



SC photo

Trotskyist League contingent on October 20 antiwar demo in Toronto opposes foreign war, domestic repression.

NDP Backs Foreign War and Domestic Repression

The following article was first issued as an SC supplement on 13 November. The next day, as Afghanistan's ruling Taliban and its militias abandoned major cities, the Canadian government offered 1,000 combat troops as part of a UN-sponsored invasion force, to garrison areas now held by the Northern Alliance. Within 24 hours, the New Democratic Party officially endorsed this, repeating yet again that "New Democrats are committed to international action under the auspices of the United Nations." There could be no better

confirmation of our supplement's warning to workers and antiwar youth that the NDP's "peace" posturing is a pro-imperialist fraud.

Also proven dead-on is our supplement's exposure of the reformist left as shills for the NDP's crooked game of dressing imperialist war in UN blue and calling it "peacemaking." On November 17—*two days after* the New Democrats' official statement of support for the insertion of Canadian troops—NDP speakers were featured at "Peace Now" demonstrations in several cities. In Toronto, fake socialist groups including the International Socialists, who were chairing the rally, joined in loud cheers as Ontario NDP MPP Marilyn Churley brazenly declared that the NDP was "the only party to oppose the war." In sharp contrast, the

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Letter

IBT's Centrist Phrasemongering

The following letter and response were first published in *Workers Vanguard* (No. 768, 9 November), newspaper of the *Spartacist League/U.S.* The letter is printed in the form that our comrades received it by e-mail.

* * *

20 October 2001

To the Editor

In the 12 October issue of *Workers Vanguard* it is alleged that IBT comrades in Toronto have been pressing Trotskyism [sic] League youth "to agree that all those killed in the attack on the Pentagon 'deserved to die.'" This is absolutely untrue. We categorically deny making such a statement at any time in Toronto or anywhere else. We are flatly opposed to such views as our 18 September statement makes clear.

On 28 September I had a conversation with young TLER in front of the building at the University of Toronto where Tariq Ali was speaking. During this discussion the question of the omission of the Pentagon bombing from your initial statement came up, along with the question of Lebanon 1983 and other issues. On 19 October, after reading your erroneous account, I met this same comrade at a public meeting on "globalization" at the University of Toronto and asked him if he had been the source of this misinformation. He agreed that I had made no such statement, nor did he know of any other IBT comrade making such a statement. He furthermore denied being the source of the false attribution.

In a subsequent discussion with Comrade Charles I pointed out that in the present political climate the consequences of such falsehoods could potentially be extremely serious. I told him that I was raising this with him, as a leading member of the TL, on behalf of the IBT. He indicated that he was not the source of the quotation. He also advised me that *Workers Vanguard* has a policy of correcting "factual errors" and suggested that I write to you on this matter.

We look forward to an appropriate correction in the 26 October issue of *Workers Vanguard*.

Bolshevik Greetings,

Tom Riley

WV replies:

The statement in our article "On the Pentagon Attack" (*WV* No. 766, 12 October) that International Bolshevik Tendency (IBT) members argued that "all those killed in the

attack on the Pentagon 'deserved to die'" was a distortion of a report from our Canadian comrades, which we retract. What the IBT wrote in its 18 September statement is: "Unlike the personnel in the Pentagon, the command center of the U.S. military, the thousands of victims trapped in the World Trade Center's twin towers and the hundreds of passengers and crew on board the four hijacked airliners were civilians whose deaths we mourn."

The IBT has since posted a 21 October "Reply to *Workers Vanguard*" on its Web site claiming that our statement that "the IBT amnesties the 'war is not the answer' reformists in the U.S." is also "a malicious invention without any basis in fact." On the contrary, our characterization is absolutely true. Neither in its 18 September statement nor in the 21 October cyberspace reply to us (which, to our knowledge, are the only pieces of propaganda the IBT has produced since September 11) does the IBT mention, let alone criticize, the social-patriotism of the reformist left, whose various "antiwar" coalitions are based on bleating appeals to the imperialist ruling class for peace. Instead, the IBT aims virtually all its polemical fire at the Spartacist League, claiming *we* are social-patriotic because we refused to hail as an "anti-imperialist act" a truck-bomb attack on a U.S. Marine barracks in Lebanon by unknown forces 18 years ago.


We opposed the presence of U.S. (and United Nations) troops in Lebanon from the outset, unlike sundry Third World nationalists and fake leftists who sold the lie that the imperialists would be "peacekeepers" in the multi-sided religious/ethnic civil war then wracking that country. We also made clear that "from the standpoint of the struggle of the international proletariat, the Marine HQ in Beirut was an appropriate target" (*Young Spartacus* No. 114, December 1983/January 1984). However, this did not make its destruction an act of "anti-imperialism." In fact, no side in the Lebanese civil war was fighting imperialism. Those whose cause was clearest—the Palestine Liberation Organization—had requested imperialist intervention in the first place. And to this day it is still not clear who blew up the Marine barracks.

Marxists recognize that victorious struggle by the proletariat against the imperialist rulers—and the massive arsenal of violence in the hands of the capitalist state—requires the maximum assembling of effective force to deter and demoralize the forces of reaction. But the use of terrorism as a strategy by individuals or small groups—even against a military target—is counterposed to mobilizing the proletariat in class struggle against the imperialist rulers. At the same time, Marxists draw a distinction between attacks on institutions like the Pentagon and random terror against innocent civilians, as in the case of the World Trade Center, even if the perpetrators of the September 11 attacks (whoever they were) might not have drawn any such distinction. As we wrote in "On the Pentagon Attack":

"The Pentagon is the command and administrative center of the U.S. imperialist military, and rather quintessentially represents the military might of U.S. imperialism, the main enemy of the working people and oppressed of the world. That recognition does not translate this attack into an 'anti-imperialist' act, nor do we think the planeload of innocent passengers which was used as the massive bomb 'deserved to die' (or the janitors and secretaries who were employed at the Pentagon)."

In 1983, when we raised the evocative slogan, "Marines out of Lebanon, now, alive!" to intersect widespread outrage

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<p>Newspaper of the Trotskyist League/Ligue trotskyste Canadian section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist)</p>
<p>Editorial Board: Jane Clancy, Charles Galarneau (Managing Editor), Arthur Llewellyn, John Masters (Editor), Andrew Murray (Editor, <i>Young Spartacus</i> pages), Peter Stegner, Russell Stoker (Production Manager) Circulation Manager: Andrew Shilling</p>
<p>Published four times a year by Spartacist Canada Publishing Association, Box 6867, Station A, Toronto ON M5W 1X6. Opinions expressed in signed articles or letters do not necessarily express the editorial viewpoint. <i>Printed in a union shop by union labor.</i></p>
<p>Return postage guaranteed Publications Mail Reg. No. 8161 ISSN: 0229-5415 Winter 2001/2002 Date of issue: December 2001</p>

U.S., Canada, UN, NATO: Out of Afghanistan and Central Asia Now! U.S.-Backed Killers Take Kabul

The following article is adapted from *Workers Vanguard No. 769* (23 November), newspaper of the *Spartacist League/U.S.*

* * *

Surprising even their U.S. imperialist patrons, Northern Alliance forces seized the northern Afghan city of Mazar-i-Sharif and then Kabul in mid-November as Taliban troops retreated from one town after another. Hailed as “liberators” by Washington, Ottawa and the Western media, the Northern Alliance cutthroats are already displaying the internecine feuding and murderous barbarity of their four years in power in the mid-1990s. Based largely on the minority Tajik and Uzbek peoples, Northern Alliance forces have reportedly massacred hundreds of ethnic Pashtun and other Taliban prisoners.

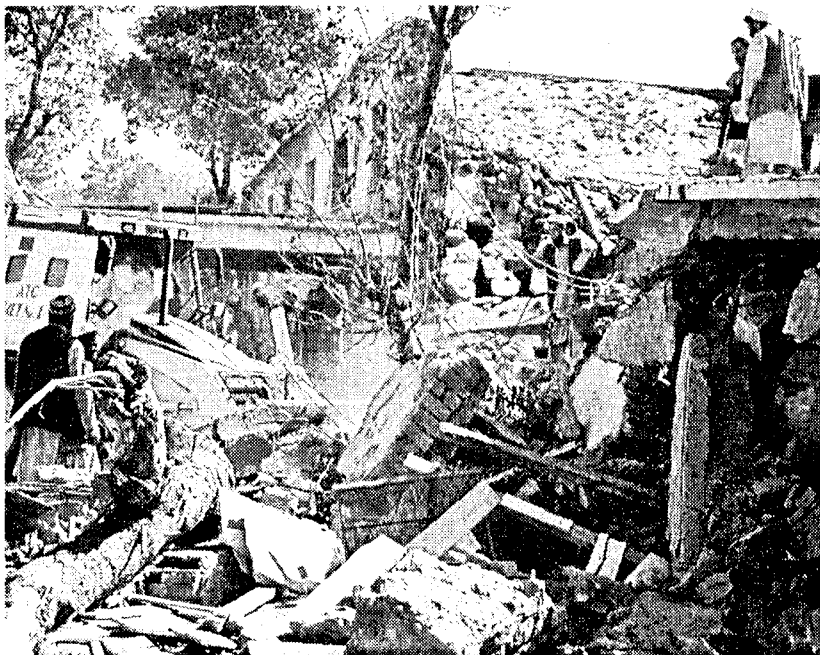
Pentagon chief Donald Rumsfeld brags that U.S. commando units are now roaming freely through Afghanistan in a manhunt for anyone allegedly connected to Osama bin Laden’s Al Qaeda network, while U.S. bombs rain down on Kandahar and Kunduz, where fierce fighting still rages between the Taliban and its rivals.

On November 13, American missiles slammed into the Kabul office of Al-Jazeera, the Arab-language satellite channel that the U.S. leaders of the “free world” have been trying to silence since the beginning of the war for its coverage of the death and destruction wreaked by the imperialists.

The war-crazed American imperialists have already begun plotting “Phase 2” of the “war on terrorism,” which Vice President Cheney has warned “may never end, at least not in our lifetime.” The London *Guardian* (17 November) reports: “The ease with which Kabul has fallen has encouraged hawks within the US administration who are keen to extend military action, particularly against Iraq.” ***U.S./Canada: Hands off Iraq!***

In moving into Kabul, the Northern Alliance forces openly flouted U.S. diktat. Now the imperialists are scrambling to conjure up a “broad-based” government under United Nations auspices, drawing in particularly the predominant Pashtun tribes. According to the London *Independent* (17 November), U.S., British and French strategists worked out a plan where “Afghanistan will be divided between the three countries into ‘zones of influence.’” Kabul is supposed to be occupied by “a strong international Muslim presence” dominated by Turkish troops, who are seasoned in the slaughter of the Kurdish national minority in Turkey. French troops are slated to move into Mazar-i-Sharif and British forces are now positioned at the Bagram air base near Kabul.

Taking hits on its own territory in the attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon, American imperialism lashed



Salahuddin/Reuters

U.S. air war has devastated Afghanistan.

out at Afghanistan to assert its unchallenged supremacy as the world’s nuclear cowboy. Now that the U.S. and West European imperialists are in the region, they will doubtless try to grab whatever they can get their hands on, including the vast oil and natural gas reserves in Central Asia. But as one Afghan intellectual recently observed, “It is impossible to predict what is going to happen in this country in an hour.” Having stoked all manner of ethnic and regional antagonisms, the imperialists have opened up a Pandora’s box that they may not be able to seal with their schemes for “zones of influence” and the like. And whatever they do, their presence will only deepen the misery and destruction already wreaked upon benighted Afghanistan. ***U.S., Canada, UN, NATO: Get out of Afghanistan, Central Asia, the Persian Gulf and the Near East!***

Northern Alliance: Woman-Hating Killers

Mostly in order to maintain liberal support at home for the war in Afghanistan, the imperialists and their media mouthpieces have portrayed the Northern Alliance as bearers of “freedom” for the Afghan masses, especially women. This fiction has also been promoted by the social-democratic left in Europe. In Paris in late September, the fake-Trotskyist Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire (affiliated with Gauche Socialiste in Quebec) joined with the three governing parties—the Socialists, Communists and Greens—in building a rally for Afghan “women’s rights” that was shot through

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Young Spartacus

Down With Racist Witchhunt Against Sunera Thobani!

The stepped-up repression that has accompanied the imperialist bombing of Afghanistan has targeted student radicals and other antiwar activists on the campuses. The Student Union at Montreal's Concordia University is being witchhunted by Zionist organizations, the media and the administration for defending the Palestinian people against racist Israeli state terror.

Professor Sunera Thobani of the University of British Columbia (UBC) in Vancouver has been the subject of foaming attacks from the federal Liberal government for her vocal opposition to U.S. imperialism. Among those joining in the campaign against Thobani was New Democratic Party leader Alexa McDonough, who denounced her for "cheap sloganeering." We print below a letter in defence of Sunera Thobani by the Vancouver Spartacus Youth Club, which was printed in slightly abridged form in the October 23 issue of the UBC student newspaper, The Ubyssy.

* * *

Professor Sunera Thobani's unexceptionable observation that "from Chile to El Salvador, to Nicaragua to Iraq, the path of U.S. foreign policy is soaked in blood" has provoked a storm of hysteria from the capitalist media and politicians intent on demonizing all opposition to their war abroad and repression at home. Thobani's office has reportedly received numerous death threats and, amidst the racist outcry, she has even faced criminal investigation by the RCMP for "hate crimes"! This alone illustrates how the central purpose of the capitalists' "hate crimes" legislation is to attack leftist opponents of racism and war.

We of the Spartacus Youth Club defend Sunera Thobani against this campaign of vilification, which is part of the drive against immigrants and working people in the wake of the September 11 attack on the World Trade Center. While the destruction of a building containing thousands of workers was an indefensible act of indiscriminate terror, the capitalist rulers in the U.S. and Canada are using this as a pretext to whip up racism against immigrants and other minorities, especially Muslims—all to divide working people and shore up their bankrupt system.

The government's "anti-terror" crusade has already provoked a series of threats and physical assaults against Arab and Islamic people and institutions, including the firebombing of a mosque in Montreal, as well as a Sikh temple in Hamilton. Not to mention the draconian new "anti-terrorist" laws and proposals to ban students from countries like Iran and Iraq from taking chemistry or biology courses. The ultimate target of these repressive measures is the integrated working class, which uniquely has the social power to lead a struggle against racist capitalism. We say: Down with Ottawa's terror scare—full citizenship rights for all immigrants!

To Thobani's statement we would add that Canadian imperialism too—from Korea in the 1950s to Yugoslavia in the 1990s—has the blood of workers and peasants on its

hands. And today, the Canadian ruling class has joined with its senior partner in Washington as bombs rain down on Afghanistan. As revolutionary Marxists, we recognize that the enemy of the workers and oppressed in this country is the capitalist class right here at home and call for the defense of Afghanistan

against imperialist attack. And while Osama bin Laden is today's designated "enemy," the fact is that the Islamic "terrorists" of today are the "freedom fighters" bought, trained and paid for by the U.S. imperialist rulers in their anti-communist drive to overthrow the Soviet Union during the 1970s and '80s. Uniquely, we Trotskyists called to hail the Soviet Red Army in Afghanistan, saying this could lay the basis to extend the gains of the October 1917 workers revolution to the Afghan people—like education for women and freedom from the stifling veil. The horrors of Taliban rule in Afghanistan today are the direct result of the victory of that imperialist-backed anti-Communist *jihad*.

Many students have come to Sunera Thobani's defense and are opposed to the war. But the social-democratic organizers of various demonstrations and meetings both on and off campus since September 11 have pushed impotent calls for "peace," seeking to pressure Canadian imperialism to "oppose the drive to war," even as the Canadian military engages in its biggest mobilization in decades. The illusion that Canadian capitalism can play some sort of "progressive" role on the world's stage is fostered by much of the left, who try to channel discontent back into the pro-capitalist NDP. In contrast, when NDP "left" MP Svend Robinson came calling at a September 28 demo on campus, we exposed this front man for Canadian imperialism, pointing to his demands for imperialist intervention in the Balkans two and a half years ago and initial support to sanctions against Iraq. Today the NDP's "opposition" to the U.S.-led war amounts to a call for war under United Nations auspices. Yet it was under the UN flag that tens of thousands of Iraqis were murdered in the 1991 Gulf War, and it is UN sanctions which continue to kill hundreds of thousands of Iraqis.

The bombing of Afghanistan has nothing to do with eradicating "terrorism" and everything to do with the U.S. rulers and their allies asserting their global dominance militarily, and most importantly, economically. Ultimately the only way to end imperialist war is by sweeping away the capitalist system that spawns it, through socialist revolution, and that is the task to which the Spartacus Youth Club is dedicated.

Marlo Carpenter
for the Spartacus Youth Club



Kahrman/Province

Sunera Thobani.

Join the Spartacus Youth Clubs!

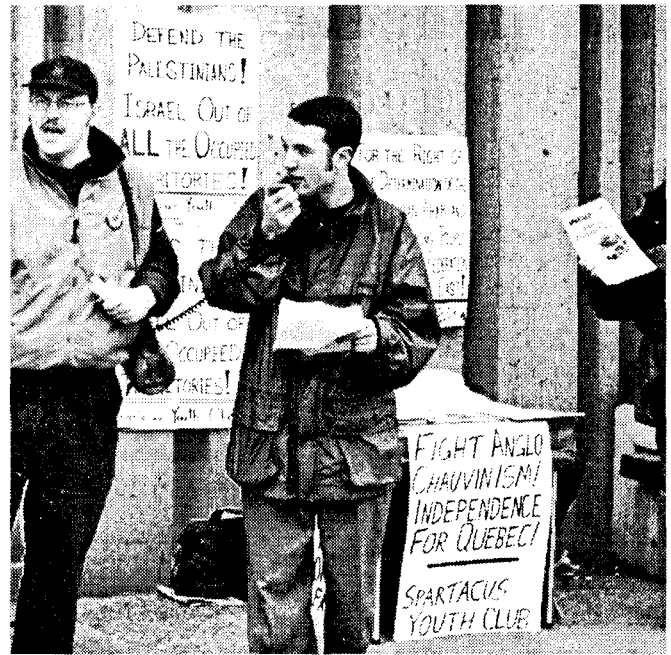
While the U.S. wages bloody war on Afghanistan with the full support of its Canadian junior partner, at home the capitalist rulers are cracking the whip of state repression. Cynically manipulating horror at the indefensible terrorist attack on the World Trade Center, the capitalist rulers are pushing reactionary patriotism to try and direct anger at the bottom of society away from themselves and toward an indefinable foreign enemy, as well as immigrants in this country. Their aim is to reinforce their arsenal of domestic state repression against all the working people as well as radical youth. From the outset the Spartacus Youth Clubs called for class struggle against the Canadian capitalist rulers and raised the slogan "Defend Afghanistan against imperialist attack!" Today we say: U.S., Canada, UN, NATO—Out of Afghanistan and Central Asia!

Behind a façade of complaints about the "unilateral" action of the U.S., the NDP has signed on to the imperialists' "war against terrorism," pleading only that it should be run by the United Nations. Reformist left groups like the International Socialists praise the pro-imperialist NDP's fake "antiwar" stance, while holding vigils for "peace" and pleading: "War is not the answer." As Leon Trotsky, who co-led the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution with V.I. Lenin, wrote: "The essence of pacifism is a condemnation, whether hypocritical or sincere, of the use of force *in general*. By weakening the willpower of the oppressed, it serves the cause of the oppressors." Our answer is *class war* to end a system that is premised on brutal exploitation, oppression and war.

The myth preached by the organizers of "anti-globalization" and now "antiwar" protests that the bloody imperialist rulers can be pressured to bring "democracy" and "human rights" to the oppressed masses in the neo-colonial world is a deadly lie. Many youth repelled by this whitewash of the capitalist rulers have looked to anarchism as an alternative. But anarchism, with its moralistic arguments and its individualistic "direct action," has no program or strategy to prevail against capitalist class rule. Rejecting the need for revolutionary leadership and proletarian state power, its more militant rhetoric and tactics only serve, in the end, as a left cover for the existing reformist leadership of the working class.

The killing of Carlo Giuliani and the mass cop terror in Genoa, Italy as well as in Quebec City provided a concrete and murderous demonstration of the highly organized and ruthlessly efficient forces of the bourgeois state, which are now going into even higher gear. To prevail against that might requires an organized and disciplined vanguard party that can mobilize the power of the one class that can defeat capitalist rule—the proletariat. Only the working class has the social power and objective interests to liberate mankind from oppression. The purpose of the revolutionary party is to infuse the proletariat with that understanding.

Armed with the revolutionary program of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky, the SYCs seek to build a youth movement that intervenes on the side of the working class against the capitalist exploiters, fighting for the rights of immigrants, Native people and all the oppressed, opposing Anglo chauvinism and calling for Quebec independence. We fight to build the Leninist vanguard party that will lead defensive struggles and transform them into a battle for socialist revolution and workers power, laying the basis for a world free of capitalist exploitation and imperialist slaughter. Join us!



SC photo

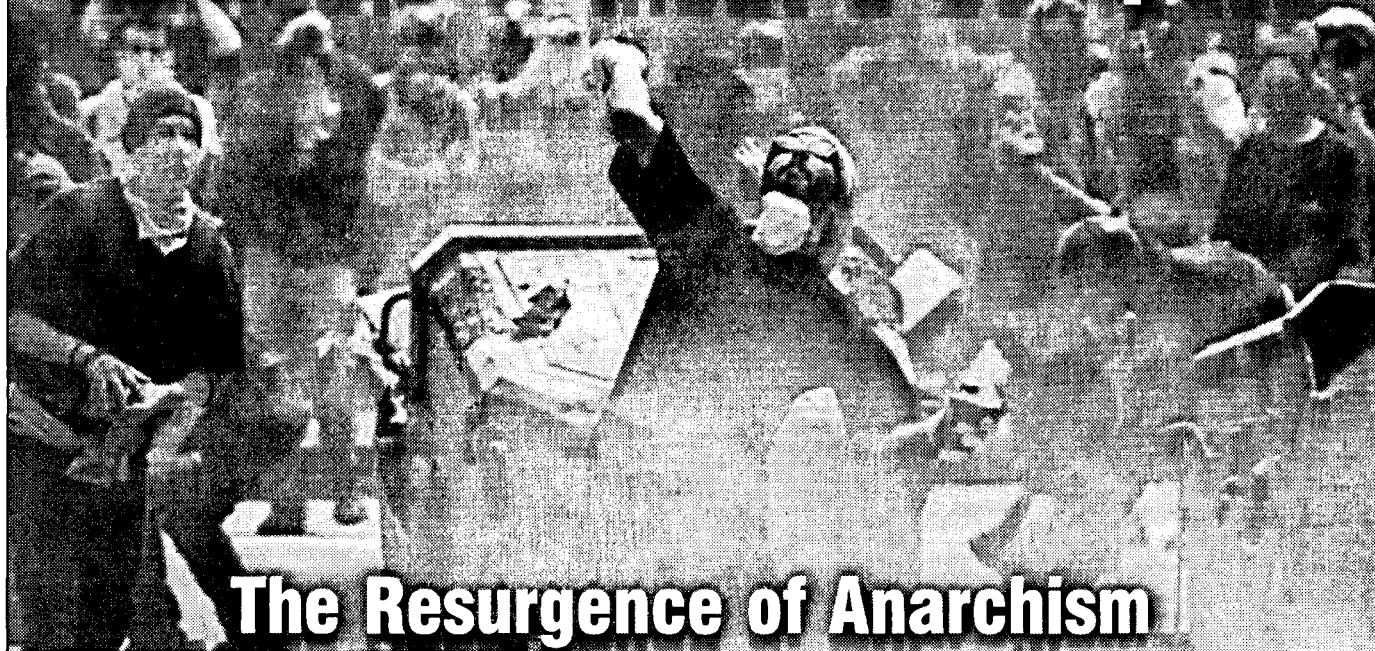
SYC speakout at UBC defends Palestinian people against Zionist state terror.

SYC Ten Point Program

1. Mobilize students behind the social power of the working class! Picket lines mean don't cross! On strike means shut it down! For union-run job recruitment and training programs for minorities and women! For union hiring halls! Down with union-busting "workfare" schemes! Jobs for all at union wages! Organize the unorganized! Down with multi-tier wages, which pit younger and older workers against each other! Cops, prison guards, security guards out of the unions! Keep the capitalists' government and courts out of the unions!
2. Independence for Quebec! Down with English Canadian chauvinism! Down with the "Clarity Act," Ottawa's latest move against Quebec's national rights! Chauvinism and nationalism are poison to working-class struggle! Equal language rights for all! Down with chauvinist "English-only" ordinances and restrictive French language legislation!
3. Full citizenship rights for all immigrants! Down with racist anti-immigrant laws! Down with anti-immigrant, anti-Semitic and all racist bigotry! No deportations! No detention of immigrants or refugee claimants! Down with the government's "anti-terrorism" scare! For mass labor/minority mobilizations to stop the fascists and race terrorists! No reliance on the capitalist courts! Fascist terror is not a question of free speech! Stop the Nazis! Stop the KKK!
4. For free, quality education for all! For an end to streaming! For open admissions, no tuition and a state-paid living stipend for all students! Abolish the administration—the universities should be run by those who work and study there! Cops off campus! Drive army and police recruiters off campus! For a single secular school system! No prayer in

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Radicals Without a Compass



The Resurgence of Anarchism

AP

July anti-G8 protests in Genoa. Anarchism has seen resurgence of popularity in post-Soviet period as youth looking to radical politics buy into anti-working-class, anti-Marxist bourgeois ideology.

In the wake of the counterrevolutions that swept across the former Soviet Union and East Europe, anarchism is resurfacing as an avowedly revolutionary pole. Anarchists are posing as a revolutionary alternative to capitalism while chanting in unison with bourgeois democrats that "absolute power corrupts absolutely" and that state power was the original sin of the Russian Revolution. They posture as providing a way forward for would-be anti-capitalists who, despite their youthful rebellion, have yet to abandon prejudices from their parents and the renewed Cold War of the 1980s.

It is ironic that the modern anarchist movement, having gained so much notoriety at demonstrations against imperialist "globalization," is premised on renouncing the Russian Revolution and its surviving offshoots in China, North Korea, Cuba and Vietnam, the greatest anti-imperialist victories in history. Railing against "all dictatorships," today's anarchists confusedly equate these workers states with the treacherous Stalinist bureaucracies that in fact threaten their very existence. In no case is this clearer than in China, where the bureaucracy is pushing market reforms that encourage the forces for capitalist counterrevolution. That would mean the imperialists could gorge themselves on the unimpeded exploitation of the Chinese proletariat for the first time since the 1949 Chinese Revolution. On behalf of the American bourgeoisie, U.S. secretary of defense Donald Rumsfeld has increased the military budget next year by \$18.4 billion to a post-Cold War record of \$343.5 billion.

The efforts to shut down or sell off state-run factories and grant ever greater concessions to foreign companies have already sparked massive revolts by the Chinese working class, which understands that capitalist restoration would condemn millions to a life of poverty, homelessness and no medical care. Anarchists, if they are consistent, are at best indifferent to these bloody designs of the world's most

powerful imperialists; at worst, in the name of "anti-totalitarianism," they join in the anti-Communist crusade of their own rulers. Intervening at the demonstrations in Washington, Quebec and Genoa, the Spartacus Youth Clubs have sought to win over aspiring revolutionaries with the class-struggle demand: *Defend China against imperialist attack and capitalist counterrevolution! For proletarian political revolution to oust the bureaucracy!*

An Unbridgeable Chasm?

The anarchist component in the anti-globalization movement has become more visible with each anti-summit demonstration, but politically remains inchoate. Those subscribing to some form of anarchism vary widely: vaguely "anti-authoritarian" elements who try to lead a "non-corporate" lifestyle; so-called "deep ecologists" who reject modern civilization; undisguised liberals like Noam Chomsky who called for sanctions against Iraq and plead for the U.S. to respect international law; "direct action" Black Blocs targeting corporate symbols. The approach posed by militant youth in Quebec and Genoa, direct confrontation with the police, can seem like a step to the left away from both petty-bourgeois lifestylism and the prating of anarchist intellectuals. However, at base there is no real difference.

Direct action, a modern adaptation of 19th-century "propaganda by the deed," is another version of anarchist "moral diffusion." The idea is that you set an example of what an outstanding moral citizen should do, be it by throwing bricks like someone in the Black Bloc or by passively enduring massacres like Mahatma Gandhi. Others are inspired by your physical sacrifice and moral victory so they do the same, and soon, the theory goes, you have a mass movement.

What especially white middle-class youth have yet to learn is that setting yourself up as an easy target for state

repression is hardly inspiring to the oppressed masses who face factory exploitation and police terror on a daily basis. This is part of the reason why the most militant contingents of anarchist youth are overwhelmingly petty-bourgeois and the movement against "globalization" as a whole has yet to attract much from the barrios and the ghettos. It is the potential for *victory*, not for victimization, that will rally the oppressed masses to a revolutionary movement, and in 1917 it was Lenin's Bolsheviks who did exactly that.

One attempt at a crude polarization of the anarchist movement comes from octogenarian green/anarchist academic Murray Bookchin, whose 1995 book *Social Anarchism or Lifestyle Anarchism: An Unbridgeable Chasm* has achieved recognition in some anarchist circles that see it as a legitimate call for an effective movement. Bookchin postures as the socialist "old guard" of the movement and posits that the recent growth of primitivism, mysticism and transparent quackery in its burgeoning camp of individualists could be detrimental to the future of anarchism as a whole. He asserts that in "today's reactionary social context," "issues of lifestyle are once again supplanting social action and revolutionary politics in anarchism."

Arguments against anti-technology primitivism from an anarchist perspective gain some currency because these theories are indeed revolting. For example, Bookchin targets Hakim Bey, whose introspective, navel-gazing slogan "Kill your inner cop" is one of the least offensive to appear on the pages of Bey's book *Temporary Autonomous Zone*. Bey does his part to uphold bourgeois law and order when he cautions against approaches other than his "personal insurrection" which result in "dangerous and ugly spasms of violence." Reactionary primitivists like George Bradford and John Zerzan play a crasser version of the same role, alibiing capital by asserting that the real enemies of human freedom are technology and civilization. Deep ecologists argue that humanity should return to small-scale local agriculture based on pre-industrial methods—this would mean the destruction of contemporary society. And with such a drastic lowering of productive output to a level that could sustain only a fraction of the earth's population, the logical extension of this theory is utterly fascist; who decides who would live and who would die?

Murray Bookchin devotes a considerable portion of *Social Anarchism or Lifestyle Anarchism* to refuting primitivism and counterposes his alternative, "municipal confederalism." However, any decentralization or attempt to extend a community's control over its own resources would create a regional barter system. Alternatively, cut off from international resources, even the most advanced "anarcho-commune" would revert back to sustenance agriculture. The extreme decentralization and technological standstill advocated by anarchists could only perpetuate the division between the imperialist countries and the "Global South." How could a world based on autonomous communes ever bridge the gap in wealth between Chiapas and Manhattan's elite neighborhoods, for example? Only world socialist revolution and the creation of an international division of labor can even begin to redress the centuries of imperialist plunder which have made of the "Global South" a sea of poverty and backwardness. We are for an internationally centralized, planned economy as the only way to eliminate scarcity.

At his best, Bookchin and those who subscribe to his theories present an idealistic defense of technology, rationalism

and collectivity. But anarchism is a trans-class theory that writes off the proletariat and advocates a moral regeneration of society *at large*. Some anarchists may consider their theories a revolutionary alternative to individualistic lifestylists. But without a program to mobilize the multiracial proletariat together with minorities to smash capitalist oppression, there is no revolutionary ideology, only abstract rhetoric and moralism. Bookchin has no strategy to lead the struggles of workers and the oppressed to victory, so he is left only to bear witness, hoping that his idea will somehow "catch on," just like the personalistic fads of Bey & Co.

Anarchism: Polarized and Defeated by Class Struggle Decades Ago

Like his lifestylist opponents, Bookchin denies the revolutionary centrality of the proletariat. In streams of polemics, notably "Listen, Marxist!" and *Post-Scarcity Anarchism*, written in the late 1960s as an attempt to counter the influence of a pro-working-class pole in Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), he tries to pass off the proletariat as bought off, conditioned to obedience, and (occasionally) even nonexistent. Thus he claims in "Listen, Marxist!" that "in fact the traditional class struggle stabilizes capitalist society by 'correcting' its abuses (in wages, hours, inflation, employment, etc.)." Don't try those lines on the hundreds of millions of workers who toil for a pittance producing the wealth of societies internationally, for whom class struggle is the only defense against their exploiters. In the same polemic, he describes the class struggle as a "disease," saying: "If the byproduct of this disease has been technological advance, the main products have been repression, a horrible shedding of human blood and a terrifying distortion of the human psyche."

The working class has the strategic and numerical power to incapacitate the capitalists, with the capability to strike and hurt the capitalists where they feel it—in profits. This social power means that it is only the working class that has the power to overthrow the bourgeois order and smash the capitalist state—petty-bourgeois radicals do not. Without such a mobilization of the social power of the working class, there will be no revolution, only the continued hegemony of capital.

The profound failing of anarchism on the question of leadership lies in the complete inability of anarchists to pose the following question: what obstacles today prevent the revolutionary struggle of the masses for the seizure of power? Flowery rhetoric about spontaneity and the mass awakening of humanity simply serves to mask the fact that leadership already exists. Misleadership must be politically exposed and defeated; it will not just disappear. The politics of union bureaucrats and reformist "socialists" reinforce the powerful hold alien class forces have over the working class. In the U.S., the workers are bound to the racist Democratic Party by the pro-capitalist labor bureaucracy, which falls in line with the bourgeoisie's use of religion, anti-immigrant chauvinism, nationalism and especially anti-black racism to fragment the proletariat and obscure the fundamental class division between the exploiters and the exploited.

We want to build a party to defeat the pro-capitalist leadership of the working class, making possible a revolutionary struggle in this country. But you will not find a single word about these questions in the writing of *any* contemporary
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Anarchism...

(continued from page 7)

anarchist: Chomsky, Bob Black, Bookchin, *Anarchy, Fifth Estate*, whoever. They drivel on about moral revulsion and speculations about the ideal anarchist commune and spout anti-communist propaganda. But they say precious little about the actual battles of the working class today, and nothing about the political forces in the labor movement binding the workers to their class enemy, or about what it will take to transform isolated defensive strikes into a determined struggle for power. Denouncing the struggle for leadership serves as an easy and cheap cover to make peace with the existing, false leadership and accommodate the current consciousness of the masses. The logic is simple: if you do not lead, you follow.

To communists, the concept of a fatal contradiction within the anarchist movement is hardly new. Because anarchism is a trans-class ideology, the anarchist movement suffered a devastating split in the '20s that reflected the unprecedented wave of *class struggle* sweeping the world in the aftermath of Red October in Russia. Many anarchists sided with capital in the face of a workers insurrection. They often turned a blind eye to social backwardness among non-proletarian oppressed strata, championing small proprietors like the Ukrainian-nationalist, anti-Semitic Makhnovists and the Kronstadt peasant-sailors against the young workers state. Others like the once radical French syndicalists Léon Jouhaux and Alphonse Merrheim rapidly degenerated into trade-union bureaucrats. But the most revolutionary elements of the anarchist movement, exemplified by Victor Serge and Alfred Rosmer, merged with the Bolsheviks during the Russian Civil War. James P. Cannon, a leader of the early American Communist Party and the eventual founder of American Trotskyism, had also earlier been in the anarcho-syndicalist Industrial Workers of the World.

Many courageous labor activists abandoned anarchist moralism and embraced the necessity of the proletarian dictatorship when they witnessed the unrelenting carnage and counterrevolutionary intransigence of the White forces. The generation of young workers and leftist intellectuals whose hatred of the bourgeois order was formed amid the mud and blood of the battlefield in World War I, whose hope for a better future was inspired by Red October, abandoned anarchism en masse for the Communist International. The one exception was Spain, where, tragically, the lessons learned by Cannon and his co-thinkers were not grasped by the anarchist movement two decades later.

Anarchists Sell Out the Spanish Revolution

Uninvolved in the First World War and sheltered from the earthshaking political developments that followed, Spain was the last great bastion of traditional anarchism. At the height of a vast revolutionary upsurge in the '30s, when workers and peasants had seized their factories and land in the name of revolution, the anarchist-led National Confederation of Labor-Iberian Anarchist Federation (CNT-FAI) entered the capitalist Popular Front government, along with their supposed arch-nemeses, the Stalinists. A popular front is a coalition of workers parties and bourgeois parties through which the workers' interests are subordinated to those of the capitalists. In the name of the "people's front" against fascism, this class-collaborationist popular front



Historia 16

Anarchists like Juan García Oliver (far left) became ministers in capitalist government which suppressed armed workers struggle in the Spanish Civil War.

strangled an uprising of the working class on May Day 1937 and broke the revolutionary tide, preparing the way for the triumph of the Franco dictatorship.

It is immensely difficult to grasp the magnitude of the Spanish defeat in modern terms. The political consciousness of the working class in Spain at that time was, according to Trotsky, even more advanced than that of the Russian workers in 1917, and the anarchists numbered one and a half million. American Trotskyist Felix Morrow explained at the time why the anarchists failed and indeed refused to seize power:

"Class collaboration, indeed, lies concealed in the heart of anarchist philosophy. It is hidden, during periods of reaction, by anarchist hatred of capitalist oppression. But, in a revolutionary period of dual power, it must come to the surface. For then the capitalist smilingly offers to share in building the new world. And the anarchist, being opposed to 'all dictatorships,' including the dictatorship of the proletariat, will require of the capitalist merely that he throw off the capitalist outlook, to which he agrees, naturally, the better to prepare the crushing of the workers."

That is precisely what happened in Spain. In July 1936, the attempted right-wing military coup led by Francisco Franco was defeated in Catalonia mainly by the anarchist-led workers militias of the CNT-FAI. García Oliver and other CNT-FAI leaders then met with the head of the Generalitat (Catalan government), the liberal bourgeois nationalist Luis Companys. In an interview the following year, García Oliver, then a government minister, recounted what happened at this fateful meeting.

Companys said to the anarchist leaders: "You have won, and everything is in your hands; if you do not need me nor wish me to remain as President of Catalonia, tell me now, and I will become one soldier more in the struggle against fascism." But, Companys continued, if you consent to my remaining as president, "you can count on me and on my loyalty as a man and as a politician who is convinced that today a whole past of shame is dead and who desires sincerely that Catalonia should place herself at the head of the most progressive countries in social matters."

García Oliver and his comrades responded:

"The C.N.T. and the F.A.I. decided on collaboration and democracy, renouncing revolutionary totalitarianism which would lead to the strangulation of the revolution by the anarchist and

confederal dictatorship. We had confidence in the word and in the person of a catalan democrat and retained and supported Companys as President of the Generalitat.”

—quoted in V. Richards, *Lessons of the Spanish Revolution, 1936-1939* (1953)

Following the anarchists’ treacherous collaboration with and entry into the Popular Front, the bourgeoisie taught the working class a deadly lesson: no war in history has ever been won through democratic consultation with the enemy; the class war, waged for the largest stakes in history, the earth and all its fruits, is no exception. This understanding is at the core of the Trotskyist call for a *dictatorship of the proletariat*. And to an extent, many of the workers in Spain understood. They had no intention of deserting the May Day barricades in Barcelona as part of a deal that the CNT-FAI cut with the bourgeoisie. The popular-front government’s move to suppress the uprising was successful because the workers lacked a well-established revolutionary vanguard party to organize and lead the insurrection to victory.

Bookchin, who claims the defeated Spanish Revolution as his own, does not deny the anarchists’ treason in May ’37. Instead, he denounces the CNT-FAI leaders and the capitalist Popular Front for creating “a civil war within the civil war, irrespective of its toll on the struggle against the Francoists” (see his book *To Remember Spain: the Anarchist and Syndicalist Revolution of 1936* for more details). This “secondary” civil war was in fact an expression of the fundamental class divide between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. It was precisely the task of every class-conscious worker to mount such a civil war in advance to purge the revolution of its bourgeois-democratic betrayers who, in the end, proved to have more in common with Franco than they did with the left-wing insurgents. But history has shown that even the most militant anarchists are too intoxicated with liberal rhetoric to draw a clear class line through the “democratic movement against fascism.” Incorrigibly, and against the necessity of what Bookchin labels “a contrived ‘program,’” he and other modern-day anarchists vaunt their petty-bourgeois disdain of the working class by claiming that the CNT-FAI leadership betrayed the interests of its proletarian base merely because it was not democratic enough.

The Vanguard Party and Revolutionary Program

The question of leadership dominates the history of workers revolutions. It was the Bolsheviks that made the Russian Revolution different from all others, which were either betrayed and defeated by class-collaborationist sellouts like the anarchists in Spain and social democrats in Germany two decades earlier, or bureaucratically deformed from their outset by the Stalinists in China and elsewhere. The Spartacus Youth Clubs exist to break revolutionary-minded youth and young workers away from the false consciousness that paved the way for the betrayals in history. We defend the gains of revolutions past in order to fight for new Octobers worldwide. In this process, our revolutionary program, described in our slogans and demands at demonstrations, at speakouts and in our press, is absolutely indispensable.



Roger Viollet

Workers man the barricades in Barcelona, May 1937.

Murray Bookchin cites the goals he sees as central to the anarchist movement in the conclusion of *Social Anarchism or Lifestyle Anarchism*: “a confederation of decentralized municipalities; an unwavering opposition to statism; a belief in direct democracy; and a vision of a libertarian communist society.” But he gives no viable revolutionary program to achieve them. In fact, this is not a new problem for the movement Bookchin represents. Opposing the vanguard party on principle, anarchists have no means of establishing a coherent strategy toward leading the real-life struggles of workers and the oppressed to a worldwide victory. Rejecting the “Leninist tyranny” of a unitary revolutionary program, modern anarchists like the Quebec-based CLAC (Anti-Capitalist Convergence) among others issue calls for “a diverse and pluralistic resistance movement.” Faced with the highly organized, ruthlessly efficient forces of the bourgeois state—and ask anyone from the Balkans and Iraq to Hiroshima, the terror in Genoa was a very small taste—this is a call for impotence. Defeat and disillusion are the result, paving the way for a return to the “politics of the possible” espoused by the very national-reformist sellouts that anarchist youth claim to oppose. This would not be the first time that anarchists end up ceding leadership to opportunistic mainstream politicians.

Like the Russian Bolsheviks in 1917 and the Spanish Trotskyists in 1937, the Spartacus Youth Club seeks to win the most revolutionary elements from all subjectively anti-capitalist movements to the perspective of socialist revolution internationally. That begins with a party that will mobilize the social power of the proletariat in defense of the rights of black people, immigrants and all the oppressed—and that intransigently defends the conquests of workers against U.S. imperialism abroad. This is the only way to bridge the chasm between the ideal of a classless, stateless society and the day-to-day struggles that workers and minorities take up against capitalist oppression. The Spartacus Youth Clubs say: *For new October Revolutions, worldwide!*

—Reprinted from the Young Spartacus pages of Workers Vanguard No. 764, 14 September

Canadian Imperialism...

(continued from page 1)

Trotskyist League intervened with signs saying: "UN: Fingleaf for Imperialist Aggression" and "No to Canadian Imperialist 'Peacekeepers'!"

* * *

As U.S. bombers pound Afghanistan into blood and dust, the Canadian imperialist ruling class has run up its battle ensign behind its American senior partner. The destruction of the World Trade Center was a criminal act that incinerated thousands of innocent people, but it is not the death of ordinary people that moves America's rulers or their accomplices in Ottawa. After all, Osama bin Laden is a Frankenstein's monster that turned on his creator, American imperialism, which unleashed him and other Islamic reactionaries, like the Taliban, against the Red Army in Afghanistan in the 1980s as part of its decades-long drive to smash the Soviet Union. In their crusade against "godless Communism," the imperialist rulers readily accepted the re-enslavement of Afghan women as "collateral damage."

The rulers of the U.S., backed by Canada, seek to assert their unchallenged supremacy in the world, and to assure that their drive for profits will encounter no obstacles. Unlike Canada's full-scale participation in the 1999 war on Serbia, its dispatch of a half dozen warships and supply vessels (against a country with no coastline) is of little military consequence. But politically, the so-called "war on terrorism" is a godsend for Canada's bourgeois rulers. With profits falling and the economy already in recession long before September 11, they have seized the opportunity to restock their arsenal of *domestic* state repression.

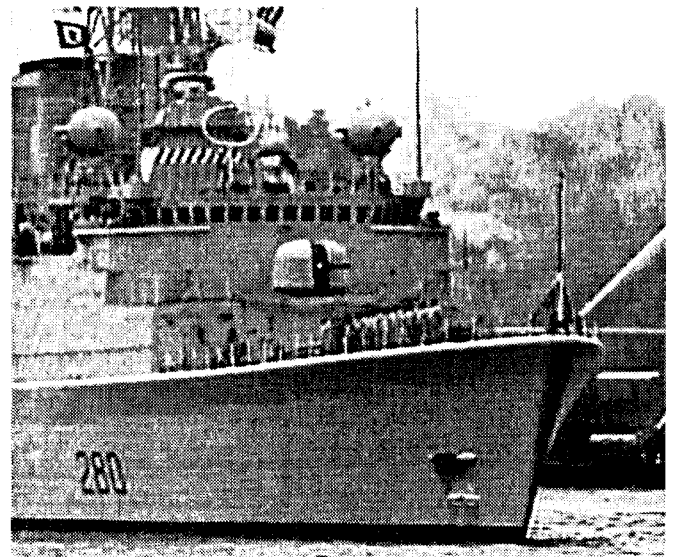
That arsenal is aimed at the whole of the working people and their organizations. In the first instance, the targets are immigrants and refugees, from the Middle East and elsewhere. But immigrant workers today form key battalions of the working class, and have come increasingly to the fore in important labor battles. In its own defense and that of all the oppressed, the labor movement must oppose Ottawa's racist anti-immigrant laws and demand full citizenship rights for the foreign-born.

Uniquely in this society rooted in wage slavery, the working class has the social power and historic interest to overturn capitalism and open the road to an egalitarian socialist future. To carry out this task—even to defend their daily interests—the working people must oppose the Canadian ruling class, and its foreign and domestic war aims. **Defend Afghanistan against imperialist attack! Down with the racist "anti-terrorism" campaign—Defend immigrants and refugees! For class struggle against Canada's imperialist rulers!**

Immigrants, Refugees in the Rulers' Gunsights

Hard on the heels of anti-immigrant legislation introduced before September 11, Ottawa is pouring billions into its stepped-up war on refugees. There are also moves afoot to establish an economic/security "perimeter" around North America. Manitoba's NDP government is already in talks with U.S. states to "secure" their stretch of the 49th parallel. A crucial purpose of the "perimeter" plan is to choke off the inflow of immigrant labor, for which the bosses have no need as unemployment mounts.

At the same time, Bill C-36, the omnibus "anti-terrorism" legislation now before parliament, targets immigrants and



CBC

Canadian warship leaves Halifax harbor to join U.S. navy in Arabian Sea.

refugees already in the country. As the government prepares to outlaw a list of Muslim, Sikh, Tamil, Filipino and other immigrant organizations for alleged "links to terrorism," the police are using an anonymous telephone snitch line to compile a database of "possible terrorist sympathizers" based on "hearsay, tips and even suspicious neighbours" (*National Post*, 11 October). Scores of "suspects" have been detained without charge; some have already been turned over to U.S. authorities, without even a pretense of due process.

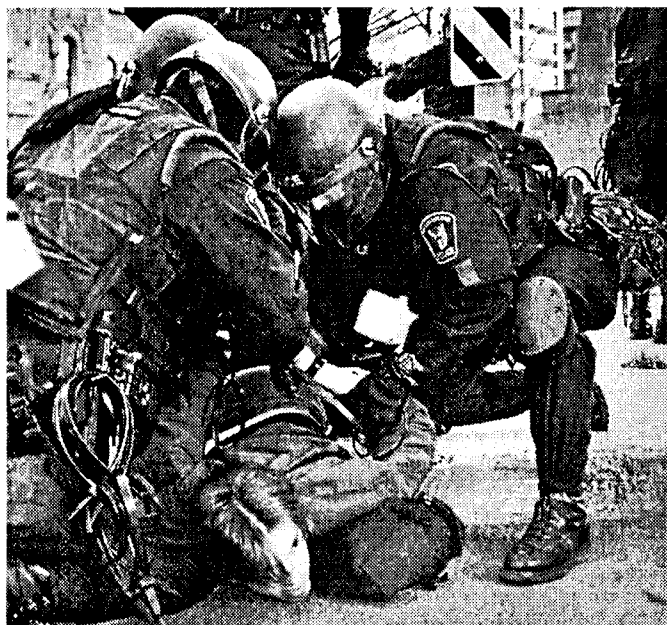
In "normal" times, the class dictatorship of capital over labor, of wealth and privilege over the poor and oppressed, lies partly hidden in a wrapper of constitutions and rights, treaties and conventions, elections and parliamentary debate. But the "war on terrorism" is lifting that cover, revealing the democratic imperialist state as nothing other than the bourgeoisie's repressive weapon against the working class. Here are just a few of Bill C-36's prominent casualties:

- **Habeas corpus.** Police will be able to make "preventive arrests" without a warrant and hold "suspects" for up to three days without charge. Anyone the cops say has "information" relating to an "investigation" can be held indefinitely.
- **The right to remain silent.** Anyone detained as a "material witness" will be forced to give evidence in closed hearings.
- **The right to face your accusers.** Forget it. In order to "protect" individual informers or state agencies, no one swept up under the new law will be allowed to cross-examine their accusers, or even to know who they are.

And the definition of what constitutes "terrorist activity" is vague enough to include "disruptions" like the Quebec City anti-globalization protests, Native blockades in pursuit of land claims, or "illegal" strikes like the citywide Days of Action in Ontario in the mid-1990s.

NDP Backs State Repression and War

Behind empty phrases opposing (unilateral) U.S. bombing and defending (some) civil liberties, the New Democratic Party has *embraced* the bourgeoisie's reactionary "war on terrorism." On September 12, Alexa McDonough declared: "We need to work closely with our American neighbours to



Madonick/Toronto Star

State repression: cops brutalize protesters at G-20 conference in Ottawa on November 16.

enforce immigration screening and border monitoring.” On October 25, NDP house leader Bill Blaikie assured CBC viewers: “The Liberal government’s new anti-terrorism legislation is welcome in so far as it implements certain United Nations conventions that Canada has ratified.” In fact, the NDP is prepared to accept Bill C-36 if the Liberals address a few “concerns” about its implementation, and include a “sunset clause” which would void some of its provisions after a fixed period.

The New Democrats do not oppose war on Afghanistan, either: they merely want it to be carried out by the UN. McDonough spelled this out in a speech to the NDP Federal Council on October 13:

“We have argued for a special international criminal tribunal, under UN auspices, similar to those set up for Rwanda, the former Yugoslavia, and for the Lockerbie bombing.

“That Tribunal would indict, apprehend, try, and punish the perpetrators.

“And let me say clearly, we support the use of force if necessary to apprehend those terrorists.”

UN intervention is hardly an alternative to U.S. imperialist barbarism. From the three million workers and peasants killed in the Korean War against Communist-led revolution to the ongoing starvation sanctions against Iraq (1.5 million dead so far), and every flashpoint in between, the UN is a flag of convenience under which to enforce the bloody U.S.-dominated imperialist order. Canadian “peacekeepers” have figured prominently in most of the UN’s deadly military adventures, notoriously during their murder-and-torture mission to Somalia in 1992-93.

The NDP is what Marxists call a bourgeois workers party, based in part on the organized labor movement but thoroughly pro-capitalist in its leadership and outlook. Its role is to direct class struggle and all social discontent into safe parliamentary channels that uphold the system. To do so, the social democrats occasionally have to adopt a posture of semi-opposition to this or that government policy, the better to enhance support for their national bourgeoisie and its capitalist democracy as a whole. That is why today the New

Democrats posture as the “peace party.” But this is all a cheap conjuror’s trick, designed to deceive the unwary.

The reformist left acts as the NDP’s shells in this shell game, obscuring or denying their real positions. The New Politics Initiative (NPI), which claims to offer an “activist” alternative to the NDP leadership, issued a statement hailing “the courage of the federal caucus of the NDP, and its leader Alexa McDonough,” and declaring that they “stand with the New Democrat caucus in opposing the frightening ‘anti-terrorism’ Bill C-36.” In the aftermath of September 11, the NDP Socialist Caucus, dominated by Socialist Action, supported McDonough’s response “as far as it goes,” and blustered: “It is imperative that the NDP take the lead in preparations to mobilize against impending military actions.”

The International Socialists (I.S.) are characteristically dishonest. Their *Socialist Worker* (24 October) featured the lying headline “NDP Says ‘No’ to War,” over an article which gushed that McDonough is “the only social-democratic leader in the world to oppose the war.” The I.S. itself gives voice to the patriotism which is the stock-in-trade of all social democrats. On October 17, the I.S. joined a flag-waving rally in Halifax to send off Canadian troops to the war on Afghanistan. According to *Socialist Worker* (24 October):

“We stood with peace signs raised, and banners with peaceful messages. We were a presence both in solidarity with the troops themselves and in protest against Canadian involvement in the war.”

They even chanted: “If you hate war, you’re not alone! We love our troops, so keep them home!” *Our* troops? Tell that to the Mohawks who faced down the army at Oka in 1990, or to surviving victims of Canadian “peacekeepers” in Somalia! The military is at the core of the bourgeoisie’s repressive state apparatus.

The I.S. is also enthusiastically promoting the September 11 Peace Coalition, a lash-up of social-democratic labor leaders from CUPE, the Canadian Auto Workers (CAW) and other unions, together with the likes of Maude Barlow’s bourgeois-nationalist Council of Canadians. Echoing the NDP, the September 11 Peace Coalition humbly petitions the Liberals with a “plea for peace and respect for international law.”

War is a test for every tendency claiming to oppose the exploitation, oppression and violence of capitalist society. It demands a straight answer to a simple question: Which side are you on, the bourgeoisie’s or the proletariat’s? The NDP’s answer is as clear today as it has always been: they take the side of the Canadian ruling class. By supporting the New Democrats and endorsing their sham “antiwar” credentials, outfits like the NPI, I.S. and Socialist Action give the same answer at one remove.

Anarchists Face the Test of War

Some trends associated with anarchism have held aloof from the social patriotism of the New Democrats and their fake-left spaniels. This has sent sections of the bourgeois media into a frenzy, depicting “direct action” protesters as Osama bin Laden in miniature, and bin Laden himself as the ultimate “anti-globalizer.” Even more sinister are threats from the state itself. Specifically referring to the militant youth who demonstrated near the wall at last spring’s Quebec City protests, Liberal justice minister Anne McLellan made clear that under the government’s new legislation, “There may be those involved who would fit the definition of terrorism” (*Globe and Mail*, 19 October). And at a bail

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Canadian Imperialism...

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hearing for demonstrators arrested during a 2,000-strong Ontario Common Front "direct action" protest in Toronto's financial district on October 16, the judge called the youthful activists "potential terrorists."

These are no idle sallies. Denouncing the judge's chilling and deadly libel, a 23 October protest letter by the Partisan Defense Committee, the legal and social defense organization associated with the Trotskyist League, warned: "Amid the hysteria whipped up in support of the imperialist 'war on terrorism,' to be labeled a terrorist by the state is to be declared a non-person to whom anything can be done." Remember Carlo Giuliani, killed by police in Genoa, Italy!

"Anarchist" moods sometimes reflect a healthy revulsion for the groveling reformism of parliamentary social democracy. But anarchism's explicit rejection of the fight for revolutionary leadership cannot provide a meaningful alternative. Many anarchists are outright hostile to the working class; but even those who sympathize with working-class struggle and who want to identify with it are compelled *at best* to substitute themselves for mass mobilization of the proletariat against capitalism. Following September 11, Toronto's Freyheyt Collective (affiliated with the Northeastern Federation of Anarcho-Communists) issued a leaflet that raises the slogan "No War but the Class War!", but which presents the "class war" as the battleground of small groups of militants:

"We have to put ourselves on the line to stop the murder of Afghani people by NATO and internal state repression. Our other option is to stand on the sidelines of safe, liberal protest while NATO slaughters thousands of Afghani civilians and our comrades at home are spied upon, harassed, beaten, shot and jailed."

Anarchism must pose the question this way, because it cannot offer a political alternative to the pro-imperialist labor leadership. Freyheyt's statement is blind to the labor tops' important political role in wrecking class struggle, reducing the question to one of militancy:

"In times of repression, the forces and resolve of our class weakens as many self-proclaimed labour leaders hunker down and make peace with the state and the bosses. We have already seen this start with the Public Service Alliance of Canada ending walkout strikes against the federal government and Canadian Auto Workers president Buzz Hargrove calling for the cancellation of the worldwide anti-WTO demonstrations on Nov. 9th."

This indictment of Hargrove & Co. for lack of courage under the impact of state repression misses the point. The role of the patriotic labor bureaucrats *at all times* is to preserve class peace for the bosses. While the CAW was losing 10,000 jobs in the year before September 11, Hargrove's maximum response was to plead with the corporations to save "Canadian jobs." His reaction to 5,000 Air Canada layoffs after September 11 was to come to the national carrier's rescue, waiving "no layoff" clauses in the union contract. "We're in a crisis situation here," he sighed, "and, therefore, we have to be part of the solution and not part of the problem" (*Globe and Mail*, 27 September).

The labor tops are a petty-bourgeois layer resting on top of the working-class organizations. Their privileged existence is maintained out of the superprofits of imperialist exploitation, and they therefore identify closely with the interests of



Coalier/Montreal Gazette

1996 garment workers strike in Montreal. Immigrant workers form key component of proletariat.

the Canadian ruling class. The political problem which anarchism cannot pose, let alone resolve, is how to wrest working people away from the pro-capitalist influence of such "self-proclaimed labour leaders."

Forging revolutionary class unity requires addressing and overcoming the obstacles which stand in the way. In this country, for instance, it is crucial to bridge the deep gulf separating French- and English-speaking workers. Mutual national animosity is the result of the oppression of the Québécois at the hands of the dominant Anglo ruling class, a reality reflected in the differential popular response to Ottawa's new "anti-terrorism" law. Opinion polls show broad support for restriction of civil liberties as part of the "war on terrorism"...except in Quebec, where many remember how another Liberal government suspended all civil liberties under the War Measures Act barely 30 years ago.

Both the chauvinism of the Anglo ruling class and the bourgeois Quebec nationalism which it has engendered are used by the capitalists to rally working people around their "own" national exploiters. The Trotskyist League calls for *Quebec independence* in order to remove this obstacle to binational class unity, and open the road to joint anti-capitalist struggle in the future. Many anarchists, in contrast, are indifferent to the national oppression of the Québécois and opposed to independence as just another bourgeois power grab.

By rejecting the fight for a revolutionary vanguard party of the working class, anarchists leave the proletariat in the grip of Maple Leaf chauvinists like Buzz Hargrove and his nationalist counterparts atop the Quebec unions. Self-isolated from the proletariat's vast social power, the anarchists' "direct action" tactics can provide no alternative to "safe, liberal protest." At bottom, they are only the flip side of the same liberal coin: pressure politics with a clenched fist.

For a Revolutionary Workers Party!

Imperialism's crazed "war on terrorism" at home and abroad will not be defeated by pacifist appeals to morality, compassion and reason. As Russian communist leader Leon Trotsky put it in 1932:

"To condemn war is easy; to overcome it is difficult. The

struggle against war is a struggle against the classes which rule society and which hold in their hands both its productive forces and its destructive weapons. It is not possible to prevent war by moral indignation, by meetings, by resolutions, by newspaper articles, and by congresses. As long as the bourgeoisie has at its command the banks, the factories, the land, the press, and the state apparatus, it will always be able to drive the people to war when its interests demand it."

—"Declaration to the Antiwar Congress at Amsterdam"

Both social-democratic hand-wringing over this or that method of the ruling class, and the anarchists' "militant" rejection of political struggle, obscure the truth: the whole capitalist system must be uprooted by the working class in its struggle for socialism.

In the last analysis, imperialist capitalism does not wage war and run roughshod over the world by "choice." Imperialism is warlike and oppressive because it has to be. Modern capitalist industry is in league with and dominated by huge financial interests. Both have long since outgrown the ability of national markets to absorb either the goods they produce, or the vast surplus wealth extracted from the exploitation of labor the world over. The resulting struggle for limited "offshore" markets, cheap labor and raw materials leads inevitably to war as the final arbiter of imperialist economic rivalry.

Imperialism is thus not a "policy" of particularly right-wing leaders or governments, but the nature of the capitalist system. The struggle against war can only be a struggle to abolish that system. The basic precondition for victory is that the working class come to see its "own" ruling class as the mortal enemy of peace, freedom and social justice, and not as a potential ally. That understanding must be brought to the working class by a programmatically coherent revolutionary party in struggle against the pro-capitalist labor tops and social democrats.

The capitalist ruling class does not bend to "popular pressure" where its fundamental interests are at stake. The reformist left's calls for "Peace" and to "Stop the War!" serve only to reinforce democratic-nationalist illusions in the possibility of reforming, or at least restraining, Canadian imperialism. Against all such illusions and those who sow them, the Trotskyist League fights to assemble and train the nucleus of a revolutionary workers party, section of a reformed Fourth International. Such a party will fight for the overthrow of the imperialist system by revolutionary, internationalist, proletarian-centered means. The bourgeoisie's "war on terrorism" presages full-scale wars in the future, ultimately encompassing all the imperialist powers and posing the spectre of a nuclear holocaust. Only world socialist revolution can save mankind from such a barbaric outcome. ■

Join the SYC...

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the schools! For separation of church and state! Defend science against superstition and mysticism! For the right of people to be educated in the language of their choice! Defend bilingual education programs and ESL training!

5. For women's liberation through socialist revolution! For free abortion on demand! Down with parental consent laws and "squeal rules"! For free, quality 24-hour childcare! Down with attacks on medicare—for free, quality healthcare for all! For mass, labor-backed mobilizations to defend abortion clinics! Equal pay for equal work! Down with reactionary age of consent laws! Full democratic rights for gays! Government out of the bedroom! Down with the anti-sex witchhunt! Down with all laws against crimes without victims—prostitution, consensual sex, drugs!

6. The capitalist state—at its core consisting of the cops, courts, prisons and the standing army—is the executive committee of the ruling class, an instrument of organized violence by the capitalists against the working class and the oppressed. The state is not neutral and cannot be reformed—it must be smashed through workers revolution! Defend victims of racist cop terror and police frame-up! Down with the "war on drugs," a racist war by the ruling class against blacks and other minorities! For mass labor protests against cop terror! Free all class-war prisoners! There is no justice in the capitalist courts! No illusions in civilian review boards or "community control" of the police! Abolish the Senate and reactionary relics like the monarchy and governor-general! No to gun control! For the right of armed self-defense!

7. Labor must defend Native rights! Abolish the racist Indian Act and the Department of Indian Affairs! Police and courts keep off the reserves and other Native land! Only socialist revolution can end the deep-going oppression of Native people.

8. Down with Canadian nationalism: the main enemy is at home, our "own" bourgeoisie! Defeat Canadian imperialism through workers revolution! For the defeat of Canadian imperialism in all its military adventures! Beware the fraud of "human rights" imperialism! The UN is a den of thieves, their victims and their lackeys! All Canadian/UN/NATO troops out of the Balkans, East Timor, the Persian Gulf! Down with the terror bombing of Iraq! Down with the UN starvation blockade! Canadian imperialist troops are not "peacekeepers" but bloody enemies of the world's workers and oppressed!

9. Down with anti-communist China bashing! Defend the gains of the 1949 revolution which smashed the rule of the landlords and capitalists, and collectivized property! No to imperialist penetration of China! For unconditional military defense of China and the other deformed workers states—Cuba, Vietnam and North Korea—against imperialism and internal counterrevolution! For workers political revolution to oust the Stalinist bureaucrats and establish regimes of workers democracy based on the power of workers councils, and revolutionary internationalism! Workers of the world unite! Smash NAFTA through united class struggle from the Yukon to the Yucatán!

10. Break with the Anglo-chauvinist, pro-imperialist NDP: a bourgeois workers party that upholds the rule of racist capitalism! The trade union bureaucracy are the agents of the capitalist class—for a class-struggle leadership of the unions! For international working-class solidarity! Down with the chauvinist poison of protectionism! For a revolutionary, multiracial, binational workers party that fights for socialist revolution! Look to the example of the heroic, Bolshevik-led workers of 1917 Russia! For new October Revolutions! For the international rule of the working class!

The Spartacus Youth Clubs are the youth groups of the Trotskyist League/Ligue trotskyste, Canadian section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist). ■

U.S.-Backed Killers...

(continued from page 3)

with portraits of assassinated Northern Alliance leader Ahmed Shah Massoud.

In the U.S., even "First Lady" Laura Bush, whose husband's administration would be happy to see every abortion clinic in America burned to the ground, gave a radio address denouncing the Taliban's "brutality against women." CNN has been televising images of women no longer wearing the head-to-toe *burqa* in "liberated" Kabul—above a "Women's Liberation" logo, no less! But as Maureen Dowd noted in the *New York Times* (18 November): "Most have held off burning burkas because, as one woman put it, 'They say the Taliban beat first and asked questions afterward. They say the Northern Alliance asks questions first and beats afterward'."

The display of crocodile tears by American and Canadian rulers for the enslaved women of Afghanistan is the most repulsive hypocrisy. The Taliban, Osama bin Laden and the rest of the Islamic fundamentalist killers are Frankenstein's monsters unleashed by the U.S. in the 1980s against the Soviet Red Army, which brought the only hope of emancipation for the hideously oppressed women of Afghanistan (see "Afghan Women Enslaved by Islamic Reaction," page 24). The Soviet military presence there was one of the few truly progressive acts carried out by the Stalinist bureaucracy, offering the possibility of extending the social gains of the 1917 Russian Revolution to the downtrodden and impoverished Afghan peoples. When the Kremlin announced that it was withdrawing Soviet troops, we declared, "Russia Must Win Afghan War!" and warned: "The price for this obscene bid to placate U.S. imperialism is to hand over hundreds of thousands of Afghans to be tortured, flayed alive, beheaded and dismembered as infidels by the mullahs, tribal khans and feudal landlords. This is treachery!" (*Workers Vanguard* No. 444, 15 January 1988).

And the forces that make up the Northern Alliance—not least among them the late, unlamented Massoud—constituted the bulk of the anti-woman cutthroats bankrolled by the CIA to kill Soviet soldiers. During the four years those same forces ruled Afghanistan, they killed countless civilians, perpetrated mass rapes and enslaved women in the veil. After a bloody year-long civil war in which 50,000 Kabulis were slaughtered and the city reduced to rubble, Massoud's mainly Tajik forces took control of Kabul in 1995, expelling the Shi'ite Muslim Hazara minority from the capital.

Matching the speed of their current military advances is the rapidity with which this makeshift "alliance" is splintering into mutually hostile tribal armies and regional warlords who have little love for each other and even less for foreign troops. Meanwhile, former Taliban commanders are now proclaiming their hatred for the "terrorist" Taliban and reverted to being simply Pashtun tribal leaders. Mazar-i-Sharif is the fiefdom of Abdul Rashid Dostum, an ethnic Uzbek. Logar Province has reportedly been claimed by the Pashtun Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, a fanatical woman-hater who got most of the U.S. largesse doled out to the *mujahedin* in the 1980s and has now returned from exile in Iran. Herat is in the hands of



Chaudry/AP

Pakistani women workers protest Afghan war. International proletariat has social power to sweep away imperialism.

Tajik warlord Ismael Khan, who has warned the British to pull out of Bagram and declares, "People are very sensitive about the presence of foreigners in Afghanistan. We don't need them." Announcing that Britain may not deploy the 6,000 troops it was planning to send in after all, Blair government spokesman Geoff Hoon said of the looming chaos in Afghanistan, "It sounds pretty dangerous."

As correspondent Robert Fisk noted in the London *Independent* (19 November), "Ethnic groups and tribes and villagers don't take orders from foreigners. They do deals." The imperialists think they can cobble together a "national" government in Kabul by putting enough *baksheesh* in the pockets of local khans and tribal chiefs. But Afghanistan is not a nation; it is a region of several nationalities and of little coherent economy. There is little likelihood of stability there in any case.

For Permanent Revolution in Central Asia!

Indeed, the imperialist military presence will only sow further instability throughout this volatile region. The borders separating Afghanistan from its neighbors, drawn by the imperialists in the 19th century to create a buffer state between British India (which included Pakistan) and tsarist Russia, also carved up the peoples of the region. Afghanistan has barely half as many Pashtuns and Tajiks as Pakistan and Tajikistan, respectively, and only a small percentage of the number of Uzbeks living in neighboring Uzbekistan.

Afghanistan's bloody tribal and ethnic conflicts have always spilled over into the surrounding region. As Tim Judah noted in an article in the *New York Review of Books* (15 November):

"Iran has helped the Hazaras. Tajikistan and Uzbekistan have helped the Tajiks and Uzbeks, and still do. And of course Pakistan wants to support the Pashtuns. Russia too has its interests; its chief concern had been to stop the spread of Islamic fundamentalism. Iran has made it clear it wants a weak and divided Afghanistan which could not threaten it. Pakistan has wanted Afghanistan to have a strong central government, dominated by Pakistan of course, which would then ensure open trade routes

to Central Asia and allow the building of valuable gas and oil pipelines across Afghanistan and then into Pakistan."

At the same time, it is the proletariat of countries like Pakistan and Iran that today holds the key to the social liberation of the peoples of Afghanistan, which has no working class and hence no possibility of social revolution from within. Pakistan, in contrast, has a proletariat numbering nearly ten million in manufacturing, transport and other industries, and millions more agricultural laborers. Iran, likewise, has a sizable proletariat that was, until the 1979 victory of the Ayatollah Khomeini's "Islamic Revolution," historically pro-Communist. The despotic bourgeoisies that rule these countries are beholden to the imperialist exploiters, whose dictates they enforce. To achieve social and national justice requires the seizure of power by the proletariat, standing at the head of all the oppressed and led by internationalist revolutionary vanguard parties. As Leon Trotsky stressed in advancing the perspective of permanent revolution, only proletarian revolution can break the imperialist yoke over such countries and, with the spread of workers rule to the advanced capitalist countries, end imperialism forever.

For Workers Revolution to Sweep Away Imperialist Rule!

In practice rejecting the struggle to render the proletariat in either the backward or advanced capitalist countries conscious of the need for socialist revolution, the centrist British Workers Power group and its League for a Revolutionary Communist International, in a 9 October statement on the war, instead concocted fantasies of "united action of all Afghan forces—including Islamist forces—to repel the imperialist assault." Although refraining in print from explicitly echoing Workers Power's deranged proposal for "anti-imperialist" unity of the Taliban and the myriad U.S.-backed rival warlords who are now trying to slit each other's throats, the Internationalist Group (IG) in the U.S. has also conjured up the spectre of an American military defeat in Afghanistan, pointing to the example of the defeat of French imperialism in its eight-year-long colonial war in Algeria (*Internationalist*, Fall 2001). But what does this have to do with a situation in which the U.S. is carrying out a military adventure largely from the air against tribal forces in one of the world's most backward countries?

In addressing the IG's fevered denunciations of our supposed "opposition to calling for the defeat of 'their own' bourgeoisie in an imperialist war," we wrote: "The call for a U.S. military defeat is, at this time, illusory and the purest hot air and 'revolutionary' phrasemongering—and one which derives from forsaking the mobilization of the U.S. proletariat with the aim of the conquest of state power" ("No to Bosses' 'National Unity'! For Class Struggle at Home!", *Workers Vanguard* No. 768, 9 November). Pandering to "Third World" nationalists and all manner of alien class forces, the IG elevates military struggle against imperialism (including by former creatures of U.S. imperialism like the Afghan Islamic fundamentalists) over and above the political struggle to mobilize the proletariat to smash imperialist rule from within.

The "revolutionary" rhetoric spewed by such centrists is strictly for cyberspace. On the ground, the Australian Workers Power marched in an October 13 Melbourne protest with a placard pleading, "No to Ground Troops—Yes to Aid." Indeed, Washington is currently playing up its "humanitar-

ian" food aid to Afghanistan as a weapon to win "hearts and minds." It was in the guise of distributing food to famine-stricken Somalia that the U.S. launched its bloody neocolonial adventure there in 1992. In pleading to the imperialist butchers who have presided over the starvation of over one and a half million Iraqis through the UN blockade, Workers Power demonstrates that far from fighting for the defeat of imperialism, it has a touching faith in the imperialist rulers to act in the "humanitarian" interests of the oppressed.

We Trotskyists of the International Communist League recognize that every military defeat for imperialism weakens the class enemy; correspondingly, we warn that a victory for U.S. imperialism and its Canadian junior partners will mean even more intense racist oppression, union-busting and all-sided reaction at home. The social power to sweep away the imperialist system that breeds war and misery resides in the multiracial proletariat, which must be broken from the misleaders who tie it to the capitalist exploiters. That is why we have emphasized the political struggle to break the workers from the jingoist "national unity" promoted by the bosses and their labor lieutenants in the trade-union bureaucracy. Every national section of the ICL has raised the call: "For class struggle against capitalist rulers at home! Defend Afghanistan against imperialist attack!"

Some elemental labor struggles against the war have broken out, such as the one-day protest strike called by the COBAS unions in Italy on November 9. Now Japanese dock workers at Sasebo Port in Nagasaki are refusing to load military goods onto Japanese warships as a protest against resurgent militarism. And in the U.S., there are some fissures in the front of "national unity," as the military adventure in Afghanistan is brought home in escalating attacks on the livelihoods of the working class and a domestic "war on terror" targeting immigrants, black people and labor. The crystallization of new "anti-terror" laws by the Bush administration in the U.S. and the Liberal government in Canada, marking a sharp diminution in civil liberties, is aimed at regimenting and intimidating the population as millions more face unemployment, misery and hunger.

Unlike the "revolutionary" phrasemongers of the IG, we fight to awaken class combativity in the proletariat, to break the chains forged by the labor bureaucracy that currently shackle the workers to the parties of the class enemy. Our task in the bastion of world imperialism is the construction of the multiracial revolutionary workers party that can, through education and in the course of class struggle, infuse the working class with the consciousness that it has the social power and historic interest to shatter the rule of imperialism, expropriate the bourgeoisie as a class and establish proletarian rule as the first step toward the creation of an egalitarian socialist society. ■

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IBT...

(continued from page 2)

among the American population against the Reagan administration, the IBT (then called the External Tendency—ET) denounced us as social-patriotic and countered with the call, “Marines: live like pigs, die like pigs!” We wrote in “Marxism and Bloodthirstiness” (WV No. 345, 6 January 1984):

“From a safe distance, the petty-bourgeois radicals embrace the ‘good’ peoples (if necessary first inventing them, as in Lebanon today) and for the ‘bad,’ well, the only good one is a dead one. Reactionary in itself, such an attitude—completely divorced as it is from Marxist class analysis—necessarily gives way to anti-communist public opinion. Thus we see many of yesterday’s ‘radicals’ joining up ideologically with U.S. imperialism over the plight of ‘poor little Afghanistan’ and the crushing of counterrevolutionary Polish Solidarność.”

This aptly captured the politics animating the ET/IBT, which was founded by people who quit our organization in the early 1980s when they caught the first whiff of the heightened reaction and repression of Cold War II. The renewed imperialist offensive against the Soviet Union was launched after Red Army troops moved into Afghanistan in December 1979 to aid a pro-Moscow, left-nationalist regime besieged by a CIA-backed Islamic insurgency. Noting that what was posed was not only defense of the Soviet degenerated workers state but the possibility of extending the social gains of the October Revolution to the hideously oppressed peoples of Afghanistan, particularly women, we forthrightly declared, “Hail Red Army in Afghanistan!”

In an early polemic, we wrote: “If the ET were more honest, they would admit that they hated it when we hailed the Soviet Red Army’s military intervention in Afghanistan” (“The ‘External Tendency’: From Cream Puffs to Food Poisoning,” WV No. 349, 2 March 1984). Four years later, they finally owned up to their real position, declaring: “Trotskyists never hail Stalinist traitors or their state.... The slogan ‘Hail Red Army’ is not a Trotskyist slogan, because what it tells workers is to trust the Stalinists, put your faith in the Stalinists, hail the Stalinists” (see “BT Says Don’t Hail Red Army in Afghanistan,” WV No. 449, 25 March 1988). This retrospective repudiation came even as Soviet troops were being withdrawn, so the IBT’s sole purpose was to clean up its history to remove any taint of “Spartacism.”

Here was a quintessential expression of social-patriotism, on what was a defining question of opposition to the imperialist rulers. In the biggest covert CIA operation in history, the U.S. funneled billions of dollars to the Islamic “holy warriors” in Afghanistan, with the aim of using the Afghan conflict as a launching pad for the destruction of the Soviet Union. Albeit administered by a nationalist Stalinist bureaucracy, the Soviet Union was a *workers state* based on proletarian property forms. In its contemptuous dismissal of the Soviet Union as a “Stalinist state,” the IBT was simply giving voice to the social-democratic hatred for the dictatorship of the proletariat—the necessary instrument for the suppression of counterrevolution. The IBT’s purpose was to gain entry into the social-democratic swamp, and it succeeded, being welcomed into events organized by reformists from which the SI was excluded.

We have long noted that early supporters of the IBT were the crystallization of every flinch and deformation in our organization under the pressures of renewed imperialist Cold

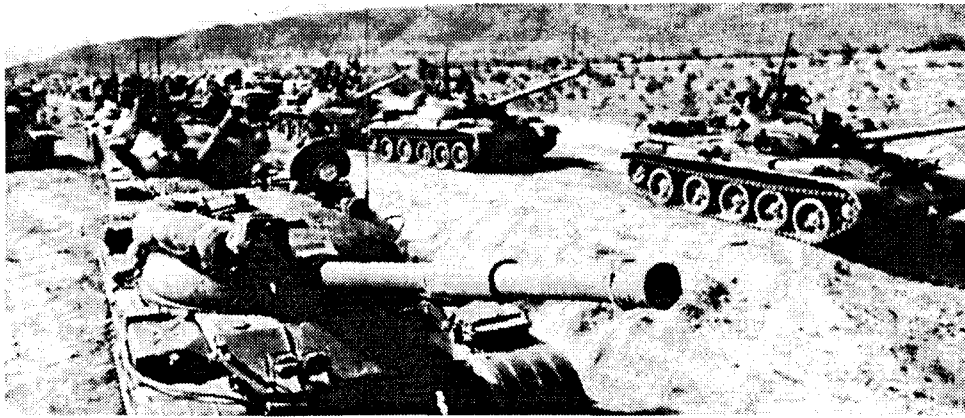
War. Indeed, they have attracted to their ranks some of the most loathsome elements that have ever been supporters of our organization. One is Howard Keylor, who never broke from the Stalinist line of support to the “democratic” imperialist Allies in World War II. Another early adherent was one Gerald Smith, who devoted his energies in the early 1990s to building “Copwatch,” a “police reform” outfit in Berkeley. Then there was Fred Ferguson, the IBT’s chief trade-union supporter, who ran for office in the Bay Area printers union just before the 1991 Gulf War on a platform whose sole reference to the impending war was to complain, “It is our sons and daughters who will die”—with not a word in defense of the Iraqi people facing imperialist slaughter! And finally, there is current IBT *supremo* Bill Logan, a sociopath who was expelled from our organization in 1979 for gross crimes against communist morality and elemental human decency—including interference in the personal/sexual lives of comrades, forcing couples apart or making them stay together and forcing a comrade to give up her baby.

In joining this anti-Spartacist lash-up in the 1990s, Logan steered the IBT more openly into the waters of social-democratic opportunism. In 1996, the IBT’s British outfit totally liquidated into Arthur Scargill’s Socialist Labour Party (although one might more appropriately charge Scargill with opportunism for accepting them given that the IBT stood to his right, particularly in regard to the Cold War). More recently, the IBT supported the Socialist Alliance in Britain, which ran point in the last elections for Tony Blair’s Labour Party. Both the IBT’s 18 September statement and its recent Web posting avoid any mention of the Labour Party, whose government is the most stalwart ally of U.S. imperialism in the current war. The title of the IBT’s initial statement, “U.S. Imperialist Rule: An Endless Horror,” played well to its audiences at antiwar rallies in Britain and Canada, where anti-Americanism is the stock in trade for those who want to cover for the crimes of their own imperialist rulers.

War provides the clearest test for organizations that claim to speak on behalf of the working class, and it is not only over today’s U.S.-led assault on Afghanistan that the IBT has bared its opportunist underbelly. In 1990, as Washington instigated the United Nations blockade of Iraq that has led to the death of some one and a half million people, the IBT group in the U.S. busied itself in trying to build an “antiwar” coalition with red-white-and-blue reformists, declining even to call to end the blockade as part of the coalition’s “basis of unity.”

Eight years later, when NATO launched its bloody war against Serbia under the guise of defending the Kosovo Albanians, the IBT joined with the rest of the opportunist left in promoting imperialist war propaganda with the call, “Independence for Kosovo!” While claiming to “defend Yugoslavia against NATO’s attack,” the IBT simultaneously lined up behind the Kosovo Liberation Army—which was then literally acting as spotters for U.S./NATO air strikes—writing: “While we offer no political support to the bourgeois-nationalist KLA, we nonetheless side with them militarily in their struggle for freedom from their Serb oppressors” (19/7 No. 21, 1999). Only after a month of the bombing, as KLA forces in Kosovo served as military auxiliaries for NATO and KLA supporters in the West joined in openly pro-NATO demonstrations, did the IBT finally acknowledge that the KLA had become a “cat’s paw of imperialism.”

The IBT readily shouted for “Independence for Kosovo!”



Der Spiegel

Soviet tanks in Afghanistan. Those who went on to form IBT couldn't stomach our hard Soviet-defensist slogan, "Hail Red Army!"



at a time when this suited imperialist interests. In Canada, the IBT stands with the English-Canadian chauvinist rulers in *opposing* independence for Quebec. In fact, the IBT and the unabashedly Maple Leaf nationalist Communist Party of Canada were the only purportedly socialist groups to join the Canadian ruling class in calling for a "No" vote in a 1995 referendum on independence in Quebec. The IBT's sole member in Quebec, as he quit, denounced its "de facto bloc with the Canadian bourgeoisie" (see "From the Swamp of Anglo-Chauvinism—'Bolshevik Tendency' Opposes Quebec Independence," *Spartacist Canada* No. 108, March/April 1996).

The IBT seeks to camouflage its many capitulations to bourgeois social-chauvinism with what we have termed "vicarious bloodthirstiness." Thus much of its latest Web posting is devoted to reiterating for the umpteenth time the charge that we were guilty of a "cowardly flinch" for raising "Marines out of Lebanon, now, alive!" at a moment when the Reagan administration was widely reviled because it had sent the troops into the Lebanese quagmire.

The vulnerability of the government over the Lebanon fiasco was demonstrated not least by the fact that it immediately launched an invasion of the tiny black Caribbean island of Grenada in order to get an easy "victory." The sheer absurdity of the IBT's charge that we went social-patriotic over Lebanon is shown by the fact that we coupled our Lebanon slogan with the call, "U.S. out of Grenada, dead or alive!" on the front page of *WV* (No. 341, 4 November 1983), where we also hailed the 700 Cuban construction workers who resisted the American invaders. Unlike in Lebanon, in Grenada Marxists *had a side*: with the Cubans and others who fought against the U.S. occupation forces.

In its Web posting, the IBT writes that "Leninists stand for the immediate and unconditional removal of imperialist troops from neo-colonies as a matter of principle." But at the time, the IBT wasn't simply for the unconditional withdrawal of U.S. troops from Lebanon. Rather, they engaged in idiot New Left grooving over the dead Marines, sneering: "The pro-imperialist 'American masses' don't want the *U.S. Marines* to die in Beirut, and neither does the SL leadership. We say: 'Marines: Live Like Pigs, Die Like Pigs!'" (ET Statement of 12 November 1983, reprinted in *Bulletin of the External Tendency of the iSt* No. 2, January 1984). While opposing the many bloody incursions of U.S. imperialism around the world, our purpose is not to gloat over the deaths of American soldiers—who are disproportionately black and overwhelmingly of proletarian origin—but to make the

working class conscious of the need to overthrow capitalism through a socialist revolution. Such a revolution will never be achieved if you are indifferent (at best) to the working-class ranks of the army.

The IBT posting demagogically claims that in labeling Reagan's Lebanon adventure "senseless" our concern was the same as that of the bourgeoisie, quoting their 7 February 1984 article "Marxism and Social-Patriotism":

"Senseless" is precisely the way that Reagan's Democratic critics in Congress perceive his intervention in Lebanon. 'Senseless' from the point of view of the best interests of U.S. imperialism. They also want to be sensible and smart and get them out now, while they are still alive."

In fact, the bourgeoisie doesn't care how much of its working-class cannon fodder is expended in war. During the Vietnamese Revolution, the rulers in Washington were worried not about GIs coming home in body bags, but about *losing the war*—and that was directly related to the fact that the American army was splintering from within. The Vietnamese liberation fighters did not gloat over the deaths of American GIs, but rather appealed to black troops in particular to turn against their own racist rulers, declaring in one instance: "U.S. Negro Army-men! You are committing the same ignominious crimes in South Vietnam that the KKK clique is perpetrating against your family at home."

Revulsion in the ranks of the military over senseless slaughter has long been a powerful weapon for communists: many of the early cadre of the Communist parties in Europe were World War I POWs on the Eastern front who came home won to Bolshevism and the Russian Revolution. Winning over the largely peasant-derived ranks of the tsarist army was crucial to the victory of the Bolshevik Revolution.

We are Marxists not least because we abhor war and its pointless slaughter of millions of lives. Unlike the reformists the IBT is so happy to tail, we are simultaneously for the victory of just causes, from the Vietnamese Revolution to the defense of semicolonies and small countries from Iraq to Serbia and now Afghanistan against imperialist bombing and blockade. This is all part of our struggle to reforge Trotsky's Fourth International as the instrument for the emancipation of the working class and oppressed worldwide. In contrast, as we wrote in our 12 October polemic, "the IBT's vicarious bloodthirstiness and conspicuous silence on the social-patriotism of the reformist left merely serve the interests of the class enemy, insofar as their insignificant forces are capable of serving any cause." ■

Afghan Women...

(continued from page 24)

onslaught against Afghan workers, women and leftists, we bitterly denounced this betrayal. In an attempt to placate U.S. imperialism, the Kremlin Stalinists handed over hundreds of thousands of Afghans to be tortured, flayed alive, beheaded and dismembered as "infidels" by the CIA-funded mullahs, tribal khans and feudal landlords. In solidarity with the Afghan masses, who were waging a bitter struggle for survival in the wake of the Soviet withdrawal, we formally proposed to the Afghan government, in a letter dated 7 February 1989, the following: "To organize an international brigade to fight to the death" to defend "the right of women to read, freedom from the veil, freedom from the tyranny of the mullahs and the landlords, the introduction of medical care and the right of all to an education."

Though this offer was declined, at the request of the government, the Partisan Defense Committee (the class-struggle legal and social defense organization associated with the SL/U.S.) and the PDC's fraternal organizations around the world raised over \$44,000 in two months. The money went to aid the civilian victims of the all-out *mujahedin* offensive that year against Jalalabad, the Afghan city closest to the CIA's guerrilla bases in Pakistan. The attack was soundly defeated for a time.

In 1996, after four years of the horrific rule of a shifting "coalition" of warring factions of the reactionary Islamic *mujahedin*, who had already brought Kabul to the point of famine and devastation, the capital of Afghanistan fell to the Taliban, a fundamentalist Islamic militia. One of the Taliban's first acts was to grab the former president and Soviet ally, Najibullah. He was castrated and then hanged from a lamppost in downtown Kabul for three days. The Taliban killers proceeded to wreak bloody vengeance against any remaining vestige of social progress, adding the finishing touches to the program of social reaction implemented by the U.S.-sponsored, CIA-funded *mujahedin* cutthroats who took power in 1992. Anti-Communism was the bond between U.S. imperialism and the mullahs in Afghanistan.

Today, under the Taliban's savage and backward regime, women are not allowed out of their homes unless escorted by a male relative. They must wear a head to toe covering, called the *burqa*. A dense, mesh-covered, three-inch square opening around the eyes provides the only means to see. In 1979, prior to the Soviet intervention, we said that "the sun never shines on Afghan women." This is literally true—veiled women don't see the sun, they breathe the dust that swirls underneath the *burqa*'s 30 yards of opaque muslin, which will again lead, as then, to a high level of tuberculosis.

There is nothing progressive or "anti-imperialist" about being shrouded in the veil. Nor is it, as some liberals would maintain, a quaint cultural attribute. You wouldn't think you would have to be a communist to see that wrapping a woman in a veil and secluding her in the home is a hideous



Northern Neighbors

Woman teaches literacy class following Red Army intervention. Soviet workers state held out possibility of social emancipation for Afghan masses.

oppression crying out to be wiped from the face of the earth! The veil is a physical symbol of the submission of women to men and the imposed affirmation of their inferior status. The bride price and the veil are concrete manifestations of the material oppression of women. In Afghanistan today, women are property economically, socially and legally. They occupy a subordinate status rooted in the oppressive institution of the family.

Defense of the Soviet Union and Cold War II

So what happened in Afghanistan that has resulted in unspeakably hellish conditions for women? Why did almost every leftist and feminist group oppose the Soviet intervention which alone raised the *possibility* of social liberation in this wretchedly backward country? Uniquely in modern history, the rights of women were a *central issue* in the civil war which raged in Afghanistan from the late 1970s to the early 1990s. Some of the blood of every unveiled woman butchered by the Afghan fundamentalists is on the hands of every leftist and feminist organization internationally that lined up behind U.S. imperialism's anti-Soviet dirty war in Afghanistan. They did their small part to contribute to the horror which is today being inflicted upon Afghan women.

To see what sparked the Soviet intervention in 1979, you have to go back to the "April revolution" in 1978 when the Soviet-backed left-nationalist People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan—the PDPA—came to power. The PDPA's base consisted overwhelmingly of the educated petty bourgeoisie, schoolteachers, students and Soviet-trained army officers. Many of them were educated in the Soviet Union, where they saw the advances of their ethnic cousins in Soviet Central Asia. With this direct comparative experience to show them how truly backward their own country was, many in these petty-bourgeois strata began to push for significant modernization. When the PDPA came to power, the Western press raised cries of a "Communist coup." In fact, this was a left-wing officers' coup, based mainly on the army.

At the time, Afghanistan was one of the most primitive,



Reuters

Members of Afghan women's militia rally in Kabul just before Soviet pullout in 1989.

tradition-bound countries on earth. In 1978, only 35,000 people were employed in manufacturing—out of a population of 17 to 20 million. Their numbers were dwarfed by the Islamic clergy. There were a *quarter of a million* mullahs, an enormous parasitic caste sucking the blood from a desperately poor people. There was virtually no industry—no railroad tracks, very few highways, primitive sanitation and widespread malnutrition. The average life expectancy was 40 years, infant mortality was at least 25 percent and half of all children died before age five. The rate of illiteracy was more than 90 percent for men and 98 percent for women. Almost all women, save members of a tiny Westernized urban middle class, were imprisoned in the veil and sold like chattel under the bride price system. Most people lived in nomadic tribes or as impoverished farmers in mud villages. There were a multitude of tribes over which no previous government had ever completely established its authority. Life was scarcely different from many centuries earlier.

While not repudiating Islam, the PDPA regime sought to give the country a secular, progressive image. One of the more popular measures was to cancel the debt that poor and landless peasants owed to the powerful moneylenders. The landlords and tribal khans held the power of life and death over the mass of peasants, controlling 42 percent of cultivable land and the associated irrigation systems. Though the PDPA government proposed a sweeping land reform program, they were stopped in their tracks by landlord economic sabotage and terror combined with a mass reactionary insurgency.

But what drove the mullahs into a frenzy and to take up arms were the limited measures of equality for women introduced by the government—reducing the traditional bride price to a nominal sum and introducing compulsory education for girls and voluntary literacy programs for adult women. Even the *New York Times* in February 1980 admitted: "It was the Kabul revolutionary Government's granting

of new rights to women that pushed Orthodox Moslem men in the Pashtoon villages of eastern Afghanistan into picking up their guns." With social development somewhere between tribalism and feudalism, there was no *internal* social base for the relatively minimal reforms pursued by the PDPA, much less for proletarian revolution.

The institution of the family takes different forms according to the demands of the social system—a point that was perhaps most eloquently captured in a statement by the utopian socialist Fourier, which Marx often liked to quote. That is that the status of women in any given society reflects the general level of human emancipation and human freedom. In areas such as Central Asia, there was a strategic relationship between the bride price and polygamy, primitive agricultural production, sheep-herding, land and water rights.

Women were their fathers' means of exchange and their husbands' chattel; the right to control and inherit property rested on men. Most variants of local law gave a man access to land and water rights only if he married; more than one wife meant more land and water. On the other hand, marriage was so expensive (because of the bride price) that many poor men never married at all—and others turned to abduction and rape to get a wife.

There was a lot going on in the world and in the region in 1978-79. The Soviet high command watched as Iran slipped into near-total chaos after the U.S.-supported Shah was overthrown; as U.S. aircraft carriers lined up in the Arabian Sea; as the Soviet-allied Kabul government was threatened by a reactionary Islamic *jihad* (holy war). Seeing the U.S. at an impasse in Iran, the Kremlin bureaucrats seized the time to quell the uprising by the Afghan mullahs and khans, deployed thousands of Soviet troops into Afghanistan, and in the process extended their defense perimeter by several hundred miles around the eastern flank of Iran. The USSR was rightly worried about hostile Islamic fundamentalist governments on their border. As we wrote in *Spartacist* in the summer of 1980: "Afghanistan is a flash of lightning which illuminates the real contours of the world political landscape. It has exploded the last illusions of détente to reveal the implacable hostility of U.S. imperialism to the Soviet degenerated workers state."

Lashing out against so-called "Soviet expansionism," Democratic Party president and born-again Christian Jimmy Carter launched Cold War II against the Soviet Union. Like Cold War I in the 1950s, this anti-Soviet war drive was accompanied by a massive increase in military spending, in this case a five-year, trillion-dollar program. At the same time, millions of U.S. dollars began flowing to the reactionary Islamic fundamentalists via the CIA.

In the 1920s, the British sought to foster Afghanistan as an anti-Soviet force in the area after the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution. As colonialists, the British had long cultivated backward layers in the administration of their empire, backed up by their army, of course. Leon Trotsky, in a speech to the Communist University of the Toilers of the East in Moscow in April 1924, said:

"Afghanistan is at present the scene of truly dramatic events: the Great Britain of Ramsay MacDonald is fighting there against the left national-bourgeois wing, which aims at the Europeanization of Afghanistan. It endeavors to place in power in that country the most unenlightened and reactionary elements, imbued with the worst prejudices of pan-Islamism, of the caliphate."

If you substitute the U.S. for Britain in this quote, this could
(continued on page 20)

Afghan Women...

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have been written in 1979.

The Russian Revolution inspired the only attempt at significant social reforms in Afghanistan prior to 1978. The "national-bourgeois wing" referred to by Trotsky was led by Amir Amanullah Khan, who took the throne in 1919 and attempted to implement a broad range of reforms like Kemal Atatürk did in Turkey. The British continued to bolster the power of the Islamic clergy and sanctioned the *shariat* courts that ruled on questions of family, sex, inheritance and so on, as supports for their colonial rule. They supplied arms to the rebels and infested the area with their agents and spies. In 1929, Khan was overthrown and tribal and clerical "traditionalism" was restored to its position of power. Had the Red Army of Lenin and Trotsky been in a position to go into Afghanistan in 1921, Afghanistan could have been incorporated into Soviet Central Asia, which would have brought Afghanistan rapidly into the 20th century.

As the leading imperialist power after World War II, the U.S., following in Britain's footsteps, consciously manipulated and cynically reinforced religious fundamentalism and pre-feudal reaction as an organized force for counterrevolution. Cold Warrior John Foster Dulles wrote in 1950: "The religions of the East are deeply rooted and have many precious values. Their spiritual beliefs cannot be reconciled with Communist atheism and materialism. That creates a common bond between us."

When the Soviet Red Army entered Kabul in 1979, U.S. imperialism was still smarting from its defeat by the heroic Vietnamese four years earlier. While the U.S. was bogged down in that losing war, the USSR gained nuclear parity with the U.S. Seeking to bury the "Vietnam syndrome"—the mass perception among working people and youth that the U.S. government and military tops were a bunch of liars and baby-killers—Jimmy Carter launched a hypocritical "human rights" campaign against the Soviet Union. The U.S. imposed a grain embargo so the people of the USSR could suffer for "human rights" and boycotted the 1980 Moscow Summer Olympics. Part of this anti-Soviet war drive was the biggest military buildup in human history, including a massive increase in nuclear weaponry aimed at the Soviet Union. The goal: the destruction of the Soviet workers state itself. Afghanistan, where American-supplied weapons were being used to kill Red Army soldiers, was the hottest hot spot of Cold War II.

To give you an idea of the ferocity of the CIA's "freedom fighters," according to *Killing Hope: U.S. Military and CIA Interventions Since World War II*: "A 'favorite tactic' of the Afghan freedom fighters was 'to torture victims [often Russians] by first cutting off their noses, ears, and genitals, then removing one slice of skin after another, producing 'a slow, very painful death'." Flinging acid in the faces of unveiled women and flaying alive Communist schoolteachers for teaching girls to read were also "favorite tactics."

All organizations claiming to stand for revolutionary Marxism were put to the test over Afghanistan: For or against the defense of the Soviet Union? For or against imperialist-sponsored counterrevolution? For or against the fight for women's liberation from the veil, isolation and illiteracy? For revolutionary Marxists, there is nothing tricky or ambiguous about the war. The Soviet army and its left-

nationalist allies were fighting a CIA-backed, anti-communist, anti-democratic mélange of landlords, money-lenders, tribal chiefs and mullahs committed to mass illiteracy and the subjugation of women. The gut-level response of every radical leftist should have been fullest solidarity with the Soviet Red Army. Not so.

Only those leftists poisoned by anti-Communism and bourgeois nationalism could deny that a social revolution such as the transformation of Soviet Central Asia after the Bolshevik Revolution, although imposed from without and bureaucratically deformed from the outset, would have an enormously liberating effect for the Afghan masses. The difference in social progress and economic development between Soviet Central Asia and Afghanistan was measured not in decades but in centuries. For example, neighboring Soviet Uzbekistan had a nearly 100 percent literacy rate; the average life expectancy was 70 years. 45 percent of legislators and 18 percent of judges were women (as compared to 3 percent in the U.S.). There was one doctor for every 380 people, compared to one doctor for every 20,000 in Afghanistan.

Marxism vs. Feminism

There is a wide historical gulf between Marxism and feminism. However, I do want to address the differences because various feminist organizations and campus women's groups now profess concern over the plight of Afghan women. The Marxist understanding of women's oppression as rooted materially in class society is diametrically opposed to the outlook of feminism, which is fundamentally a variant of bourgeois ideology, positing the main social division as one of sex and not class. Feminists see women's oppression as a set of bad ideas and policies stemming from male supremacy, not as something integral to class-divided society. Most feminists supported U.S. imperialism against the Soviet Union no matter what the consequences were for Afghan women.

In 1996, at a time when the U.S. had declared an anti-Islamic holy war against terrorism, the Feminist Majority Foundation started circulating a petition calling for sanctions against the Taliban to be imposed by the same U.S. imperialists that armed the Islamic reactionaries in the first place! In February at Madison Square Garden, a benefit performance aiming to call attention to violence against women was organized by playwright Eve Ensler around readings from her *Vagina Monologues*. Featuring dozens of stars like Jane Fonda and Oprah Winfrey, the show was sponsored by Hearst Magazines and Liz Claiborne, among others, with ticket prices topped out at \$1,000 a seat.

Winfrey performed "Under the *Burqa*," which according to my daughter who saw it performed in San Francisco is a powerful description of the life of misery for veiled women. Thousands signed petitions for the Feminist Majority's Campaign to Stop Gender Apartheid in Afghanistan and wore "*burqa* swatches" as a symbol of remembrance for Afghan women and girls. One group speaking at the event and sharing in the funds raised was the Revolutionary Association of the Women of Afghanistan (RAWA) which toured the U.S. last summer. The CIA-supported "Voice of America" broadcast reports from their demonstrations and interviews with RAWA members in Pakistan and the U.S.

Founded in 1977, this well-connected group is fiercely anti-communist, though even they admit that "the present

conditions are even worse than those of the Soviet occupation period." RAWA also calls for UN intervention and hopes for the return of the king who was overthrown in 1973. They advocate education and employment for women, while remaining in the Islamic fold. Though they don't insist on women wearing the *burqa*, they do expect women to conform to an appropriately decorous form of dress.

Though Feminist Majority propaganda lists the gains for women in Afghanistan prior to the rule of the Taliban, there isn't one word about how this came about—which was through the extension of social reforms by the Soviet-backed government. In fact, some feminists grossly claim that communism was actually responsible for women's oppression in Afghanistan. For example, a *Ms.* magazine interview with Sima Wali, a self-described Afghan "human rights activist" and anti-communist, proclaimed (May/June 1997):

"When the Communists took over, Afghan women were jailed, they were subjected to torture, especially the women who had ties to the Afghan resistance that took root in Pakistan. This was unheard of in Afghan history.... The Afghan Communists basically had a laissez-faire attitude toward Afghan women. The schools were not closed, they did not institute the veil, and they did introduce reforms. But they focused so much on the war that they did not actively upgrade the status of women."

Wali fled to Pakistan as soon as the Soviet Army entered Kabul. The "Afghan resistance" she's referring to is the CIA-backed mullahs. In the same interview, Wali called on former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright to "take on the issue as a woman." Our youth comrades at UC Berkeley did the right thing last spring when they shouted down Albright as the "Butcher of the Balkans." Albright represents the capitalist class; she is not our ally in the fight for women's liberation.

Bourgeois feminists were perfectly aware of the social changes that were benefiting women in Afghanistan during the ten years of the Soviet intervention. When we kicked off our Jalalabad campaign on April 4, 1989 at the huge National Organization of Women-sponsored abortion rights demo in Washington, D.C., NOW goons tried to shut down all socialist literature tables and unleashed the park cops on militants, like ourselves, who declined to be segregated from the main rally in NOW's demeaning penned-in "ghetto" for left groups. Despite these attempts to censor communists, we distributed more than 25,000 leaflets for Jalalabad, as we marched with our banner proclaiming "No to the Veil! Defend Afghan Women! Support Jalalabad Victims of CIA Cutthroats!"

No Illusions in Bloody U.S. Imperialism!

Besides showering the *mujahedin* with millions of dollars of military equipment, the CIA's disinformation machine at Langley, Virginia cranked out the most blatant lies about Afghanistan. Dutifully, the U.S. mass media snapped to atten-



Workers Vanguard

Following Soviet withdrawal, international campaign to aid embattled city of Jalalabad launched at April 1989 abortion rights demo in Washington, D.C.

tion, churning out government-sponsored, imperialist war propaganda. Bloodthirsty tribesmen who skinned Communist teachers alive for the "crime" of teaching little girls to read and write were passed off as "freedom fighters."

Shots purportedly showing a Soviet jet bombing an Afghan village turned out to be of a Pakistani jet. And a shiny red "toy bomb" supposedly planted by the evil Soviets to lure Afghan children to their deaths was created by the same freelance photographer who had earlier provided faked battle scenes that Dan Rather aired. Ronald Reagan made numerous speeches accusing the Soviets of spraying "yellow rain" over Afghanistan, Laos and Cambodia, causing over ten thousand deaths. Dutifully, reams of press copy were produced asserting that the USSR was using chemical warfare—this was later revealed to be pollen-laden bee excrement which, of course, had caused no deaths!

U.S. imperialism is the biggest terrorist in the world, from the nuclear bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, to the murderous campaigns carried out by the CIA's Nicaraguan contras and Cuban gusanos, to the 1999 U.S./UN war of annihilation against the Serbian people which bombed that country back to the Stone Age, to the terror bombing of Iraq and never-ending starvation blockade that has led to at least 1.5 million deaths—to just name a few. Imperialism is not a "bad policy" that can be changed through mass pressure to be more humane, as the liberals, feminists and reformists contend. It is an organic outgrowth of the profit system and the "highest stage of capitalism," as Lenin defined it. Calling on bloody U.S. imperialism, NATO or the UN to intervene for "human rights" is a dangerous trap that builds illusions in this bloody imperialist system which enforces capitalist exploitation, mass poverty and national oppression the world over.

Ever since the 1979 Soviet intervention, the Western media labeled the civil war in Afghanistan "Russia's Vietnam," a characterization that is still used today. Mikhail Gorbachev, who came to power in the USSR in 1985, took up this insidious lie for his regime's own reasons. As Marxists, we judge what side we take based on what advances the

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Afghan Women...

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interests of the working class and the oppressed. In Vietnam, the U.S. fought a genocidal war to smash a social revolution and was soundly defeated *on the battlefield*. We said, "Victory to the Vietnamese Revolution—Defeat U.S. Imperialism!" The Soviet Army in Afghanistan fought on the side of social progress to stop the reactionary onslaught which imperiled not only the Afghan masses but the USSR itself. That's why we said, "Hail the Red Army in Afghanistan."

But the Soviet bureaucracy didn't fight to win. From the outset of the war the Kremlin tops always held open the possibility of withdrawal as a bargaining chip in dealing with Western imperialism. Nonetheless, by 1984 the Soviet and PDPA forces had practically won the war. The CIA's "holy warriors" were shattered and demoralized. And the government's modest reforms, although scaled back from even the moderate program first offered by the PDPA, were winning support in the countryside.

When Gorbachev came to power in 1985, he faced economic stagnation aggravated by the intensified military pressure from the U.S. that had accelerated under President Ronald Reagan. Gorbachev pushed a series of policy changes: "restructuring" (*perestroika*) of the Soviet economy, "openness" (*glasnost*) in Soviet society and "new thinking" in international affairs. This "new thinking" amounted to Soviet *retreat* on a global scale: the cutoff of arms to leftist guerrillas in El Salvador, aid cutbacks for the Sandinistas in Nicaragua and one-sided nuclear arms reductions by the USSR. As part of this strategy of surrender in the hopes of striking a "peace" deal with Reagan, Gorbachev's Politburo decided in November 1986 to abandon Afghanistan within two years.

The withdrawal was completed on 15 February 1989. The *Washington Post* reported, "At CIA headquarters in Langley, operations officers and analysts drank champagne." The withdrawal of the Red Army was a cold-blooded betrayal of the Afghan *and* the Soviet peoples. Gorbachev's treacherous pullout of Afghanistan burnt out a whole generation of youth in the Soviet Union who did their internationalist duty serving in Afghanistan. One young Russian told our comrades in 1994 that he had fought in Afghanistan in 1986 when he was 18, "to fight for internationalism," but when he returned home he was reviled and said that he was "called a rapist by the same people who sent [him] there." Another Soviet veteran said in March 1988: "Our sacrifices were not for nothing. We have after all brought there the achievements of the civilized world."

We honored the Soviet veterans of the Afghan war who justly viewed themselves as fighters for revolutionary internationalism. The Soviet bureaucracy's attempt to trade Afghan blood for good will in Washington only whetted the appetites of the imperialists, intent upon the counterrevolutionary destruction of the entire Soviet Union. Inside the USSR, this move strengthened pro-capitalist forces. The Red Army pullout was *directly linked* to the final collapse of the USSR itself, a historic defeat for the working class and oppressed internationally. Gorbachev's foreign minister, Eduard Shevardnadze, later said: "The decision to leave Afghanistan was the first and most difficult step. Everything else flowed from that" (*Washington Post*, 16 November 1992).

The Afghanistan intervention testified to the persistence—even after some six decades of Stalinist repression, lies and sellouts—of the contradiction between the collectivized foundations of the Soviet state and the parasitic bureaucracy which rested on top. It was the last time the bureaucracy ruling the Soviet degenerated workers state undertook a progressive act. Although undertaken purely for defensive geopolitical reasons, it did go against the grain of the Stalinists' abject pursuit of "peaceful coexistence" with imperialism.

In the 1930s and heading into World War II, Leon Trotsky analyzed the character of the Soviet degenerated workers state and put forward the program of proletarian political revolution, noting that if the working class did not throw out the bureaucracy, the bureaucracy would strangle the workers state. Though it took longer than Trotsky anticipated, the final dissolution of Stalinist rule under the military and economic pressure of imperialist encirclement of the Soviet Union conformed very precisely to his analysis. I would recommend, for those who haven't read it, our pamphlet *Stalinism—Gravedigger of the Revolution: How the Soviet Workers State Was Strangled*.

Withdrawal from Afghanistan was followed by counterrevolution in East Europe: Solidarność-led capitalist counterrevolution in Poland in 1990, the capitalist reunification of Germany in 1990, Boris Yeltsin's 1991 pro-capitalist counter coup in Moscow. This, in turn, led to a total cutoff of aid to Kabul, spelling doom for the fragile Afghan economy and central government. In April of 1992, the Kabul government, headed by Najibullah, fell to the feudal reactionaries. The warring mullah factions then subjected the entire populace to a reign of terror and plunder.

The horrors being played out in Afghanistan today are the starkest expression of the choice which has been posed, with increasing sharpness and urgency, over the past century: socialism or barbarism. Young fighters against social

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I.S. Cheered CIA's "Holy Warriors"

Not long ago, woman-hating Muslim fundamentalists like Osama bin Laden and the Taliban were the "freedom fighting" heroes of the imperialist ruling classes, social democrats and their fake-left tails. Their enemy then was the Soviet Red Army, whose intervention in Afghanistan in 1979 was seized on by the imperialist rulers to launch Cold War II. To realize its longstanding aim of reversing the 1917 Russian October Revolution, Washington mobilized the biggest covert CIA operation in history to aid the Islamic *mujahedin* "holy warriors" fighting to maintain the enslavement of women and other barbaric practices. Both the government in Ottawa and the NDP backed the U.S., raving against "Soviet totalitarianism."

The Soviet Union was not a capitalist country: it was a bureaucratically degenerated workers state. Soviet military intervention therefore offered the possibility of social revolution to the hideously oppressed peoples of Afghanistan—especially women, who made far-reaching gains under the Soviet-backed People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan regime. As Trotskyists who fought for the unconditional military defense of the Soviet workers state, we said: "Hail Red Army in Afghanistan! Extend gains of the October Revolution to Afghan peoples!"

In contrast, virtually every other self-proclaimed Marxist organization howled with the imperialist wolves against the Soviet intervention. Foremost among them were the International Socialists (I.S.). Today, the I.S.'s *Socialist Worker* (24 October) says: "The mujahadeen that fought the Russian army throughout the 1980s was heavily funded and trained by US money and personnel.... Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher spoke of the 'brave Afghan struggle for freedom.'" But so did the I.S.! For the I.S.'s mentor, the British Socialist Workers Party (SWP), screaming "Troops out of Afghanistan!" was not enough. Leading SWPer Paul Foot used his weekly columns in the bourgeois *Daily Mirror* to denounce then prime minister Thatcher, known as the "Iron Lady" of anti-Communism, for allowing exports of "our beef" to the USSR. Foot's "exposés" succeeded in provoking an anti-Communist clamor in the British parliament for an all-out trade embargo of the Soviet Union.

When Soviet troops were withdrawn from Afghanistan, *Socialist Worker* (March 1989) wrote glowingly that "a defeated Russia will spur the struggles of the oppressed nationalities in eastern Europe and inside Russia itself." Indeed, the victory of the CIA's Afghan cutthroats "spurred

oppression must study and learn the lessons of past struggles and defeats, including the world-historic defeat represented by the destruction of the remaining gains of the October Revolution, if they are to go forward to win new victories. We of the International Communist League fight for new Octobers, both in the U.S. and around the world. And we here in the U.S., in the belly of the beast, have a special responsibility to smash U.S. imperialism through workers revolution.

We fight to forge Bolshevik parties internationally to lead the workers—standing at the head of all the oppressed—to power and to a society in which capitalist oppression and enslavement of women are relics of a barbaric past. Women will be in the front ranks of such a revolutionary movement,

Socialist Worker

Monthly paper of the International Socialists

March 1989

stance began as a reaction to the nationalist zeal of the middle classes. Localized forms of oppression in the were fought for and a feudal system of land resistance to even the land reform, the subjection of women in

the backwardness lies outside the borders of the Afghan state. are lies elsewhere, among the working classes of Iran, India, or in the West, where the have power to challenge this system rests.

However, the importance of the defeat of the Russian army should not be overlooked by western socialists. Just as a defeated America turning tail from Vietnam fuelled the aspirations of national liberation struggles throughout America's sphere of influence, so a defeated Russia will spur the struggles of the oppressed nationalities in Eastern Europe and inside Russia itself.

the struggles" of the forces of capitalist counterrevolution that in the next few years succeeded in destroying the Soviet Union and the deformed workers states of East Europe.

The withdrawal of the Red Army from Afghanistan flowed from the whole nationalist outlook of the Stalinist bureaucracy which governed the Soviet workers state. Stalinism subordinated the interest of the international proletariat to defense of its own privileged position as a parasitic layer resting on the planned, collectivized economy. As the last Soviet troops were pulled out in an attempt to placate the imperialists, we declared: "The Red Army withdrawal from Afghanistan is a cold blooded betrayal of the Afghan *and Soviet* peoples" ("Battle for Afghanistan," *Spartacist Canada* No. 74, Spring 1989). A year later, in the first issue of our Russian-language *Spartacist Bulletin*, we wrote: "Far better to have fought imperialism through an honorable fight in Afghanistan than to have to now fight it within the borders of the Soviet Union!"

The capitalist counterrevolution welcomed by the imperialists and their social-democratic lackeys brought the working people of the former Soviet Union massive misery, unemployment and homelessness, an unprecedented drop in lifespan, as well as ethnic slaughter. As opposed to the I.S., which joined with the NDP in cheering the CIA's reactionary "freedom fighters" in Afghanistan, and now begs the imperialists to be peaceful in their "war on terrorism," we fight for new October Revolutions to liberate the working people and oppressed masses of the world. ■

understanding that their interests cannot go forward without a working-class perspective, and the workers movement cannot go forward without taking up the fight for women's liberation. I want to end with a quote from Trotsky in 1924 about the Muslim women of the Soviet East:

"The Eastern woman, who is the most paralyzed in life, in her habits, and in creativity, the slave of slaves...she, having at the demand of the new economic relations taken off her cloak, will at once feel herself lacking any sort of religious buttress. She will have a passionate thirst to gain new ideas and new consciousness which will permit her to appreciate her new position in society. And there will be no better communist in the East, no better fighter for the ideas of the Revolution and for the ideas of communism, than the awakened woman worker." ■

Bitter Fruit of Imperialists' Anti-Soviet War

Afghan Women Enslaved by Islamic Reaction

Expressions of horror over the plight of Afghan women under the Taliban are currently the fashion among imperialist spokesmen, bourgeois feminists and fake socialists. The hypocrisy of this "concern" beggars description. When their Islamic allies were fighting the Red Army of the Soviet degenerated workers state in a U.S.-bankrolled anti-Communist war in the 1980s, the imperialists were happy to accept the re-enslavement of Afghan women. We print below, in condensed form, a talk given last spring in San Francisco, Vancouver and Chicago by comrade Kathy Ibsen of the Spartacist League/U.S. which exposes this sordid and hastily hidden history. The complete version of the presentation was first published in Workers Vanguard No. 756, 13 April.

* * *

It's Afghanistan in 1988: 15,000 women serve as soldiers and commanders in the army; there are 245,000 women workers. Women are 40 percent of the doctors and 60 percent of the teachers at the University of Kabul; 440,000 female students are enrolled in educational institutions and 80,000 more participate in literacy programs. The All-Afghanistan Women's Council has 150,000 members. Western dress is common in the cities and women enjoy some real measure of freedom from the veil and subjugation, for the first time in Afghanistan's history.

What made this possible? It was the Soviet Union sending 100,000 troops, mainly from Soviet Central Asia, into Afghanistan, which bordered the USSR, in December 1979 in order to stem a *mujahedin* insurgency against the left-nationalist, pro-Soviet government. Our party, uniquely on the left, forthrightly declared, "Hail Red Army in Afghan-



Women beg on streets of Kabul under Taliban rule. The veil is both symbol and instrument of women's oppression. AP

istan! Extend social gains of October Revolution to Afghan peoples!" This expressed our recognition that, despite its degeneration under a Stalinist bureaucratic caste, the Soviet Union remained a workers state and continued to embody historic gains of the October 1917 Russian workers revolution, not least for women and the historically Islamic peoples of Soviet Central Asia. Within weeks of the Soviet troops going in, the international Spartacist tendency (now the International Communist League) held demonstrations internationally calling for defense of the USSR and victory to the Red Army.

When the Soviet forces completed their pullout from Afghanistan in early 1989, paving the way for a bloody
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Trotskyists Said: "Hail Red Army in Afghanistan!"
