groups such as the supporters of the IBT and IG. In this milieu as well the RWO is succeeding in winning both new comrades and a periphery of active contacts.

Such consistent and ongoing work over a period of years has been key to attracting more and more supporters to the RWO. While the forces of no less than a couple dozen opportunist centrist groups in Ukraine have waxed and waned along with the political fortunes of the various reformists and Stalinists they have tailed in recent years, the RWO has steadily built its forces on a principled basis and has grown both numerically and geographically.

The RWO is now, after the CWI and LRCI, the third-largest left group in Ukraine (outside of the open Stalinists). The RWO consists of several dozen workers not only in the center in Kiev, but also with groups of several workers each in no less than half-a-dozen other key cities in different regions, both in mostly Ukrainian-speaking Western Ukraine and in mostly Russian-speaking Eastern Ukraine. The composition of the comrades in

the organization is overwhelmingly young and working-class.

Also critically important is the RWO's international work in Moscow. Through interventions at major demonstrations and events there, especially at the November 7 events marking the anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution, the RWO has won an impressive group of COFI supporters in Moscow. The Russian comrades were also represented at the COFI Conference in Warsaw. It is only a matter of time before the RWO-Russia will establish a formal relationship with COFI. It has to be especially noted that the Moscow comrades' revolutionary internationalist stand in defense of the Chechen people is particularly admirable in the face of the wave of chauvinist hysteria which swept Moscow after the theater hostage-taking incident and the Putin regime's deadly storming of it last fall.

The conference agreed that the most important task facing the RWO-Ukraine is the establishment of a regular propaganda press organ. The RWO published a large and impressive first issue of its propaganda journal, *Proletarskaya Revolyutsiya*, but we all recognize the need to make it a regular publication. In addition, the RWO has been issuing a number of leaflets on particular events and topics as they arise; it is now a goal to make such publications into a regular series of bulletins.

In conclusion, it must be said that for the American comrades of the LRP, who have fought for decades against the stream of political opportunism that has swamped the left, joining forces with a large group of young revolutionary workers from the former Soviet Union, the land of the Russian Revolution, is an inspiring step. It confirms our confidence in the correctness of our struggle. Huge events have greatly widened the impact of COFI around the world. By far, we have more contacts in more countries approaching us than ever before and we expect further additions to our ranks in the near future. The Congress gave us renewed and increased confidence in the fight to re-create the authentic Fourth International, the World Party of Socialist Revolution.



Massive anti-war protest on March 22 in New York. The LRP marched with banner: "Defend Iraq Against U.S. Imperialist Attack! No Genocidal UN Sanctions! No Imperialist UN Inspectors!"

CHICAGO LRP

As the imperialists put the final touches on their plans for massive slaughter of Iraqis, the main emphasis of the Chicago LRP's work was of course opposition to the war. Chicago comrades attended the massive January 18 events in Washington and San Francisco, and we have mobilized for numerous demonstrations here.

On March 20, the day after the imperialist bombardment began, the LRP joined the other protesters who poured into Federal Plaza for a demonstration of 20,000 or more people. The largest protest in the U.S. that day, the demonstration was massive by Chicago standards. It marched to Lake Shore Drive and took it over, the first time a protest had seized the Drive since the first Gulf War in 1991. Notably, many of the motorists stuck on the drive – including nearly all of the Black drivers we saw – honked and raised their fists or thumbs in solidarity. We learned later that city buses which were stopped by the wave of protesters were emptied by the cops – and at least in some cases, all their passengers arrested! This was a foretaste of the police tactics.

Despite its size and objective militancy, the demonstration was quite white and middle-class in composition, and the pacifist slogans which dominated the march reflected that. On the return march toward Federal Plaza, a group of apparently anarchist

youth tried several times to veer off in smaller group actions. Eventually, as numerous protesters broke away from the march they succeeded, despite our vocal warnings, in leading the group in an ill-fated attempt to take Michigan Avenue, Chicago's fashionable shopping street.

When the march as a whole went along with the attempt, we stayed with it despite our disagreement. Our action contrasts with the scandalous behavior of the Spartacist League, which liquidated its contingent and scuttled away, leaving their fellow demonstrators (including some who had marched in their "revolutionary" contingent) in the lurch. The fleeing Spartacists did not even make a stand to try to warn the protesters streaming by them of the cop gauntlet being formed at Michigan Avenue.

Humiliated by the takeover of the Drive, the cops sealed off the march at both ends and waited, letting a few people leave in small groups. Meanwhile they were arresting protesters on the slightest pretext or none at all. Around 10 pm (5 hours after the demonstration started), the cops moved in and arrested hundreds of protesters, including an LRP supporter.

The demo was a victory, but one which, thanks to the abdication of the demonstration's ostensible leaders and the misleadership of the anarchists, ended on a sour note. As a result, the follow-up demonstration on March 21 was smaller: 10,000 or so.

LRP Speech at Chicago Rally *Spread Idea of General Strikes Against War!*

At the April 5 anti-war rally at Federal Plaza in Chicago, an LRP speaker addressed a crowd of 3000 to 5000 people. Although most of the other speakers expressed a liberal and pacifist line toward the war, our comrade received applause for his arguments for working-class action building towards a general strike. Here is what he said.

I'm speaking on behalf of the League for the Revolutionary Party, a working-class revolutionary communist organization.

It's great to see so many different groups and individuals, united in protest today. It's great that in this united struggle all different opinions against the war are heard. This way we can build the biggest protests possible against this war, and also discuss and debate how we can put an end to such wars for good.

The LRP believes that wars like today's against Iraq can only be ended for good by an independent working-class struggle against capitalism, and that means rejecting both the Republican and the Democratic Parties.

200,000 Iraqis were slaughtered in the first, United Nations-backed Gulf War supported by both the Republicans and Democrats. Since then, Bush-the-First and Clinton's U.N. sanctions starved another 1 and a half million Iraqis to death. Now, having been disarmed by the U.N., Iraq is being

devastated and re-colonized.

What is called "Bush's war" by some is actually supported by almost all Democratic Party politicians. When it comes to enforcing capitalist exploitation and oppression, there will always be bipartisan cooperation in Washington.

In the face of the invasion of Iraq, we say that all true champions of freedom have a side to take: for the defense of Iraq, and the defeat of the invading imperialist forces. This doesn't mean giving any political support to the brutal dictatorship of Saddam Hussein. The defeat of U.S. imperialism would bolster the struggles of all the world's workers and oppressed against their dictators and the imperialist system they serve. Such a defeat would also greatly weaken the American ruling class in their relatively more peaceful economic war against the working class and poor at home.

We all want to build the biggest possible protests against the war. But will even massive protests be enough? I don't think so. As death row inmate Mumia Abu Jamal recently explained, protests don't seem to be powerful enough to stop the war. Mumia asked: "What would happen, however, if a general strike were called [by] unions, against this ... war?" And he answered "It may take such measures to begin to put the dogs of war back in their cages ...".

Mumia's right, but we're a long way from

such actions. We have to spread the idea though, and do all we can to encourage the fightback against layoffs, budget cuts and increasing racist attacks at home, including fighting the pro-Democratic Party union bureaucrats who hold back those struggles. Growing struggles here will start to make the connection between the ruling class's attacks on us here, and its military attacks abroad.

And it makes sense, because this war is about capitalist profit-making, from exploiting the Middle East's oil, to exploiting workers in the U.S. Such growing struggles, if they break free of the grip of the Democratic Party, could really challenge the system and lay the basis for overthrowing it once and for all through a socialist revolution. That's the way to go from defeating this war, to making sure wars like this never happen again. That's how we can avoid the trap that stopped the anti-Vietnam war movement from challenging the system and rather let it live to commit more crimes.

While uniting with others in the biggest possible protests against the war, the League for the Revolutionary Party believes that the most urgent task in this struggle is to begin to build a revolutionary working class political party to lead the fight to put an end to this rotten system that has gone on for far too long.

Defend Iraq! Defeat U.S. Imperialism!

Worse, the mood was much more subdued, even cowed. Though there apparently weren't many arrests, the cops established their control of the streets by not allowing anyone to join or leave the protest once it began. Until our side re-establishes its militancy and confidence, chants of "Whose streets? Our streets!" will ring hollow indeed in Chicago.

In addition to participating in demonstrations and giving a public talk on the imperialist war at Northeastern Illinois University, we have participated extensively in the anti-war movement, attending events hosted by Chicago Students Against the War Network, the Campus Antiwar Network and the virtually stillborn Chicago Labor Against the War. Always we strive to raise deep political discussion needed to answer the burning question, "How do we stop the war?"

In labor work, an LRP supporter was once again elected, as a delegate in the Chicago Teachers' Union. The decisive margin of our comrade's victory does not indicate widespread agreement among the teachers with the revolutionary politics of the LRP. Rather, the teachers recognize that he is a tireless fighter for the rights of the working class generally and specifically in his school. A significant issue in the CTU, the largest union in Illinois, is keeping the heat on Deborah Lynch and her fellow bureaucrats and supporters to mobilize seriously against the imperialist war. Despite significant antiwar sentiment in the CTU, they have not done so. Later this year, the teachers' contract comes up, and we expect a hard fight to bring crucial questions like class size back onto the bargaining table.

MINNEAPOLIS LRP

Our Minneapolis supporter has been active in the anti-war movement in the Twin Cities, where protests have had a decidedly pacifist and middle-class tone. There was an important development at the speakout and rally on March 29, however. Vernon Bellecourt, a founder of the American Indian Movement, drew striking parallels between the decimation of Iraq and that of Indian nations by the U.S. military, giving examples of slaughters *after* weapons were "voluntarily" given up. He concluded by raising the need for the AFL-CIO to call a general strike to stop the war.

When our comrade spoke, he solidarized with Bellecourt's call and pointed out that the fight in the unions to end the AFL-CIO leadership's support for the war and to defend Iraq is necessary for U.S. workers who are fighting to defend themselves against attack by the same capitalist class. "The better the Iraqis defend themselves, the more difficult it is for the same rulers to attack us."

NEW YORK LRP

The LRP joined the massive anti-war rallies on February 15 and March 22 with many placards and our banner: "Defend Iraq Against U.S. Imperialist Attack! No Genocidal UN Sanctions! No Imperialist UN Inspectors!" The LRP Bulletin we distributed on March 22 is on our website and also available on request. At these rallies and on the Palestinian Land Day demonstration on March 29, our pro-Palestinian signs (including "All Israel Is Occupied Territory!" and "Long Live the Intifada! Arm the Palestinian Masses!") were most effective setting a clear anti-imperialist line.

On February 16 the LRP held an educational day for supporters and contacts, discussing the topics "Race and Imperialism" and "Revolutionaries in the Anti-War Movement – The United Front." On February 21 we held a forum on "Class Struggle at Home and Abroad."

At City College, where the LRP still works with the Coalition

Against the War, sales of *Proletarian Revolution* have been higher than in recent times with over 60 copies of *PR* 66 sold as of this report. Increased interest in our pamphlets and book is clearly due to the war and its lead-up. We also held a well-attended public forum on "The Fight Against Imperialist War: Which Way Forward?" on March 6.

At an anti-war rally at CCNY on March 20, most of the chants raised by the leaders were pacifist and patriotic (like "Peace Now!" and "Support Our Troops – Bring Them Home!"). In the face of this atmosphere, a young professor who works with the LRP gave a speech explaining what was about to happen to the people of Iraq and convinced the entire crowd to chant the slogan, "Defend Iraq Against U.S. Attack."

LRP IN LOCAL 1199-SEIU

The Hospital Workers Union held an Emergency Budget Crisis meeting on March 3, attended by well over 1500 members and delegates. The union tops and their management cronies forecast rough times to come. Our union overseers let the plantation owners do all the layoff talking while they confined themselves to "Yes, Boss" yapping about the importance of class-collaborationist unity.

An LRP supporter rose to warn workers to not be fooled by our president Dennis Rivera being on stage with management; they are still the bosses and therefore still our enemies. This drew loud applause from virtually everyone but those on stage. He went on to say the bosses' interest is the profits they will lose from health care cuts, not workers' jobs – and that the only thing that can stop the budget cuts is what management fears, what the Democrats and Republicans fear and what Rivera fears, our power to mobilize and most importantly to strike! This received the most applause. Our comrade had let loose the tension that was present from the beginning by open opposition to those the workers instinctively knew they should oppose, management. A tide of speakers after him expressed mistrust of this "unity."

Another LRP supporter emphasized that "it wasn't just health care." Workers had to unite with other unions and workers to fight the budget cuts. She quoted Rivera on the need to put aside all other attacks such as that on education. Pointing to the row of executives on the stage, she noted that "people up there don't have kids in public schools: it's not their kids that are going to be affected, it's ours." She was applauded very loudly, and workers in the audience made mocking sounds at management. Another wave of speakers hostile to management took their turn. But these did not include the pseudo-socialist supporters of the Workers World Party and the International Socialist Organization who are active in 1199. The method is to accommodate the betraying union tops rather than try to advance workers' consciousness.

For followers of our work in the transport workers union TWU Local 100, a new issue of *Revolutionary Transit Worker*, No. 17, is available, which draws the lessons of last fall's betrayed strike movement. The issue is on our website and also available from the LRP. (See also "Union Tops Sabotage Transit Struggle" in *PR* 66.)

PUERTO RICO

A COFI supporter in Puerto Rico has been working against the war in Iraq by distributing thousands of leaflets at demonstrations, marches, colleges and union meetings in various cities and on the internet. Our internationalist slogan, "Defend Iraq, Defeat US Imperialism!" stands out in an environment where nationalists formations have raised class-conciliatory pacifist slogans like "No to War, Yes to Peace!" and "Yes to Life, No to War!"●

Imperialist War

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millions in the great struggles ahead.

DEFEND IRAQ – DEFEAT U.S. IMPERIALISM!

It is the internationalist duty of all workers to come to the defense of Iraq against the imperialist slaughter. It is also a necessary act of self-defense for the U.S. working class. Success in the war will strengthen the capitalists in their relatively more peaceful economic war against the workers and poor at home. The cost of war will be used as an excuse for further attacks on our standard of living, and appeals to patriotism will be used against our strikes and protest struggles.

Anti-Arab racism whipped up after September 11 was used to justify the jailing and deportation of thousands of immigrants, and had already led to a rise in police brutality against Blacks and



U.S. missile launched from Persian Gulf. War killed unknown thousands of Iraqis.

Why We Said “Defend Iraq – Defeat U.S. Imperialism!”

The LRP took a clear stand in the imperialist invasion of Iraq with its slogan *Defend Iraq – Defeat U.S. Imperialism!* We explained that by standing beside our brothers and sisters in the “third world,” our position fostered the international unity of all workers that is needed for the struggle against capitalism. The defeat of U.S. imperialism would also advance the interests and struggles of American workers.

Our slogan shocks patriots but also raised questions among those opposed to the war. Some have expressed concern for the fate of American soldiers, most of whom are the sons and daughters of the working class. Others have asked that since Iraq is so out-gunned by the U.S., is the slogan just a “principled stand” rather than a guide to action?

As we point out in our lead article, while the Iraqis could hardly defeat the imperialist invaders themselves, it was not totally ruled out that they could defend their country long enough to allow anti-war struggles to threaten the Middle Eastern ruling classes. An outbreak of revolutionary struggles in the region could have forced the imperialists to pull back. On another front, if popular anti-Blair protests in Britain were to accelerate, the weak government could fall, and that would deal a blow to Bush’s plans.

SUPPORT THE TROOPS?

The position of favoring the defeat of the imperialists is a crucial guide to immediate anti-war struggles. In a number of countries, unions refused to move cargo bound for the imperialist military forces. But once the war began, an effort was made by some anti-war trade union bureaucrats to argue that workers had to “support the troops” not just by

demanding they be brought home but also by not stopping the shipment of food and other non-military supplies. These moves weakened overall union opposition to the war in a number of countries.

All attempts to argue that the struggle against the war can be reconciled with the bourgeoisie’s “support the troops” line are capitulations to patriotism and imperialism. As long as “our” troops are following orders and slaughtering the Iraqi people, any support to them is aiding the imperialist war. If union bans were to threaten cutting the food supply to the military and threaten troops with starvation, then the troops would have to learn to fight for an end to the war themselves so that they could return home.

By potentially crippling the imperialists’ war drive, all forms of mass struggle threaten the defeat of the imperialist armed forces. Revolutionaries embrace this aim. “Anti-war” leaders who flinch at this prospect only telegraph their future betrayal of the anti-imperialist struggle.

WORKING-CLASS TROOPS IN IMPERIALIST ARMIES

In saying that the defeat of the U.S. forces is in the best interests of even the U.S. working class, we are not unconcerned with the fate of American soldiers. The core of the army is its trained professional killers, mercenary careerists known in the military as “lifers.” But the majority is made up of working-class youth, particularly Blacks and Latinos, who joined because of the “economic draft” – in search of a stable job or college assistance. It is these working-class soldiers who form the “cannon-fodder” of the imperialist army and who should

be encouraged to oppose their officers’ orders to attack.

The alleged grenade attack by U.S. Army Sgt. Asan Akbar on three command tents in Kuwait has stirred up memories of the “fragging” attacks by American soldiers (mainly Blacks) on officers sending them into harm’s way during the Vietnam War. A *New York Times* article on the class and racial composition of the U.S. military in Iraq quoted a young reservist who had been called up to fight. She objected to the proposal by some Congressmen to reinstate a military draft.

“Already with callbacks you can see the morale is down lower,” she said. “They’re like, ‘I had a job.’ Just think if you had a whole draft of people who didn’t want to be there. I think of that guy who threw the grenade – you wonder if there would be a lot more like that.” (March 30.)

Even in a “volunteer army,” the disenchantment could end up far greater, once soldiers recognize that the Iraqi population views them as killers and conquerors, not the “liberators” promised by Bush and Cheney. Two British soldiers in Iraq have already refused to fight, on the grounds that the war required the killing of innocent civilians.

When we stand for the defeat of the U.S. side in war, we take no satisfaction in the deaths of working-class soldiers subjected to military servitude. It is the ruling class that is sending them to kill and die. But they too will have to learn that their rulers and officers are their enemy, just as their bosses and foremen are the enemies of workers’ struggles everywhere – as their forerunners did during the Vietnam War.●



One war criminal greets another. Donald Rumsfeld was U.S. envoy to Iraq in 1983, sent to supply dictator Saddam Hussein with arms and military advice. Rumsfeld then did not protest Saddam's use of chemical "weapons of mass destruction" against Iran.

Latinos. (See page 24.) The butchering of thousands of Iraqi civilians and poorly equipped soldiers only intensifies the racist attitude that Arab lives, and consequently those of all people of color, don't matter. This will inevitably mean an intensification of racism in the U.S.

Revolutionary communists do not just condemn this criminal war: we openly declare that the U.S. working class, along with the workers of the entire world, has a side to take – for the defense of Iraq and for the *defeat* of the invading U.S. and allied forces. We reject pacifist pleas against war in general; we call for class war against imperialism. The war-making system cannot be reasoned with; it must be destroyed.

Our stand for the defeat of the imperialists does not mean that we give the slightest political support to Iraq's brutal dictator, Saddam Hussein, who loyally served Washington as its local enforcer for years. The working classes in the U.S. and the other imperialist countries can aid the neo-colonial workers and poor in their struggle to overthrow the dictators who stand over them only by standing with them against imperialism.

WAR AND THE CLASS STRUGGLE

In the past, the U.S. has secured the cover of the United Nations for its biggest imperialist military campaigns. This time the U.S. was forced to go it alone without "multilateral" approval. Its "Coalition of the Willing" includes troops from only two other imperialist countries, Britain and Australia, and has the support of a few dozen governments, almost all of which are defying the wishes of their own people. This has made the aggression and rapaciousness of U.S. imperialism clear to millions around the world.

The key division in the world is between the capitalists of every country and the workers of the world, dispossessed, exploited and persecuted. The capitalists who rule the world are united by their dependence on exploitation. But they are divided into competing international blocs, nation states and enterprises. The capitalists do their best to rally popular support for themselves, using nationalism and other populist ideologies to encourage workers to support their own rulers' victory in the competition as the best way to defend their own living standards, be it in the market place or on the battlefield.

As the economic crisis sends profits tumbling, the capitalists intensify their exploitation. Their attacks challenge the workers and

oppressed to fight back in mass struggles, which set off a chain reaction of crises and responses. Economic competition leads to trade wars; the military defense of spheres of economic domination leads toward world war. The U.S. war against Iraq is just the latest example of how the quakes and eruptions that rock the surface of world events are produced by the underlying clash of the two decisive forces of society: the exploited and oppressed workers of the world, on the one hand, and the ruling capitalist classes, on the other.

THE REAL REASONS FOR THE WAR

1. Capitalist Economic Crisis and Imperialism

Cutting across and enforcing the class division of the world is the subdivision of world capitalism between the most powerful "first world" imperialist states and those of the exploited and dominated "third world."

The first years of the 20th century saw the capitalist super-powers divide the world into empires made up of colonies they directly ruled. After the anti-colonial struggles that broke out in the wake of World War II, the imperialists were forced to dominate from a distance, with local rulers doing their dirty work. In this way the imperialist powers superexploit the workers and resources of the "third world" and use the profits to stabilize their rule at home.

This condition constantly provokes rebellions, which have at their heart the struggle of the working classes and poor against imperialist exploitation. From the refusal of the Palestinians to surrender in the face of U.S.-backed Israeli terror, to the struggles that overthrew the pro-U.S. government of Argentina in 2001 and are flaring up again, the workers and poor continue to launch powerful struggles.

The profit crisis has been sweeping the globe over the last three decades, breaking out first in the weaker national economies and moving toward the most powerful. The crisis triggered the fall of the Stalinist state-run capitalist economies in the late 1980's. In the 1990's, it forced the breakdown of the Southeast Asian economies and the further deterioration of Latin America and Africa. Today Western Europe and Japan are also in slumps.

The U.S. alone was able to postpone succumbing to the crisis, thanks to its international dominance as well as the success of its economic attacks against the working class at home. But the U.S. economy too is now teetering on the edge. The financial swindling and collapse of giant companies like Enron and WorldCom showed the capitalists' desperation. The crisis is now worldwide, and it intensifies conflicts among the imperialist powers as all seek to hold on to their shares of evaporating profits.

Through its occupation of Iraq and its seizure of the world's second largest oil reserve, America's capitalists hope to gain an immediate boost to their profits, particularly for Bush and Cheney's buddies in the oil business. But the U.S. war is aimed at far broader goals: to enforce an intensified exploitation of the whole neo-colonial world and strengthen the U.S. capitalists' economic power over rival imperialists.

2. The Middle East and the Crisis of Neo-Colonialism

The Middle East is of special concern to the imperialists. Its oil wealth is crucial to the world economy. However, oil has given the local ruling classes some leverage against the imperialists: they demand bigger shares of the take rather than accept total foreign control and ownership. The threat of mass anti-imperialist struggles has often forced them to adopt nominally anti-imperialist postures and press imperialism for concessions.

But imperialism relies on these local ruling classes to enforce the conditions of exploitation. With the economic crisis mounting, the imperialists can no longer afford to tolerate upstart regimes

trying to buck the system. Imperialism demands that they surrender any dreams of expanding their own power and obediently act as its servants and local policemen.

Thus Iraq's Saddam Hussein, and before him Panama's Manuel Noriega and Serbia's Slobodan Milosevic, were all loyal servants of U.S. imperialism who got out of line and were brutally punished, along with their nations' peoples. The current war will provide the U.S. with a military beachhead from which to threaten surrounding states, particularly Iran. Similarly, other neo-colonial countries whose rulers challenge imperialism's interests are under attack: a U.S. embargo strangles Castro's Cuba, and the U.S. supports attempts to overthrow Venezuela's populist president Hugo Chavez. The *New York Times* recently quoted an "unnamed hawk" around Bush:

By setting up our military in Iraq ... we can set an example to other countries: "If you cooperate with terrorists or menace us in any way or even look at us cross-eyed, this could happen to you." (March 9.)

The imperialists' most threatening challenger will not be dictators like Saddam Hussein but the workers and poor. In the Middle East, the masses' anti-imperialist consciousness and ongoing struggles, and particularly the inspiring example of the Palestinian *intifada* against Israel, continue to threaten imperialism. In Turkey, long a bought-and-paid-for ally, mass opposition forced the regime to break its deal for the U.S. to use its territory to invade Iraq. Washington has concluded that its permanent military presence in the region needs a major expansion to prevent upheavals. The war sends the workers and poor of the world the terrifying message that the bloody fate of the Iraqi masses awaits them should they rise up against the imperialist behemoth. And they call this a war *against* terror!

That Washington's war has nothing to do with its professed aim of bringing freedom to the masses of the Middle East can clearly be seen in the fate of the Kurds, who with the Palestinians, are among the world's most nationally oppressed peoples. Washington is dedicated to the maintenance of Iraq's borders and will not tolerate the creation of an independent Kurdistan, which would inspire Kurdish revolts in Turkey, Syria and Iran. At the end of the last Gulf War, when the Kurds in northern Iraq rose up against Baghdad, Washington left Saddam in power to slaughter them. Since then, the U.S. has allowed Turkey's air force to regularly cross the border to bomb Kurdish villages, and has not raised a peep of protest while Turkey butchers the Kurds within its borders.

The U.S. ruling class has concluded that the Middle East's local rulers can no longer be depended on to keep the masses down without the imposing presence of its own military. This points to the crisis of neo-colonialism in general. The deepening world economic crisis is leaving the neo-colonial rulers perilously weak. The collapse of a number of states in the 1990's, including Haiti and Somalia, demanded the intervention of imperialist forces to try to maintain capitalist order.

Such crises will increasingly afflict the neo-colonial regimes and will give the imperialists no choice but to intervene. Capitalism is now truly globalized, and the "third world" working classes are too powerful to have direct colonial rule imposed on them. Over time the U.S.'s rule in Iraq will surely be challenged by popular rebellions. The imperialists will have no choice but to attempt to construct nominally independent governments as fronts for increasingly direct imperialist rule in the neo-colonies.

3. Inter-Imperialist Rivalries and the United Nations

The U.S. war drive met with unexpectedly strong opposition from rival ruling classes. British Prime Minister Blair and Secretary of State Powell, who were strongly seeking U.N. cover



Rumsfeld, now U.S. "Defense" Secretary, plays key role in ruling class's grab for world empire.

for Bush's war drive, didn't expect so much resistance. France and Germany stuck to their guns in the fight to postpone war, partly because their leaders wished to tap anti-war sentiment at home for their own political interests: Schroeder in Germany won re-election last year only by distancing himself from Washington's proposed war, and Chirac in France has enhanced his popularity the same way. They are also working to keep the anti-war opposition within safe, pro-imperialist, bounds.

Their position of continuing to disarm Iraq via inspections offered no real alternative to war. All the imperialists had endorsed the U.N.'s murderous sanctions that caused the deaths of over a million Iraqis through malnutrition and disease. And they all shared the assumption that imperialist powers have a right to weapons of mass destruction while neo-colonial countries, beginning with Iraq, have to go without.

The "anti-war" posturing of France, Germany and Russia should convince no one. They are just as committed to the violence and exploitation of imperialism as is the U.S. France has an ongoing brutal record in Africa, Germany moved to re-establish its East European empire by intervening in Yugoslavia, and Russia continues its bloodbath in Chechnya.

Behind these rival imperialists' diplomatic opposition to Washington's war is the recognition that the U.S.'s grab for oil and assertion of unilateral military power are aimed at them, too. As the imperialist powers are driven into ever more fierce competition with one another, the world is increasingly divided between military alliances and trade blocs.

The U.S. ruling class has been aware for some time that it has to use its advantage as the world's only military superpower to press its economic advantage over its rivals. It has been particularly concerned with the potential of Germany to expand its economic domination of Europe. Control of Iraq's oil will give the U.S. the leverage it wants.

The ideologues of the Bush administration remember the experience of the last years of the Cold War. As part of the Reagan administration, they engineered a new arms race that succeeded in forcing the Soviet Union, its economy already floundering, to the point of economic collapse. Through economic and military domination of the Middle East, they hope to similarly check their rivals today. While the U.S. produces most of the oil it needs, its main imperialist competitors, Germany and Japan, depend on importing oil. Also, Russian capitalism is now tied to the price of the oil it sells on the world market, and U.S. control over oil prices would place Moscow even more under Washington's thumb.

Thus the U.S. invasion of Iraq is an aggressive move against its capitalist rivals; this explains why Europe was so divided by



Anti-war demonstration in Malaysia, March 29, 2003

Washington's war moves. British capital is thoroughly interpenetrated with the American economy and intimately linked with U.S. investments abroad. Tony Blair's role as Washington's lap-dog is not a matter of personal subservience but an expression of British capital's economic interests, particularly in countering Germany's domination of the European Union.

Similarly, France's opposition to the war, which was more unyielding than that of the other European imperialists, expresses its

position as one of the weaker imperialists of Europe. Its multinational companies face stiff competition from U.S. firms and American capital's much greater role in the neo-colonial world. France's opposition to the war has even deeper roots in its fear of an independent Germany. It is committed to lashing itself and Germany together in a joint domination of the European Union with greater distance from the U.S.

Having failed to prevent the war, the imperialist "opponents" of the invasion of Iraq showed where their real concerns lie. Once the invasion began, they did nothing to inconvenience the U.S. war machine. France allowed the U.S. air force to use its airspace on route to bombarding Iraq, and Germany has let the U.S. use its military bases. When Bush and Blair failed to get a Security Council majority for their criminal war, there was no counter-resolution by the majority denouncing the U.S. for trampling on the international law they claim to uphold. To challenge the U.S. after it had launched its war would have weakened imperialism as a whole too much.

The U.N.'s bloody role in preparing the current war confirms what Marxists have long stated: it is a "thieves kitchen," a forum where representatives of the world's ruling classes, dominated by the imperialists in the Security Council, try to agree on how they will rule the world. The rival powers' effective acquiescence to the U.S. war makes clear that their concern was never the well-being of the masses of people. They worry only about the maintenance of the imperialist system and their share of power in it.

Twenty years ago, when the Cold War was in full swing, this

The Search for a New World Order

The Bush administration's defiance of the opposition of rival imperialists and the United Nations to its invasion of Iraq has shocked many. Its foreign policy of acting unilaterally rather than through diplomacy and the United Nations is pointed to as irresponsibly aggressive: the rational multilateralists of the Clinton administration have been replaced by imperial cowboys who have ridden out of Texas to make the world into their new Wild West. Although the Bush II policy is a bold leap beyond previous U.S. strategies, it was prepared and partly begun by Clinton.

THE POST-COLD WAR CRISIS OF U.S. IMPERIALISM

Since the collapse of Stalinism in the late 1980's left it the world's lone military superpower, U.S. imperialism has tried to find a new way to stabilize imperialist rule over the planet. Stalinism had served world imperialism well. The Soviet Union often supported nationalist forces in the neo-colonial world, but it did so with the aim of bringing those nations into its sphere of economic and military domination.

Through the Cold War, the Western imperialists fought against this challenge to their

exploitation of the neo-colonial world. But they also recognized that Stalinism was a crucial counterrevolutionary force: it acted as a barrier to prevent neo-colonial regimes from going too far in challenging imperialism, as well as a brutal force of repression against the real revolutionary threat of the working class. The Cold War further served to tie rival imperialists, particularly West Germany and Japan, to the U.S. and thus to prevent them from independently expanding their global power.

By the late 1970's, economic crisis had already diminished Stalinism's ability to dominate mass upheavals and demanded a more aggressive U.S. role around the world. The Reagan administration began to answer this need with military adventures, including the mining of Nicaragua's harbors, the invasion of Grenada and the bombing of Libya. But generally it acted through proxies like the Nicaraguan contras and Islamic fundamentalists in Afghanistan.

George Bush the First continued these moves with his invasion of Panama to arrest Manuel Noriega, but more dramatic moves were needed. Thus he attempted to declare a "New World Order" with the first Iraq war in 1991. But the U.S. could not rule the

world alone. It needed agreement from its imperialist allies, which it could gain by virtue of its military supremacy and role as world stabilizer for the capitalist system. It secured U.N. endorsement of its war as a cover to limit protests around the world, especially in the Arab states. But despite the slaughter of 200,000 Iraqis in the "Desert Storm" terror campaign, Bush I had to keep Saddam in power in order to prevent mass unrest in Iraq and the rest of the Middle East from spreading.

CLINTON'S MOVE TOWARD UNILATERALISM

Bush I's "New World Order" was exposed as a dream no sooner than it had been declared. With economic crisis spreading and inter-imperialist economic competition heating up, Washington saw that diplomacy and multilateral agreements restrained the U.S. from taking the aggressive steps it needed to preserve its dominant role.

In an attempt to answer this challenge, the Clinton administration declared its readiness to go it alone if "the national interest" demanded it. "When our national security interests are threatened," its 1996 National Security Strategy Paper explained,

magazine stood alone on the far left in predicting that the U.S.-Soviet rivalry would be eclipsed by conflicts between the U.S. and other imperialist powers, notably Germany and Japan. (See "Reagan's Russian Dilemma," *Socialist Voice* No. 15.) Our prediction was based on the understanding that Stalinism was a weak variety of capitalism and would offer no long-term competition, and that violent clashes between leading imperialists were inevitable. The collapse of the Soviet Union confirmed the first part of this prediction, and now the second is starting to pan out. However, even we did not foresee that the open break that is now evident would come so quickly. We thought that Schroeder, Chirac and Putin would finally cave in at the U.N., but the underlying crisis is spurring events even more rapidly than we expected.

Under imperialism, the world capitalist economy has expanded to its geographic limits. As the world economy stagmates, all the rival imperialists can do is fight for greater shares of the wealth exploited from the world's workers. Similar inter-imperialist rivalries produced the First and Second World Wars, as the imperialists fought to re-divide the world. So too the now open conflict between the U.S. and the European powers is setting the stage for a third inter-imperialist war.

4. Overcoming September 11 and the Vietnam Syndrome

The U.S. ruling class knows that it has to aggressively assert its military might to back its drive for greater economic domination. But it has for decades been restrained from launching the military campaigns it would like by the "Vietnam syndrome": the

fear of popular opposition to military adventures abroad if many American lives are lost. The ruling class has been looking for a way to overcome this legacy. The terrorist attacks of September 11 provided it with an opportunity to justify a series of military actions that could do just that.

Moreover, since U.S. military might is the essential guarantor of American economic power, the September 11 attacks demanded that the U.S. strike with a show of force that could cover the world. As we wrote right after the attacks:

American workers are justifiably and intensely angry over the murder of their innocent brothers and sisters. ... But George W. Bush and the rest of the scum who rule America are angry for a different reason. Somebody has humiliated them; their place as the world's most powerful and seemingly invincible terrorist has been challenged!

... Soon, as Bush & Co. intimate, the masses abroad will receive a bloody response which will dwarf past atrocities and re-establish who has the only "God-given right" to engage in mass murder on this planet. Terror does rule the world, and Bush wants to make it clear who is going to exercise it. ("Behind the Terror Attacks Stands Bloody U.S. Imperialism," Sept. 13, 2001.)

The U.S. war on Afghanistan was only a limited success in this respect. It did succeed in toppling the Taliban and installing a puppet regime, slaughtering thousands of civilians in the process. But even against this weak enemy, the U.S. failed to kill or capture the top Taliban or al Qaeda leadership. By invading Iraq, the

"we will, as America always has, use diplomacy when we can, but force if we must. We will act with others when we can, but alone when we must."

Clinton's first military adventures in Somalia and Haiti under the U.N. banner had been debacles. Consequently, he knew the U.S. had to launch a powerful display of military force to reassert its authority. His opportunity came with the civil war in the former Yugoslavia and Serbia's ethnic oppression in Kosovo. According to bourgeois international law, military intervention over what was officially a part of Serbia would have been illegitimate without U.N. approval. But Russia and China, wary of Western power and aligned with Serbia, were ready to veto any imperialist intervention in Kosovo.

To dodge their veto, the U.S. turned to NATO and launched a massive bombing campaign against Serbia. As we wrote in *PR* 59:

... Kosovo presented the U.S. with an opportunity to establish a new world order – based not on a three-way imperialist balance of power but on unchallenged U.S. domination in every sphere: military, economic and political.

Thus the stage was set for the Bush II team.

BUSH'S UNILATERALISM

As the new administration prepared for

office, a think-tank dominated by the neo-conservatives, the Project for the New American Century, argued for a bold assertion of U.S. military power, beginning with an invasion of Iraq. It explained that "some catastrophic and catalyzing event – like a new Pearl Harbor" would be needed to justify such a move. The September 11 terrorist attacks were a godsend.

The new U.S. unilateralism does not abandon use of the U.N., diplomacy or multilateral alliances. Indeed, Powell and Blair's diplomatic efforts showed that they still wanted to obtain U.N. cover for even this most aggressive assertion of U.S. power if at all possible. While the U.S. now asserts its right to unilaterally invade sovereign nations when it sees fit, it will no doubt use the U.N. and alliances like NATO to check attempts by rival imperialists to match the U.S.'s military and economic expansionism.

But U.S. imperialism's attempt to abandon balance-of-power imperialist geo-politics is doomed. The U.S. unilateralist drive, seen by Washington as the only way to maintain both imperialist world control and American supremacy, must inevitably produce a counter-drive. On the economic level, the inexorable capitalist shift from entrepreneurial competition toward monopoly inevitably gave way to even more deadly competition among gigantic mega-corporations and trusts. Likewise, on the

level of international politics, the drive toward world dominance by one or two imperialist powers inevitably produces a reaction in the form of a counter-alliance by rival imperialists. The response to the effort by one bloc to control and stabilize the world leads to a stand-off between two blocs. Historically this has been known as the balance of power.

Even if U.S. imperialism emerges fully victorious from the current Iraq war and exercises its ability to push all other powers around; even if France, Germany and Russia all proclaim their eternal fealty to U.S. leadership; that will only be temporary. We cannot yet fully determine the line up of the future rival power blocs. Suffice it to say that the U.S. and Germany will be the polar centers with Japan the next most powerful factor in the balance of power.

Given the nature of imperialism and its inevitable war of all against all in a world beset by a deepening economic crisis, a balance of power can only provide a momentary repressive stabilization. Thus the war is not just for control of Iraq but for control of the world. We cannot put the issue more sharply. The working class's fight cannot be for "peace," in a world that cannot possibly have peace. Authentic communists must fight for a working-class-led war against imperialist war. The only thing that can prevent the coming of World War III is the victory of the workers' socialist revolution. ●

U.S. is sending the message that it has the power and will to smash even bigger enemies without regard for diplomacy or international law.

While the Bush administration zeroed in on Iraq, North Korea exposed another fraud in the U.S. campaign by openly restarting its nuclear program. Any military response by the U.S. has to consider not only the vulnerability of its own forces but also the fact that a large proportion of the heavily industrial South Korean working class seethes with anger at the U.S. and opposes intervention in the North. China and Japan are also worried about the destabilizing situation. The U.S. adopted a wavering diplomatic approach in Korea for the moment, but if Bush's strategy works in Iraq, North Korea may become the next oppressed nation under his guns.

U.S. RULING CLASS DIVISIONS

The stark, unilateral aggressiveness of the invasion of Iraq seems excessive to some observers. Even though the Iraq war is a necessity for U.S. imperialism, the ruling class is divided over it.

The crew around Bush II is a fortuitous combination from the vantage point of U.S. bourgeois needs. The administration's neo-conservative intellectual elitists have long promoted the need for a bold new American empire to lead the world as its new messiah. (See *PR* 64, "Bush's Bloody Empire.") They serve as advisors to the avaricious CEO's in the cabinet whose lust for greater exploitation knows no bounds. This team had the nerve to strike now without fully considering the risks and certainly without any concern for the loss of human life, American as well as Iraqi.

Within the U.S. ruling class, the disquiet about the war deepened when the Iraqi's defense of their homeland initially slowed the imperialist attack. It was not only a few marginal liberal Democrats and far-right Republicans who questioned the Bush rat pack. Many in the officer corps loathe Rumsfeld and Wolfowitz, considering them to be technocratic cowboys who don't understand war on the ground. Yet few if any ruling-class spokesmen were willing to oppose the war outright, fearing that if the U.S. does not triumph decisively then its imperialism will suffer a serious blow.

Another reason for the Bush gang's single-minded war drive is their need to deepen their authority within the U.S. ruling class. This includes electoral victory for their wing of the Republican Party, but it is not that alone. They fear that any temporizing would bolster the "moderates" in their effort to return to the more

cautious and generally multilateralist imperialist foreign policy of the past. For them, the risk of returning to a policy of restraint in today's world is far more dangerous than the hazards involved in their rush to war.

While Bush's war drive has the support of the overwhelming majority of Democratic Party politicians, criticism of his unilateralism is particularly voiced by some Democrats who worry that it may unnecessarily destabilize the world. But even these disagreements are over how best to strengthen U.S. imperial rule. Even the "anti-war" Democratic presidential candidates accepted the murderous U.N. sanctions and the imperialist policy of disarming Iraq that paved the way to the war. And no wonder: these were policies of the Clinton presidency. Furthermore, the Democrats hardly have a principled commitment to working through the U.N. As we explain in the accompanying box "The Search for a New World Order" (p. 16), Clinton set the precedent for Bush's unilateral attack on Iraq through his bombing of Serbia.

Bush's risky decision to go it alone and lay down the law to rivals and rebels alike could have been postponed, but with an even greater risk for Washington. For one thing, the mass upheavals around the world are not yet defined by working-class leadership or consciously revolutionary anti-capitalism, but that can change. September 11 gave the White House the enormous gift of a patriotic wave which might offset the Vietnam syndrome. Bush had reason to hope that growing working-class anger to the deepening class attacks and the corporate scandals could be diverted into a war "linked" to terrorism. But the jingoist hype was already beginning to fade, and the decisive moment was at hand.

The opportunity he seized makes Bush's move look strong right now, but it is bound to fail. The inherent contradictions of capitalism point to a depression deeper than that of the 1930's. Imperialist rivals, particularly Germany in Europe and Japan in Asia will inevitably move to expand their regional dominance and challenge U.S. rule of the planet. Unless mass working-class struggles help create revolutionary communist parties that can lead them to the overthrow of the system, imperialism will condemn humanity to another world war that will dwarf that of the 1940's.

MASS STRUGGLES FRIGHTEEN RULERS

Just before the invasion began, White House officials were predicting a quick and easy victory. Richard Perle, a key architect of the invasion, declared that "there may be pockets of resistance, but very few Iraqis are going to fight to defend Saddam Hussein." Vice President Dick Cheney predicted on television that the invading forces would be "greeted as liberators," that most of Iraq's army would want to "avoid conflict with U.S. forces" and that the war would be over in weeks. The Iraqis, outnumbered and outgunned, were able to courageously fight back, and even inflicted some small defeats on the invading forces. But the imperialist occupation could yet inspire mass struggles in Iraq and the region and force an imperialist retreat.

Before the war, various Arab rulers expressed their fear that the U.S. invasion of Iraq would trigger a chain explosion of mass struggles that could topple them from power. Amr Moussa, head of the Arab League, declared that an attack on Iraq would "open the gates of Hell in the Middle East." Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, who rules uneasily over the region's biggest working class, pleaded that if there were a war, "not one Arab leader would be able to control the angry outburst of the masses." Hamdy el-Sayed, a member of the Egypt's ruling National Democratic Party admitted:

We are extremely worried about the reaction of people on the day America starts bombing the Iraqi people. Maybe



Iraqi Republican Guard outside Baghdad. Iraqi military was outgunned by imperialist war machine.

people will try to express anger at American actions, but they are in such a state of disappointment and resentment that they may also express anger against rising prices and the cost of living. It might be an opportunity to mix everything together. That's what everyone is worried about. (New York Times, March 12.)

The Middle East's indigenous ruling classes were right to fear the U.S.'s naked aggression combined with deepening super-exploitation. Indeed, several days after the invasion started, hundreds of thousands demonstrated angrily in Syria, Egypt and Lebanon denouncing Bush and Blair as murderers. Thousands of Egyptians have protested, chanting "Open the borders, let us go fight," and "Arm us, train us and send us to Baghdad!" Washington's response is that if the Arab dictators don't crack down hard enough on the masses, the U.S. will.

Enormous protests against the takeover will continue to take place around the world. But they are still small compared to the widespread anger and yearning for a way to make the will of the people felt. What has restrained them so far is the feeling of impotence to affect the powers-that-be. Given the destruction of class consciousness by the pseudo-socialist left during the Cold War, the urban working classes in many countries have lost direction. The main reason for this is the *absence of a revolutionary working-class leadership that can offer a strategy to defeat imperialism and its local enforcers.*

WORKERS' ACTIONS AGAINST THE WAR

In many cases, liberal pro-capitalist forces act as spokesmen for the mass protests. They oppose the war because they fear it will destabilize the system. But importantly, the working class in a number of countries is once again beginning to take independent action, with militancy from the ranks actually forcing unions to organize serious protests and strikes. Millions of workers in Spain, Germany and Switzerland struck briefly to protest the moves toward war, and a general strike against the war took place in Greece. In Italy the unions have taken the lead, organizing angry protests of hundreds of thousands and conducting a short general strike in response to the start of the war, with more actions planned. The longshore unions have pledged that all Italian ports will be closed to the flow of military supplies to Iraq. In Scotland, railroad workers refused to transport military equipment to NATO bases. In Newfoundland, Canada, port workers refused to handle cargo for the war.

In all these cases, the union actions have been kept within bounds: one-hour strikes do not threaten production or profits. For the labor bureaucracy, they are a device to let angry workers let off steam, not to lead them in stifling the warmongers.

In the U.S., the working class is divided in its attitudes toward the war. The majority probably supported it, with their anxiety over their economic losses diverted into patriotic sentiment. They also know that the troops on the ground in Iraq,

Shades of 1914 and 1939:

The Capitalist Fear of War and Revolution

Pat Buchanan's right-wing magazine, *The American Conservative*, strongly opposed the U.S. war on Iraq. In its April 7 issue, Martin Sieff, the Chief International Analyst for United Press International, wrote an article entitled "That 1914 Feeling." Sieff pointed out that Germany's ally, the Austro-Hungarian Empire, suffered a terrorist attack when Archduke Franz Ferdinand was assassinated in 1914. The Austro-Hungarian rulers launched a war on Serbia, a "rogue state," a response which in Sieff's opinion failed to take into account its consequences. He recounts a conversation in a café between Count Berchtold, the foreign minister, and a friend who was appalled that the attack would lead to a far wider war, destruction of the empire and communist revolutions.

Sieff's article pulls no punches in expressing the fears held by the American far right that a similar disaster awaits the U.S. as a result of the current Iraq war.

He quotes Berchtold as saying to his friend, "And who will lead this terrible revolution of yours? Mr. Bronstein, I suppose, sitting over there, endlessly arguing as usual with his friends!" Sieff then comments, "Mr. Bronstein became better known to the world as Leon Trotsky, right-hand man to Vladimir Ilyich Lenin and the future creator of the Red Army."

On August 25, 1939, a few days before World War II broke out, Hitler and Coulandre, the French ambassador to Germany, had a frank exchange. In discussing the coming war, Coulandre said "I would also have the fear that as a result of the war, there will be only one real victor – Mr. Trotsky." Hitler then shouted, "Why do you then give Poland a blank check?"

Trotsky commented that the use of his name – the name most often reviled by the Stalinists in the Kremlin at the time – merely symbolized all their fears of socialist revolution as a result of the coming war.

Trotsky's Specter Today

The various counterrevolutionaries today, including the Buchananites, have good reason to be frightened of imperialist adventures which can help ignite revolution. Imperialism was only saved after World War I by the treachery of social democracy, which betrayed the socialist revolutions that broke out in the wake of the Russian Bolshevik Revolution. Isolated, the revolution was finally strangled. Likewise, the Stalinist counterrevolution in the USSR succeeded in undermining and helping to crush the workers' revolutions that exploded at the end of World War II.

As a result of those betrayals, class consciousness among workers around the world

is far less advanced today. Berchtold, Hitler and Coulandre all knew that organized revolutionary parties were small when their wars broke out, but they also knew enough to fear their potential leadership of the masses. The forces of authentic revolutionary working-class Trotskyism, embodied today in COFI, are growing but are much smaller and more isolated than at the outbreak of the past wars.

The international working class is objectively far stronger than it was at the outbreak of the two world wars; and for Marxists, the objective potential is key. The massive struggles now being launched in response to the general capitalist attack and the war will inevitably become the seedbed for a rapid growth in revolutionary proletarian consciousness. The continuing collapse of the counterrevolutionary reformist misleaderships within our class, both Stalinist and social-democratic, is a huge advantage compared to the past.

Further, although the Iraq War is a clear omen of World War III, the next huge inter-imperialist war will break out not tomorrow but the day after. And fascism has not yet become a decisive force on the world scene. The fight for proletarian revolution and the Trotskyist party which champions it still has time to prevent the world disaster that U.S. imperialism is now sparking. ●

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largely recruited by economic necessity, are from their class – indeed, from the most oppressed sections of it. But many workers opposed the war; certainly a far greater percentage than opposed the Vietnam war in its earliest stages. Opposition can grow if Americans see increased resistance against U.S. occupation of Iraq. The experience of the ruling class's economic and racist attacks at home – and of mass struggles against them – will lead more workers to question their rulers' aims abroad.

HOW WORKERS CAN FIGHT AGAINST WAR

There were several anti-war demonstrations in the U.S. that mobilized hundreds of thousands of protesters before the invasion and shortly after it started. But all were led by coalitions of middle-class liberals and radicals who spread illusions in the U.N. and were determined to keep the movement safe for Democratic politicians. Their pacifist and electoralist programs presented no challenge to the underlying causes of the war: the capitalist system of exploitation and imperialism.

A key task for revolutionaries is to link the struggle against war with the working-class struggle. As death-row inmate and political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal recently wrote:

Demonstrations are powerful indicators of popular consciousness, but is it enough when the State is profoundly undemocratic, and driven by other forces?

The answer may lie in that little-used social resource of union power. The recent statement of the AFL-CIO ... against the war ... was all but dismissed by the Bush Regime. What would happen, however, if a general strike were called among all member unions, against this imminent war?

It may take such measures to begin to put the dogs of war back in their cages. ("Bush to World: Drop Dead," March 3.)

In fact, the AFL-CIO had raised at best token reluctance about the upcoming war, opposing mainly unilateral action by the U.S. And once the war started, President John Sweeney rallied around the flag, announcing his "unequivocal" support.

But Mumia is right about the need for a general strike. The League for the Revolutionary Party is unique on the left for having consistently promoted the idea that the working class should unite in a general strike to win its struggles. That is because we fight for the idea that the vanguard party is not a gift from condescending middle-class saviors but will arise as the working class itself reaches consciousness through its own mass self-action.

American workers are obviously a long way from being convinced of the need for general strikes against war. However, if revolutionary workers constantly propagandize for such action along with their anti-war proposals and demonstrations, the idea will gain far wider appeal as the bourgeois attacks deepen.

Hundreds of union bodies and locals passed resolutions against the Iraq war. The problem is that such statements had little meaning as long as they were not accompanied by a call for a struggle against the AFL-CIO bureaucracy, which had no intention of actually opposing the war.

The road to independent working-class action and strikes against imperialist acts will likely begin with struggles against the capitalist attacks at home – layoffs, budget cuts and rising racism. Struggles against the capitalist attacks at home can deepen workers' class hatred of their rulers and show them the power their class has when it is united in struggle. At the same time, they can win more and more workers to see the true nature of the class which leads the U.S. into criminal wars.

The class-collaborationist misleaders of our class did not gain their power by conspiracy. They rest on an aristocracy of labor, a significant layer of the working class which has had a

material stake in the capitalist system. Throughout the world, the capitalist attack has undermined and taken away much of that stake. The labor aristocracy has declined, and the allied middle strata have also been hard hit. It is no accident that the small forces of authentic working-class communism are now growing in a way that hasn't been seen in three decades.

The developing struggles are the crucible for the development of revolutionary class consciousness. In the course of these explosions, the working class will re-create its own revolutionary leadership. We in the LRP and COFI are proud to be in the forefront of such a tremendous leap forward for our class.

SOCIALIST REVOLUTION IS THE ONLY SOLUTION

Mass working-class struggles can defeat the capitalists' economic attacks and its imperialist war. Through such struggles the working class will come to see that it has the power to not just beat back the attacks, but to overthrow the whole capitalist system and build a world free of exploitation, oppression and war.

Capitalism in its brutal way has laid the basis for its own overthrow. In earlier times, class-divided societies were the unavoidable result of scarcity: economies could barely produce enough necessities for the whole population. But capitalism has built an international economy which is capable of producing an abundance for all the world's people. Not only are hunger and homelessness avoidable, but modern technology and industry have the potential to produce more than enough to satisfy every material desire and liberate all from want and back-breaking labor. The barrier to creating this world of abundance is capitalist ownership of the economy, which limits production to what can be sold for profit.

Capitalism has also created the class capable of creating a new society – the working class. Brought together from all parts of the world and organized by the production process, the working class uses the organization imposed upon it in its struggles to defend itself. Since it has no fundamental interest in maintaining the profit system, the working class's life conditions and struggle encourage communist class-consciousness. Revolutions that put the working class in power can overcome the conditions of capitalist misery and build a world of freedom and abundance for all. Racism and national oppression will be buried along with their economic foundation.

Capitalism inevitably drives the masses to revolt. Necessary for victory, however, is a revolutionary communist party to lead the struggle. The liberals and their left-wing assistants hold back mass struggles from challenging the system. The working class needs a revolutionary leadership fighting to expose these misleaders – in the anti-war movement, in the unions and every other struggle – in order to unleash the workers' power. As the capitalist crisis deepens and increasingly points toward its future of depression and world war, the work of building the revolutionary communist party leadership our class needs has never been more urgent.●

April 10, 2003

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War on Immigrants

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Asian immigrants is a vital component. Unity with other powerful sectors of the working class and its supporters is equally urgent, in order to build the types of needed mass actions that can provide a real defense.

KEY ROLE OF LATINO IMMIGRANTS

It is important to consider the role of Latino immigrants, who have played a major part in other types of fightbacks in the recent past. Only a few years ago the bold action of immigrant Latino janitors in Los Angeles and elsewhere provided a key spark for a growing amnesty movement. The struggles by immigrant workers, chiefly Mexican in origin, won concrete gains. The INS reduced the number of raids it carried out from 17,000 in 1997 to 953 in 2000.

Of course, there has never been a golden age for any people of color in this country. But the power of immigrant workers to fight back and even win gains has already been demonstrated. And to a large degree, their power is based on their role in the economy. Mass immigration has continued to grow despite September 11. Imperialism creates such misery around the world that – ironically – lots of people are forced to come to the U.S. for a better life, even though they face discrimination and would much prefer their homelands.

But the other side of this coin is that the immigrant workforce has become irreversibly vital to the U.S. economy. This fact is already understood by politicians and think tanks. And this gives immigrant workers an avenue to fight back.

CLASS WAR, NOT IMPERIALIST WAR

Our strategy is based on building the biggest and most powerful possible unity of the working class against the capitalist-imperialist class. That is why we stress the common interests of immigrants of different nationalities, and also the common interest of immigrants and workers of color in the United States.

There are two key components to the heightened attacks on immigrants. One has been an underlying motive even in the most peaceful of times. As one observant INS bureaucrat now working for Homeland Security commented, “Part of our mission has always been to carry the burden that immigration policy is very

difficult for this country. Everyone wants to have their cake and eat it too. Everyone wants to get rid of illegal aliens, but no one wants to get rid of cheap labor.” (*Los Angeles Times*, March 12.)

However, this is not a policy of an anonymous “everyone.” It is the conscious two-faced policy fostered by the capitalists against workers and oppressed peoples: force or lure people here with promises, use them for cheap labor and harass and castigate them every chance you get. The new factor is the stepped-up, open imperial stance of the U.S. in the world.

It is not only against Arabs and Muslims. A recent dispute with Mexico over support to the U.S. war drive led President Bush and his cronies to mouth off threats against Mexican workers here. An unnamed American diplomat was quoted in the press saying that if Mexico didn’t vote for the U.S. war in the U.N., that could “stir up feelings” against Mexicans in the United States. He recalled that the U.S. had interned Japanese-Americans during World War II, and threatened that a Mexican rejection would “stir the fires of jingoism during a war.” Bush himself added to the warnings, according to the *New York Times*:

He alluded to the possibility of reprisals if Mexico didn’t vote America’s way, saying, “I don’t expect there to be significant retribution from the government.” ... He then went on to suggest that there might, however, be a reaction from other quarters, citing “an interesting phenomena taking place here in America about the French ... a back lash against the French, not stirred up by anybody except the people.” (March 7.)

That is, while it is Arabs who are being rounded up now, any nation that displeases the U.S. can become a target of “the people.”

SHAMEFUL ROLE OF THE UNIONS

Given the fragile situation that immigrants find themselves in, it would be a mistake to blame the lack of a fightback primarily on the immigrant rights groups. The major problem has been the strongest working-class institutions, the trade unions, whose leadership is so rotten that few people even expect them to do their job of defending the working class.

For example, the fighting immigrant workers, especially Mexican immigrants were the main pressure behind the AFL-CIO’s historic turnabout in 2000 when it came out in favor of amnesty for immigrants. The AFL-CIO’s turn reflected the central role that immigrant workers were now playing in the blue-collar workforce. But little happened. A lot of hoopla and illusions were

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Protest against witchhunt of Arab-American men in front of the Immigration and Naturalization Service Los Angeles District Office, January 2003.

spread about a federal amnesty bill, as if it could really be won just by occasional lobbying and demonstrations. And after September 11, the reactionary labor bureaucracy went back to its real full-time job of touting U.S. imperialism uncritically.

Significantly, the only protest the AFL-CIO issued in reference to the Homeland Security consolidation was over the civil service status of the new department's employees and agents! The Arab and other immigrant workers, who were most immediately imperiled, were shoved under the rug. This was a dramatic demonstration that opposing the imperialist war in Iraq and defending immigrant rights at home are part of the same struggle.

The bureaucrats' affinity for the ruling class has produced an altogether one-sided class war at home. Now that there is a war on, the one-sidedness will be even sharper, and not only for immigrants and people of color. The living standards of the whole working class are getting worse. Because it holds back necessary and powerful struggles like a general strike, the craven union bureaucracy has to be fought until the day it is replaced!

BUILD THE INTERNATIONAL REVOLUTIONARY PARTY!

In our view, the most vital organization for the defense of immigrants is the building of the internationalist revolutionary party. Only an authentically Marxist party, which understands imperialism fully and knows that the main enemy is the U.S. ruling class, can withstand the pressures of bourgeois nationalism. In imperialist countries like the U.S., a huge problem has been the capitulation of so-called socialist and communist parties to imperialist attacks on oppressed nations. In the two inter-imperialist world wars, these same types of centrist and reformist parties mostly caved in to supporting their own bourgeoisie, with workers killing other workers in the name of their particular nation. Only a revolutionary international party can effectively fight to prevent this. It will do so as part of its fight for the socialist revolution that is needed here and across the globe.

The Third International, under the leadership of Josef Stalin, was among the parties that sided with U.S. imperialism during World War II. Only the Fourth International, under the leadership of Leon Trotsky, retained a revolutionary policy and did not side with any imperialist power in World War II. Tragically, Trotsky was assassinated at Stalin's order in 1940 and some of the

Trotskyist leadership was killed during the war. Later the Fourth International disintegrated into bands of revolutionary pretenders who betrayed other revolutions, in particular the struggle in Bolivia in 1952. Today we in the LRP fight for the basic political views of Trotsky's International. This is why the chief slogan of the LRP is to re-create the Fourth International. We must attempt to strengthen the international revolutionary program, re-create the organization that is needed and win masses of workers to it.

When united, the power of workers will defeat the capitalist class. Immigrant workers bring to the struggle a fierce hatred of imperialism based on first-hand experience, as well as a heritage of revolutionary struggle from countries all around the world. They will certainly be an important component of the struggle against U.S. imperialism here – which, if it is to succeed, must be thoroughly internationalist.

More so than ever before, there is no long-term solution to the plight of immigrants within the capitalist system. Even in the richest nation in the world, the economic crisis cannot be resolved except at the expense of the working class. Since a frontal assault on the whole working class is not yet possible, the bourgeoisie must attack its most vulnerable elements first. If immigrant workers are forced to retreat further, then all workers in this country will end up under the gun, whether they realize it yet or not.

Of course, all workers will not be won away from the U.S. nationalist patriotic garbage, but if those of us who see through the lies and racism join together, then a decisive number of our fellow workers can be won over to both opposition to the war and defense of immigrant rights and the whole working class.

The vital cause of the immigrant working class at home must not be buried. If this happens at a time when domestic and world opinion against the war is so massive it would be an even greater shame. Proletarian revolutionaries look for every opportunity to join with others to raise the needs of the working class – and the immediate defense of immigrant workers in particular – at demonstrations and anti-war events. The time is now to advance in building a revolutionary organization and fortifying a movement that can be both against the war and in defense of *all* workers!

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PROLETARIAN REVOLUTION

Spring 2003

Stop the War on Immigrants!

by Evelyn Kaye

A wave of attacks on immigrants in the U.S. began with September 11. As the war-mongering turned into an all-out war against Iraq, immigrant workers knew that there would be good cause for alarm on U.S. soil, too. Today the agenda is no less than the criminalization of entire immigrant communities. An atmosphere has been created in which all kinds of verbal and violent attacks are incited.

One significant development was the dissolution of the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) into the new Homeland Security department on March 1. "Since this is homeland security, people are afraid it will taint immigrants as potential threats rather than as benefits to society," said Greg Simons of the Committee for Humane Immigrant Rights of Los Angeles. (*Los Angeles Times*, March 1.) Talk about understatement! Indeed, the name of the department itself expresses only too well what the U.S. ruling class has in mind.

Even before the bombs began to drop on Iraq, the Bush Administration had rounded up, detained and deported thousands of documented and undocumented immigrants. There has been a long and growing official list of nationalities — almost all from the Middle East and South or Central Asia — subject to round-up or forced appearances. Many who reported for "interviews" with the INS vanished for days or even months, despite their families' and friends' frantic attempts to find them.

RACISM AND CHAUVINISM GO HAND IN HAND

What is behind all this? As our lead article points out, the same economic crisis that pushes imperialist war abroad also drives the class war at home. But the latter war is still rather covert. U.S. capitalists are masters at using racism, national chauvinism and every other reactionary device to exacerbate divisions within the working class. Their method is divide and conquer, and they hide the fact that attacking the whole working class is going to be the only way to maintain capitalist rule.

Today, Arabs, Muslims and South Asians are among the most vulnerable targets for virulent scapegoating. For one thing, they are among the more recent arrivals. More importantly, U.S. imperialism needs to justify its murderous role in the Middle East and its growing repressive apparatus at home. It is no surprise that the rulers' most rabid mouthpieces portray people born in majority-Muslim countries as one indistinguishable threatening horde. After all, Blacks and Latinos in the U.S. have always suffered pervasive racist oppression and deeper exploitation. Racial profiling was once supposed to be a justifiable part of the war on crime. Now profiling and detention of Arabs, Muslims, and South Asians are supposed to be an acceptable part of the war on terrorism. The attacks on immigrants are themselves racist and will have the added effect of deepening all forms of racism in this country.

UNITED MASS DEFENSE OF IMMIGRANTS NEEDED

To carry out its assaults without hindrance from constitutional protections, the federal government hurriedly passed new



Demonstration at LAX airport in March 2002 protesting wave of attacks on immigrants in U.S.

laws. Not only Republicans but Democratic Senators and Representatives as well voted overwhelmingly for the so-called "USA PATRIOT Act," which greatly increased police powers to detain without charge, wiretap without warrant and search without notification. And now we are supposed to sit tight and stay tuned for another round of laws in the works, referred to fondly in government circles as Patriot Act II.

Given the urgency, who should immigrants under siege look toward for their defense? A logical avenue for help would be the existing immigrant rights groups. Unfortunately so far, nationally known groups like the Arab-American Anti-Discrimination Committee have stuck to a strategy of voting for and lobbying the pro-imperialist politicians (i.e., in the Democratic and Republican Parties, which are bolstering the attacks), rather than trying to build mass actions that would seem too militant.

That doesn't mean that there has not been resistance. Although immigrant groups tend to be divided by nationality, under the common attack there is a growing sense that this needs to be overcome. One of the more militant protests against the round-ups was a demonstration of thousands of Iranians in Los Angeles last December that won national attention. But the fact remains that there needs to be an organized fightback, one that all immigrants under attack can look to and that can encourage the rest of the working class to join in, too.

There is tremendous ground for fear of reprisals; in the current climate, caution is necessary as to how and when immigrants respond. Nevertheless, a pro-establishment strategy or a policy of inaction will be a disaster for immigrants under attack. We say that a working class strategy is needed to answer these attacks. In this, unity between Arab, Latin-American, African, Caribbean and

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