



Unity with pro-imperialist Labour lefts won't stop war!

Fight British imperialism through class struggle at home!

Defend Iraq!

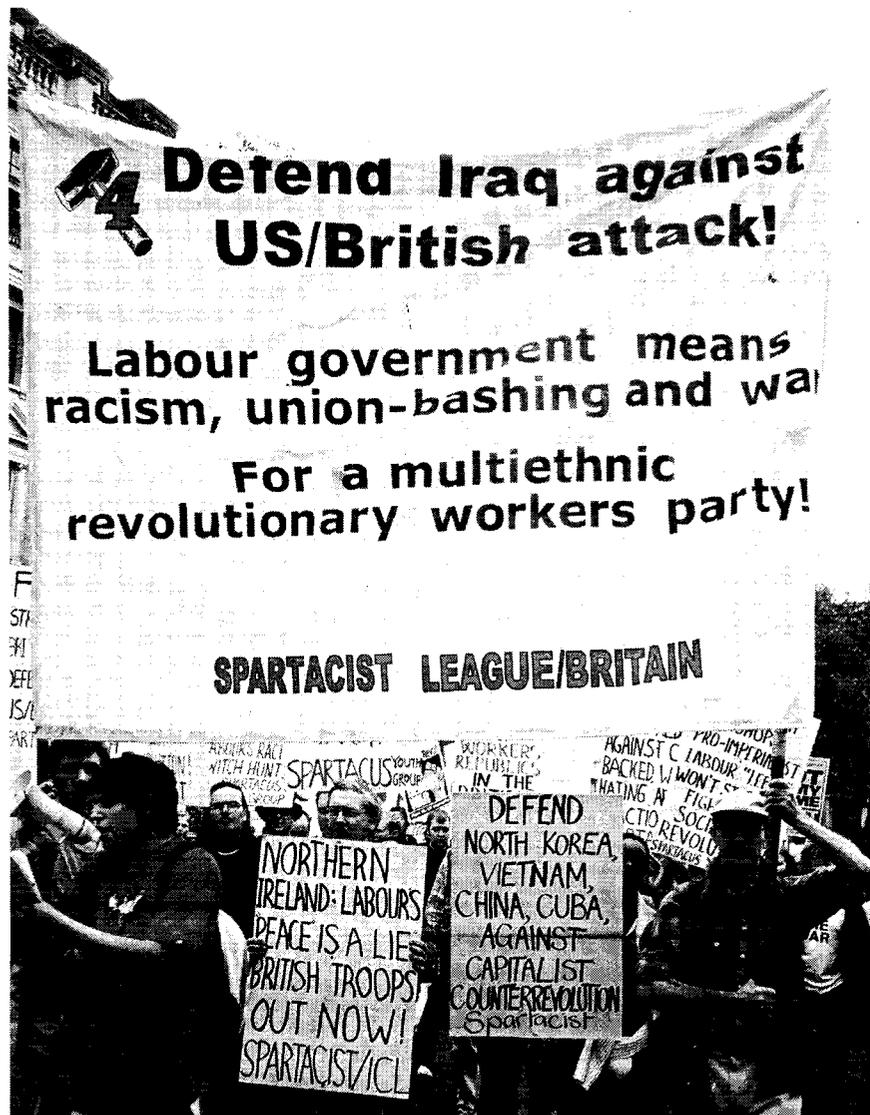
FEBRUARY 7—After weeks of storming into Iraqi government and industrial facilities, Hans Blix and his United Nations “inspectors” (spies) conceded they found no evidence of “weapons of mass destruction”. But it doesn’t really matter. The US imperialists have dispatched an invasion force of over 100,000 troops to the Persian Gulf region, with Britain deploying over 40,000 more. These inspections are nothing but a pretext for war. Indeed, as demonstrated by the US’ response to North Korea’s announcement that it is reactivating its nuclear weapons programme, the fact Iraq has no such capability simply emboldens the imperialists for war.

In Europe, bourgeois opposition to war indicates the sharpening rift between the US and its imperialist rivals, notably France and Germany, whom Pentagon chief Donald Rumsfeld contemptuously dismissed as “Old Europe” for their threat not to support an immediate war against Iraq. The European bourgeoisies are resentful that US imperialism and their British junior partner will grab Iraq’s oil wells for ExxonMobil and BP. But it is not just about oil. There is growing alarm among bourgeois governments, the working classes and entire populations around the world, at US imperialism’s naked assertion of power. This is the shape of the “new world order” emerging from the restoration of capitalism in the Soviet Union. At the same time, complaints by European governments about American “unilateralism” are

merely the squeals of less powerful states who want a bigger cut of the take and would prefer not to be pushed around by the nuclear-armed cowboys in the White House.

Fake socialists in Europe see the growing rift between the US and its European imperialist rivals as an opening to beg their “own” capitalist class to “stand up to Bush”. Last autumn, a raft of European pseudo-socialists, including Rifondazione Comunista, the French Ligue communiste révolutionnaire, the Socialist Workers Party and Workers Power issued a call “on all the European heads of state to publicly stand against this war” (reprinted in *Weekly Worker*, 12 September 2002). Far from advancing a struggle for “peace”, this serves to promote and alibi the German bourgeoisie of Auschwitz, the French imperialists who soaked Algeria and Vietnam in blood, and the British imperialists who pillaged and raped the world for centuries.

In Britain there is mass opposition to this war and to Labour. Last September, 400,000 marched in London against the war and even greater numbers are set to march again on 15 February. Hatred of Labour is particularly evident at the base of the unions, thus in mid-January train drivers in Motherwell refused to move armaments destined for an attack on Iraq (see article page 3). As war draws nearer, Blair & Co have stepped up their “war on terror” at home, which is a war on workers and minorities. They have threatened to ban any FBU strike during war, an ominous threat to



London, 28 September 2002: Our contingent at 400,000-strong anti-war demonstration stood out against the Labourite pro-imperialism of the protest organisers.

the whole trade union movement. This Labour government, one of the biggest forces for terrorism on the planet, is orchestrating a relentless racist crusade purposely trying to brand all Muslims, Arabs and immigrants as “terrorists”. In an outrageous provocation, on 20 January riot cops smashed into the North London Central Mosque at Finsbury Park, dragging off seven people under the Terrorism Act. When a cop was stabbed to death during a police raid on the home of asylum-seekers in Manchester, the government whipped up anti-immigrant racism to fever pitch and announced their intention to abolish the status of refugee altogether, a frontal assault on immigrant rights and civil liberties.

The Terrorism Act 2000 proscribed the Turkish leftist group DHKC (Revolutionary People’s Liberation Front), the Kurdish nationalist PKK as well as a host of Palestinian and Muslim organisations, in addition to the Irish groups already banned. In December, police arrested seven leftists in dawn raids targeting the DHKC and charged them with “terrorism” offences. We say:

Bloody Labour government, hands off Turkish leftists! Drop the charges! Down with the “anti-terrorism” laws! The workers movement must fight for full citizenship rights for all immigrants as part of the struggle for unity and integrity of the proletariat in self-defence against attacks from the capitalist state.

The imperialists’ war against Iraq will be a reactionary, unjust and predatory war. We stand for military defence of semicolonial Iraq against US/British imperialist attack. This entails no political support to Saddam Hussein, butcher of Iraqi workers, leftists, Shi’ite Muslims, Kurds and others. The multiethnic working people of Britain and the masses of Iraq have a common enemy in the Labour government and the British capitalist class. The colossal military might of the US and Britain means *class struggle* in the imperialist centres is the chief means to give content to the call for defence of Iraq. And we also insist: only socialist revolution can end imperialist war. The capitalist system that breeds war must be swept

continued on page 2

Down with Labour’s witch hunt against Muslims, immigrants!
Down with racist “war on terror”!

Defend Iraq...

(continued from page 1)

away through a series of revolutions and the establishment of a rational, planned, socialist economy on a world scale. The Bolshevik 1917 Revolution in Russia was the only successful *anti-war* movement in history.

Stop the War Coalition: new lease on life for Old Labour

The British fake left are building a mass "anti-war" movement whose main claim to fame is the *unity* it has forged among all classes and forces who oppose this war. The Stop the War Coalition (StWC) is the creation of the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) and incorporates Workers Power (WP), the Socialist Labour Party, Socialist Party and sundry Labour MPs and trade union bureaucrats. Its political perspective is to get Blair to "break with Bush" and stop acting as "Bush's poodle". At its January conference in London, StWC convenor and SWP leading light Lindsey German stated baldly: "Now is the time to put on more pressure and break Blair from Bush. If Blair comes to think war will split the Labour Party, he will have to think again about supporting Bush" (*Socialist Worker*, 18 January). Seeking to pressure British imperialism to "stand up to the US", StWC peddles the lie that British imperialism on its own would somehow be more humane, amnestying the crimes of their "own" bourgeoisie. Thus its statement of aims disappears any mention of British imperialism or its genocidal record. Needless to say it doesn't call for British troops out of Northern Ireland.

For decades Labour has duped the workers with false promises of "common ownership of the means of production", originally cooked up to undercut support among British workers for the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917. Old Labour has *always* supported British imperialism in war, from World Wars I and II, to sending troops to the Korean War and supporting US imperialism in Vietnam. Old Labour is *the* historic obstacle to workers achieving revolutionary consciousness, or class independence from the bourgeoisie. The Labour Party has historically been what Leninists call a "bourgeois workers party", having a mass working-class base but thoroughly bourgeois programme and leadership. In response to Blair's moves to remodel Labour as an openly bourgeois party like the Democrats in the US, the "socialists" in StWC are trying to corral youth and workers into schemes to revive Old Labour, bringing to the fore more "left" faces of Labour such as Tony Benn, Jeremy Corbyn and George Galloway who are falsely trying to paint up the earlier Labour Party as a "socialist" or pro-working class party.

StWC appeals to liberal pacifist opposition to war, thus they don't take a military side for defence of Iraq against US and British imperialism. Our opposition to this war is determined not by opposition to wars in general but by our programmatic opposition to the imperialist order and our adherence to the interests of the working class internationally. In a conflict between the imperialists and Iraq we are revolutionary defencists — ie we want imperialism to lose and Iraq to win. Our refusal to sign up for unity with Old Labour in the StWC is disparaged by Labour-loyalists



January 1999: Iraqi victims of imperialists' missile attack near Basra.

like the SWP and Workers Power as "sectarian". The reason revolutionaries do not unite with reformists on the question of war was explained succinctly in 1936 by James Burnham, then a leader of the American Trotskyist Workers Party, who pointed out that "the causes of war are part of the inner nature of capitalism" and concluded:

"To suppose, therefore, that revolutionists can work out a common 'program against war' with non-revolutionists is a fatal illusion. Any organization based upon such a program is not only powerless to prevent war; in practice it acts to promote war, both because it serves in its own way to uphold the system that breeds war, and because it diverts the attention of its members from the real fight against war. There is only *one* program against war: the program for revolution — the program of the revolutionary party of the workers."

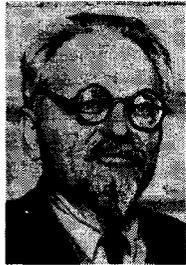
— *War and the Workers*, 1936

StWC is a classic roadblock to the fight to end imperialist war. It conceals the class nature of war and of capitalist society, and provides a vehicle for fake "socialists" like the SWP to tie youth to Labour "lefts" such as Tony Benn. Benn is a pro-imperialist who was in the Labour government that sent British troops to Northern Ireland in 1969 and in the subsequent Labour government that introduced racist "virginity" tests for Asian women on entry to Britain. During the 1991 Gulf War, the SWP built the Committee to Stop War in the Gulf, led by Benn, who at the time was calling for UN sanctions against Iraq. These sanctions — themselves an act of war — have killed a million and a half Iraqis during the past dozen years.

The SWP retail the standard argument of all reformists: the government has money for war, but it should be spent on welfare, or firefighters' pay, or

whatever. Why on earth would the capitalists suddenly give their wealth to working people? Would a government stuffed full of MPs like Tony Benn, Lindsey German et al, mean workers get their hands on it? Hardly. The capitalist system is based on the extraction of profit for the owners of the means of production through exploitation of the workers who produce the wealth of society. Getting our hands on that wealth requires breaking the power of the bourgeoisie and placing the means of production in the hands of the workers. This means socialist revolution. Imperialist war is nothing but a concentrated form of the "normal" workings of capitalism, in which capitalist classes of different countries compete for resources such as oil, for new markets and new sources of cheap labour. As revolutionaries, our task is to expose the politics of StWC and to demolish the illusions they foster in reformism in order to win workers and youth to a programme of proletarian revolution.

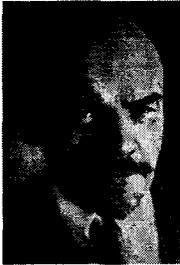
StWC is affiliated to "No War on Iraq Liaison" (NWIL) which is organised by Labour MP Alice Mahon, who supports UN weapons inspectors and who last October said "I welcome the Prime Minister's statement earlier today, calling for total vigilance against terrorism" and denounced the "concentration of Britain and the United States on the unnecessary pursuit of war on Iraq" which she says is "distracting from finding these wicked people who are slaughtering innocent civilians" (NWIL news release, 14 October 2002). NWIL is supported by Ken Livingstone, the 1999 Balkans warmonger, who retrospectively supported the 1991 Gulf War, for whom StWC provided a platform at last September's mammoth



TROTSKY

The struggle against imperialist war

The struggle against imperialist war demands a struggle for workers revolution to root out the capitalist system that breeds war. Trotsky's "Declaration to the Antiwar Congress" in Amsterdam in 1932 emphasised this point against those who, like today's Stop the War Coalition, try to mask the fact that war is inherent to capitalism.



LENIN

The principal force against war is the proletariat. It is only through its example and under its leadership that the peasants and other popular layers of the nation can rise up against war....

On the question of war, which is the other side of the question of the proletarian revolution, the irreconcilable opposition between communism and social patriotism will reach its most acute expression.

Whoever attempts to put all the programs, all the flags into one package in the name of pacifism, that is, of a superficial struggle against war in words, performs the greatest service for imperialism. On the question of war, no less than on all other questions, the Communist Party must seek to free the masses of working people from the disintegrating and demoralizing influence of reformism.

— Leon Trotsky, "Declaration to the Antiwar Congress" (1932)

WORKERS HAMMER

Marxist newspaper of the Spartacist League/Britain

For a federation of workers republics in the British Isles!
For a Socialist United States of Europe!

The Spartacist League is the British section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist).

EDITOR: Jo Watt
PRODUCTION MANAGER: James Palmer
CIRCULATION MANAGER: Alice Ableman

Published by Spartacist Publications, PO Box 1041, London NW5 3EU
E-mail: WorkersHammer@compuserve.com
Subscriptions: £3 for 1 year, Europe outside Britain & Ireland £5, overseas airmail £7

Opinions expressed in signed articles do not necessarily express the editorial viewpoint.
The closing date for news in this issue is 7 February 2003.
Printed by trade union labour ISSN 0267-8721

Spartacus Youth Group class series — Trotskyism: the fight for socialist revolution

- Wednesday 26 Feb Permanent revolution v bourgeois nationalism: For a socialist federation of the Near East!
- Wednesday 12 Mar For women's liberation through socialist revolution!
- Wednesday 26 Mar For the unconditional military defence of China against imperialism and internal counterrevolution!
For proletarian political revolution!

All classes held at 7.00pm, Room G59, at the School of Oriental and African Studies, Thornhaugh Street, Russell Square, London WC1
Nearest Tube: Goodge Street or Russell Square
Series sponsored by SOAS FOSYG

For more information and readings call 020 7281 5504 or e-mail:
WorkersHammer@compuserve.com

Scottish train drivers refuse to transport armaments

In early January, in a dramatic political action against the threatened war on Iraq, two rail workers in Motherwell, members of the union ASLEF, halted a freight train loaded with tanks and munitions destined for the Gulf. When over a dozen more drivers, employed by the EWS freight company, also refused to move the cargo, Ministry of Defence officials were forced to transport it by road to its destination—the NATO munitions depot at Glen Douglas on Scotland's west coast—where it was eventually loaded onto the Ark Royal warship bound for the Gulf region.

As revolutionary socialists who stand for the military defence of Iraq in the impending war we salute the courageous action of the Scottish railway workers. Their refusal to move the armaments points the way forward to the kind of class struggle that needs to be waged by workers here against the capitalist rulers and the Labour government in order to give content to the defence of semicolonial Iraq against the imperialist warmongers. To their credit, the local leadership of ASLEF have backed the workers involved. The drivers' action should have the full support of the union and of the entire working class. It follows similar recent working-class anti-war actions,

such as that of Japanese dockworkers at Sasebo who in 2001 refused to load armaments and military supplies onto Japanese navy ships aiding the war on Afghanistan. During the 1999 US/Britain/NATO war against Serbia, Italian COBAS unions organised a one-million-strong political general strike against the war. Fiat workers, who today battle plant closings in Italy, organised a campaign of material aid—a campaign which all sections of the ICL actively supported—for their class brothers and sisters at the Yugoslav Zastava car plant, which had been bombed by the imperialists.

The Motherwell railway workers also stand in the tradition of Red Clydeside during World War I when Scottish engineering workers waged strikes that caused major disruption to the war effort. They defied the chauvinist war frenzy, and as today this meant defying Labour politicians and union officials. Leaders such as John MacLean refused to bow to the state and insisted on pursuing the class war dur-

ing the imperialist war, and were jailed for this. Later, in May 1920 London dockers refused to load the ship SS Jolly George with weapons for war against the fledgling Soviet workers state. The "Hands off Russia" campaign achieved mass support among British workers who, like the working people of the whole world, were electrified by the Bolshevik October 1917 Revolution. The leaders of Red Clydeside, John MacLean and Willie Gallacher, were revolutionary syndicalists, who led militant strikes that challenged the capitalist system but could not overthrow it. From 1914 the Bolsheviks insisted on the need to split from the social-chauvinist Labourites, to build a revolutionary vanguard party. Indeed, Lenin wrote his pamphlet "*Left-wing" Communism—an infantile disorder* to win leaders like Gallacher and MacLean to the Communist International. The Bolsheviks' perspective was that only workers revolution could end imperialist war. That's the perspective we uphold today.

In bringing the munitions trains to a grinding halt, the Motherwell ASLEF workers' action points the way forward, demonstrating the social power of the working class. It is the labour of workers that

manufactures the armaments, that transports and loads them and it is the working class that has the capacity to bring the whole capitalist economy to a grinding halt. There is much discontent in the British proletariat and more broadly throughout society, both with economic conditions and with the war. Concerted union action against the war is needed. Every successful strike, every workers mobilisation against the war plans, every reverse for the imperialists represents a set-back for their war drive and a blow struck in the interests of workers at home.

The fight against imperialist war is the fight against the capitalist system that breeds it. Today this means the international proletariat has a stake in defending Iraq, taking a side with it against US and British imperialism. This perspective is bound up with a political struggle to win the proletariat to consciousness of the need to be truly independent of the capitalist order and to forge a Leninist party in counterposition to Labourite reformism. ■

demonstration. To mark United Nations "Human Rights Day", Mahon and Lindsey German, among others, co-signed and delivered a letter to Blair, which said:

"We call upon you as Prime Minister to give a clear undertaking not to engage in military action against Iraq without the explicit authority of the United Nations and without an explicit decision of the House of Commons to do so.

"We agree with the sentiments of Sergio Vieira de Mello, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, that the best chance for preventing, limiting, and recovering from conflict and violence lies in the defence of the rule of law."

—NWIL news release, 10 December 2002

Try telling the people of Iraq that the bombs about to be dropped on them

"peacekeepers" aided in a blood-bath of Palestinians in Sabra and Shatila refugee camps by disarming the Palestinian Liberation Organisation so that when the Zionist butchers and their Lebanese lackeys entered the camps the Palestinians were utterly defenceless.

Islamophobia in Stop the War Coalition

Labour's racist crusade against Muslims, who are relentlessly hounded and set up for attack by being branded as "terrorists", is dutifully echoed inside the StWC by the Alliance for Workers Liberty (AWL) and Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB) who are up in arms because StWC jointly sponsors events with the Muslim Association of Britain. The

Labour enforces capitalism's racist rule". The CPGB countered that the British state is anti-racist, saying: "Racism, like anti-Semitism, and anti-catholicism, no longer serves the interests of the state" and that the "greater danger comes from institutionalised anti-racism" within the state (*Weekly Worker*, 8 October 1998). Both outfits claim to be defending "secularism" within the StWC, but this doesn't wash—no such squeals were heard from them when the SWP hoped to see the Archbishop of Canterbury "leading his flock onto the anti-war demo on 28 September" (*Socialist Worker*, 3 August 2002)—the same archbishop who is today calling for asylum-seekers to be locked up. Nor did we hear much about secularism when the SWP and the

demonised by the bourgeoisie who want to smear this entire oppressed community as "terrorists" and "fundamentalists" in the service of beating the war drums for repression at home and imperialist wars abroad. For revolutionaries, it is crucial to defend the unity and integrity of the working class against victimisation by the state which today targets Muslims and immigrants the better to go after the rest of the working class and oppressed tomorrow. Organisations which purport to be against the war on Iraq but insist on steering clear of Muslim organisations are lending at best back-handed support to the ideology of the "war on terrorism".

The SWP however cannot counter this Islamophobia with Marxism—the programme of emancipation of women and of liberating humanity from

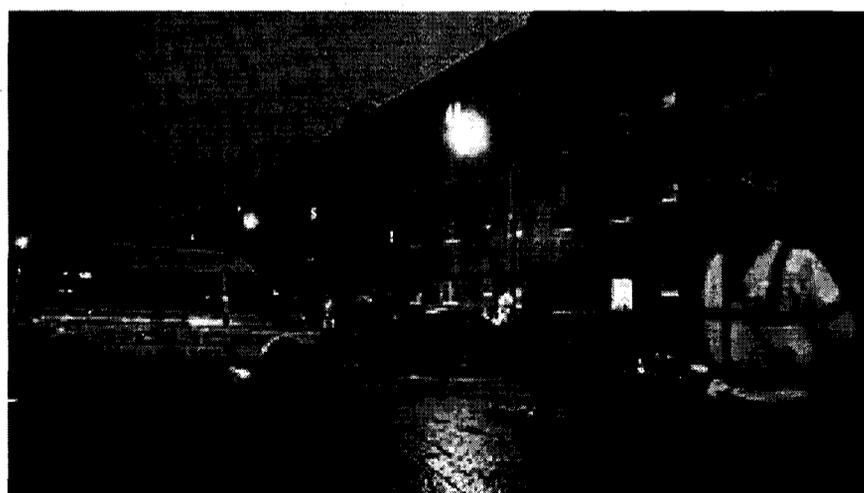


Der Spiegel

British imperialists' partition of India set stage for horrific communalist slaughter.

should have the blessing of another UN resolution, or a vote in Her Majesty's parliament! The UN is nothing but a den of imperialist thieves, their lackeys and their victims. Heinous crimes have been conducted under UN auspices, such as the anti-communist mass slaughter waged against the North Korean workers state by US and British imperialism—backed by Labour who were in government when the Korean War began in 1950. In 1982, UN

AWL are loyal supporters of New Labour and rabid defenders of British imperialist "democracy" who refuse to call for British troops out of Northern Ireland and have sponsored Loyalist paramilitary leaders on their platforms. As for the CPGB, during the 1998 public inquiry into the racist murder of Stephen Lawrence they went into paroxysms against *Workers Hammer* for our headline that: "Lawrence family will not get justice from capitalist state!



BBC

February 6: Police raid in Glasgow, part of racist "war on terror" under the auspices of the draconian Terrorism Act 2000.

AWL were hustling votes for Tony Christian Socialist Blair.

The AWL and CPGB are attacking the SWP from the right, declaring their opposition to Islamic organisations in the otherwise all-inclusive StWC, in the interests of bourgeois respectability. Asians in Blair's Britain are a besieged minority who have come under mass police and fascist provocation in Oldham, Burnley and Bradford and since September 11 Muslims in particular have been

oppression and religious obscurantism—because of their own accommodation to Islamic fundamentalism. *Socialist Worker* (25 January) says that what the US really fears "is what happened to the US's biggest regional client in the 1970s, the Shah of Iran", neglecting to add that they (and the AWL) supported the woman-hating Islamic-fundamentalist regime of Khomeini. In contrast in 1979 we stated

continued on page 4

Defend Iraq...

(continued from page 3)

clearly, “Down with the Shah, down with the Mullahs! For Workers Revolution in Iran!” In places like Iran and Iraq, we uphold the programme of Permanent Revolution. A Leninist-Trotskyist party in Iraq today would seek to combine the struggle for national independence against imperialist militarism with a social revolution against the Iraqi capitalists and landlords. Our perspective is for socialist revolution against all the capitalist regimes in the Near East—the mullahs, Sheikhs, colonels and Zionist butchers.

Whatever their differences today, the AWL and the SWP both supported the fundamentalist *mujahedin* in Afghanistan, who were backed by US and British imperialism against the Soviet Red Army in the 1980s. The fundamentalist insurgency was provoked when the Soviets intervened at the request of the modernising left-nationalist government which had undertaken modest reforms benefiting women—eg reduction of the bride price, curbing the power of the reactionary, woman-hating caste of mullahs, and teaching girls to read and write. We said: Hail Red Army in Afghanistan, as part of our principled programme of unconditional military defence of the former USSR against imperialism and for workers political revolution against the sell-out Stalinist bureaucracy; today we defend the remaining deformed workers states in China, North Korea, Vietnam and Cuba. The fake left all cheered counterrevolution, the bitter fruits of which have devastated the former USSR and Eastern Europe and have increased the imperialists’ ability to turn the screw on the so-called Third World, to further starve the already desperate workers and peasants for greater profits, while bombing into submission any perceived obstacles without fear of reprisal.

Workers Power—talks left, walks right

The centrist Workers Power adopt a more leftist pose inside the StWC. The January issue of *Workers Power* says “we positively want Iraq to defeat the attacking US and UK forces”. They add the perfectly correct statement that: “Opposition to the war means intensification of the class struggle. To take action now and in the coming weeks — against privatisation, job cuts, low wages—will weaken Blair on the foreign as well as on the home front.” In last November’s issue they waxed lyrical about the need to “intensify the social and political crisis caused by Bush’s ‘endless war’ into a revolutionary struggle for the overthrow of capitalism. This alone can bring lasting peace.” Fine words, but a little hollow from a group whose main activity is building the reformist StWC. *Workers Power Global Week* (2 February) has a scathing polemic against reformist groups who signed a declaration by the “Forum of the New European Left”, described as “definitely one of the most pathetic ones published by left wing groups about the war” because it “is not a call on the working class to fight but rather an appeal to the imperialist governments of the European Union” and “tries to convince the ruling class of the cause of world peace”. The polemic accuses the signatories of “staggering hypocrisy”—but this is staggering hypocrisy given that WP co-signed an identical-sounding call “To All Citizens of Europe and to All Their Represent-

atives”, which proclaims:

“Those who show solidarity with the people of Iraq have no hearing in the White House. But we do have the chance to influence European governments—many of whom have opposed the war. We call on all the European heads of state to publicly stand against this war, whether it has UN backing or not, and to demand that George Bush abandon his war plans.”

The StWC cannot unite the workers and oppressed in Britain along with the millions abroad who oppose this war when it prefers to have “unity” with ser-



British troops march into Baghdad, 1919, amid imperialist carve-up of Near East, following World War I.

vants and apologists for British imperialism abroad and for repression and strike-breaking at home. We agree with Russian revolutionary leader VI Lenin who said in *Socialism and War* that, “unity with the opportunists actually

December 2002). *Workers Power* (December 2002) ran an article entitled “Break with Blair—We Need a New Workers’ Party”, which says: “The question of breaking from Labour—over both the war on Iraq and the war on the unions—is now concretely posed”. They even permit that: “It needs to be a revolutionary party.” But then they give the lie to this. Using the standard excuse that “many workers don’t yet agree with the need for revolution” they call for another workers



Foreign Language Press

Vietnamese workers and peasants defeated US imperialism on the battlefield in Vietnamese social revolution.

means subordinating the working class to their ‘own’ national bourgeoisie...it means *splitting* the revolutionary proletariat of all countries”. By building the StWC, WP fulfils the role of giving a left cover to this social-chauvinist outfit.

Until now, the SWP and WP have campaigned for a vote to Labour in all elections. But with thousands of trade unionists objecting to their unions’ link with Labour, these groups are forced to talk about building a “new workers party”. The SWP can’t bring themselves to call for a break with New Labour—they say “unions should back those MPs or organisations, inside or outside the Labour Party, that stand up to New Labour and back trade union policies” (*Socialist Worker*, 14

party that would be “sponsored in the best case scenario by the RMT, the PCS, the FBU, the left MPs who oppose the war on Iraq”, in other words the “left” union bureaucrats like Bob Crow, who in a BBC interview as

recently as last September declared himself in favour of UN sanctions against Iraq and Andy Gilchrist who, when baited about the FBU strikes, professed his patriotism. WP build the Socialist Alliance, which was formed as a vehicle to herd back into the Labourite fold those who are disenchanted with New Labour, in keeping with which it hustled votes for Blair & Co in the name of “keeping the Tories out”.

Lessons of the Vietnam anti-war movement

An understanding of the lessons of the past is crucial to the consciousness that is necessary if the proletariat is to be mobilised in the struggle to shatter the rule of capitalist imperialism.

Reformists like the SWP wilfully falsify those lessons in order to peddle their opportunist wares to a new generation of fighters. Thus, the StWC is consciously modelled on the Vietnam anti-war movement, which they claim stopped the Vietnam War. Unlike Iraq today, the workers and peasants of Vietnam were fighting for a social revolution. In fact, the StWC do have a lot in common with the single-issue campaign organised by the National Peace Action Coalition (NPAC) in the US during the Vietnam War to “Bring the troops home now!”.

NPAC explicitly appealed to (and succeeded in drawing in) liberal Democratic Party politicians who sought to extricate American imperialism from this *losing* colonial war. Its effect was to deflect anti-war youth back into the confines of bourgeois electoral politics and it played a key role in defusing enormous opportunities for struggle against the capitalist order. In a similar vein, the SWP upholds the British-based Vietnam Solidarity Campaign (VSC), which organised huge demonstrations with the purpose of pressuring the then Labour government of Harold Wilson. Upholding the legacy of the VSC, SWPer Paul Foot wrote that, “the demonstrations made a difference”. They “convinced Wilson that he must curtail his instincts to send British troops to their deaths in Vietnam. Though his verbal enthusiasm for the war never faded, no British lives were lost” (*Guardian*, 26 September 2002). This is social chauvinism. Opposition to US imperialism was cheap, but the SWP were not so keen to oppose British imperialism closer to home. In 1969 the Wilson Labour government sent British troops into Northern Ireland. Not only did the SWP not demonstrate against this, they actually supported it, saying that for the oppressed Catholics, “the breathing space provided by the presence of British troops is short but vital” (*Socialist Worker*, 11 September 1969).

The Vietnam War had a combined character as both a resistance to imperialist colonial domination and, given the military intervention of the Vietnamese deformed workers state in the North, the prospect of a social overturn of capitalist rule in the South. It was not the peace demonstrations that drove the US out of Vietnam, it was the battlefield victory of the heroic Vietnamese workers and peasants that brought an end to the war by defeating US imperialism. The Spartacist League/US called for military victory to North Vietnam and the South Vietnamese National Liberation Front, and raised the slogan “All Indochina must go Communist!” The existence of the Soviet Union as a degenerated workers state marked an enormous difference from today’s world—US imperialist power was not unchallenged, and the fact the USSR had nuclear weapons prevented the US military from nuking Vietnam “back to the Stone Age”, an “option” which was discussed in military circles.

Today we fight to break the ideological chains that bind the working people, minorities and radicalised youth to the Old Labour programme of pressuring decaying British imperialism. Proletarian revolutionary opposition to war, in a conscious way, requires a split from the opportunist currents in the workers movement. The central task remains the construction of a multiethnic revolutionary workers party modelled on the Bolshevik Party of Lenin and Trotsky that led the October Revolution in Russia. Our goal is socialist revolution to end capitalist exploitation and war. ■

Labour government threatens to outlaw firefighters strike

FEBRUARY 7—When picket lines went up again outside fire stations throughout the country last week, the Labour government responded with threats of new strike-breaking legislation, announcing its intention to pass an emergency law declaring any Fire Brigades Union strike illegal during war against Iraq. This followed Prescott's announcement of the government's intention to use the 1947 Fire Services Act to give itself legal powers to impose a settlement on the FBU. These ominous threats to strong-arm the firefighters and ban their strike have alarmed even normally pliant union leaders. As one GMB official noted: "This is equivalent to declaring war on public service workers" (BBC News, 29 January).

The Labour government is intent on waging war against Iraq and is determined at all costs to impose "social peace" at home for that purpose, which means waging war on the unions and minorities. Its frontal attack on the FBU is indeed a threat to all unions and must be resolutely opposed by the whole workers movement! What we need is united class struggle across the unions and alongside firefighters to halt these attempts by the Labour government to smash working-class resistance, and to hinder its preparations for a fresh slaughter of Iraqis in the interests of British imperialism.

In a 19 November 2002 Spartacist League leaflet, distributed during the first two FBU strikes last year, we wrote:

"To wage imperialist war abroad, the bourgeoisie needs 'class peace' at home.... The working people and the semicolonial masses of Iraq have a common enemy in the war-crazed gangs in the White House and No 10 Downing Street and the capitalist classes they represent. Imperialist war and union-busting at home are flip sides of the same coin: the capitalist system is predicated on the exploitation of labour, and driven towards war in competition over spheres of trade and exploitation."

From the very beginning of their strike action, the FBU has been threatened with union-busting by the Labour government, while being pilloried as "Saddam stooges" in the bourgeois press. When the FBU leadership signalled that it was prepared to scuttle strikes in exchange for a 16 per cent offer from local authorities, the Blairites, determined to force a show-down with the unions, gave instructions to reject the settlement. The army has been used for strike-breaking and the government has threatened to send troops or cops across picket lines to seize the modern firefighting equipment.

As is the case at the base of most unions, many FBU members oppose war on Iraq. FBU general secretary Andy Gilchrist has himself also spoken out against the war. However, in response to the attempts by Labour and Tory politicians to whip up an anti-union crusade directed against the FBU for lack of "patriotism" as the government gears up for war against Iraq, Gilchrist declared: "I'm a patriot and I'm also an internationalist. Firefighters are generally extremely patriotic, a high percentage of them have done military service, many of them in the Falklands and in the Gulf War. I hope people don't really believe that firefighters are unpatriotic" (*Independent*, 20 January).

Not surprisingly, Gilchrist is a prominent supporter of the Stop the War Coalition, whose opposition to the war on Iraq boils down to impotent appeals to warmonger Blair to "break with Bush" in the "national interest" of the British capitalist state. In contrast, as Marxists we understand that the only states workers have an interest in defending are their own class dictatorships against the capitalist class.

In our 19 November leaflet we warned: "Union leaders who buy into or capitulate to the government's war drive undermine the ability to wage class struggle at home." Because the FBU leadership is ultimately loyal to the British capitalist order, in the face of the vicious material and ideological union-busting campaign of the government Gilchrist vacillates and retreats in a vain effort to appease the government. After weeks of "mediation" at ACAS, the FBU was offered a deal worse than the rejected lay-off and speed-up proposals in last year's Bain Report. This is hardly surprising, as the government and the employers feel they have the wind in their sails after the FBU leadership criminally called off a series of eight-day strikes in December, when firefighters' resolve and public support for the FBU were as strong as ever, in favour of "arbitration". And on 5 February the FBU leadership again put off strike action in favour of talks at ACAS.

The FBU leadership's prostration before the bosses' state and laws leaves the union fighting with one hand tied behind their back. To lead the working class forward it is necessary to have a clear understanding of the class forces, to know who are your friends and who are your enemies, to be intransigently opposed to British imperialism.

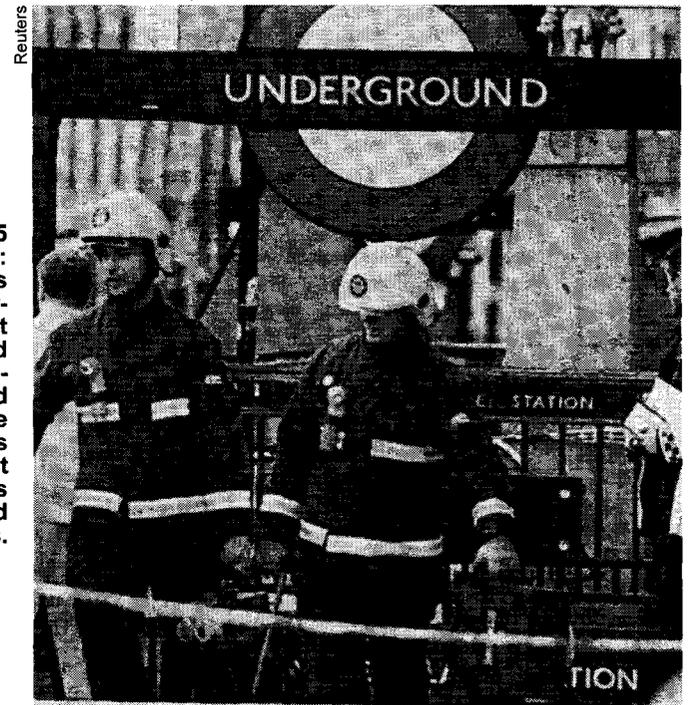
Outrageously, the FBU leadership has suspended Bob Pounder from his post as union secretary for the Greater Manchester County because he opposed the union leadership's decision to suspend the second eight-day strike and go to arbitration. Pounder, a supporter of the Workers Revolutionary Party (WRP), has been baited by the bourgeois press, which went into a chauvinist frenzy over the fact that he visited Iraq. Notwithstanding our political differences with the WRP, a group which politically supports the anti-worker regime of Saddam Hussein, and which supported Labour in the last elections, the SL/B demands: Reinstate Bob Pounder!

During the first two-day FBU strike, half of Tube drivers on duty refused to work citing a lack of fire cover and their solidarity with the FBU's struggle. This action had a tremendous impact, costing the City of London dearly, and pointing the way forward to victory. In response, the government threatened to invoke the anti-union laws against the RMT. During the following eight-day strike, drivers who continued refusing to work were harassed by management and sent home without pay. RMT leader Bob Crow is another left-talking union bureaucrat who retreated under the pressure of the capitalist campaign of war jingoism. Having promised firefighters that the Tube would be shut down during FBU strikes, Crow quickly caved in to the government's threat to

invoke the anti-union laws, leaving many of his members to face possible victimisation alone. This is hardly surprising for a union leader who, in a supreme act of class collaboration, is actually a member of the Transport for London management board!

New Labour is extremely unpopular

ber of the FBU's black caucus, and featured a real exchange of views on working-class strategy. Referring to the government's demand for cut-backs and speed-up, Carruthers told the audience, "We're talking about pay, they're talking about cuts. They call it modernisation. Their modernisation agenda takes



London, 25 January: Firefighters respond to near-death accident in Tube caused by lack of maintenance. United class struggle across unions is needed against Blair's attacks on pay and conditions.

with firefighters and it was this sentiment that Gilchrist was playing to when he declared to a meeting of the moribund Labour "lefts" before the end of the eight-day strike that he was "prepared to work to replace New Labour with what I'm prepared to call Real Labour". Following a hysterical response to this statement—which the press painted as a call to "topple New Labour"—Gilchrist announced the decision to submit to ACAS arbitration. He also responded with a 4 December 2002 column in the *Guardian*, complaining:

"The task of those, like myself, who passionately believe in strengthening the link between the party and unions, is being made increasingly difficult. In almost every Labour-affiliated union the call is becoming louder to weaken the links and reduce financial support to the Labour establishment. This demand will become impossible to counter if the government continues with New Labour's project of appeasing big business while distancing itself from the unions."

To unshackle the power of the working class it is necessary to forge a revolutionary workers party: a party built in the crucible of the class struggle through uncompromising political opposition to all forms of Labourite parliamentarist reformism, based on the understanding that the interests of the working class and the capitalists are irreconcilable and that the only way working people can secure a decent livelihood and put an end to wars is by expropriating the entire capitalist class through international socialist revolution.

The need for this kind of a party was a central question addressed by comrade Eibhlin McDonald at a Spartacist League forum in London on 25 November 2002. The meeting was also addressed by two FBU members, Billy Carruthers and Garrett Brooks, a mem-

us back 50 years." Voicing a view increasingly common among trade unionists, he added: "We put a resolution through our branch to remove our political fund from the Labour Party.... What we said is not only did we want to remove it, but we want the whole trade union movement to pull the political fund and use it somewhere else." In his remarks, Brooks said: "We all remember the pictures that we saw of September 11 last year, when New York firefighters were running into a building to save lives. That's what we do; we don't run away, we go in to try to save lives. Last year we were heroes; this year we are called criminals." Brooks also took up our criticism of Gilchrist's acquiescence to threatened army attacks on FBU picket lines raised in our leaflet. He said: "I had a different viewpoint to some of your members and that's about whether the army should cross the picket lines and take our fire engines.... Now, my view and the view of many firefighters is simple. We agree with Andy Gilchrist.... The army can't hope to compete in using our equipment and doing the same job we do."

In her presentation, which we publish below in edited and abridged form, comrade McDonald responded to Brooks's argument and also addressed the question of the trade union political fund.

* * *

We in the Spartacist League and the International Communist League are emphatically for a victory to the FBU in this struggle. We think a lot depends on it. We think it is a battle not simply for pay for the FBU. It is a battle for the entire trade union movement in Britain. And it's not only the working class that has a stake in it, but—as you can see on the picket lines—so do all the oppressed

continued on page 9

1917: How the Bolsheviks led the workers to power

We print below an edited and abridged version of a talk given by comrade Bob Carlyle at a Spartacist League/Spartacus Youth Group gathering in August 2002.

Trotsky says that the experience of the Russian proletariat in 1905 and the two revolutions of 1917 is a gigantic field of experience. We study the October 1917 Revolution not as an abstract exercise, but as a guide to our intervention and a lesson in how to forge the kind of party internationally that can do what the Bolsheviks did. Trotsky said that for Lenin the study of reality was a theoretical reconnoitre in the interests of action. The Bolsheviks were revolutionists of the deed, not of the gesture, of the essence, not of the form. All their study, debates and fights were to forge a programme of what to do.

I will go through the period from February to October 1917, but first want to look at the specific features of Russia at that time. First there was the agrarian situation. Millions of peasants—the overwhelming majority of the population—were hungry for land and lived under conditions of virtual serfdom. Serfdom had been officially abolished in 1861 but that meant peasants buying their freedom from the landlords by paying a fortune over decades. Russia had not experienced anything like the bourgeois revolution of France in 1789, where the bourgeoisie mobilised the oppressed masses and broke the back of the landed aristocracy. Another feature is what Trotsky called “combined and uneven development”. Russia had very advanced industry and a very young and volatile proletariat. Some of the factories had essentially been bought lock, stock and barrel and imported into Petrograd, and tens of thousands of workers had been brought off the land straight into these factories in huge concentrations—the Putilov works in Petrograd had tens of thousands of workers. In Britain now it’s hard to imagine that level of concentration. Additionally, this proletariat did not have decades of the tradition of Labour or social democracy, there wasn’t a deeply entrenched social-democratic leadership.

The experience of the 1905 Revolution was another major factor. In 1905, as the Russian bourgeoisie half-heartedly opposed the Tsar, it saw a very young Russian proletariat beginning to advance its own interests. The bourgeoisie recoiled from that and sought to make a deal with the nobility, out of fear of its own proletariat. 1905 produced the soviets—working-class assemblies, unifying all the workplaces in struggle and, despite the political differences within the Russian proletariat, bringing together all the workers on the basis of a united front to thrash out the political perspectives of that struggle.

Coming out of the 1905 Revolution, there were three main theoretical concepts and three different perspectives for the Russian proletariat. The Mensheviks, who came out of a split in 1903 with Lenin’s Bolsheviks—Menshevik in Russian means Minorityite while Bolshevik is Majorityite—argued that the coming revolution would be a bourgeois revolution. It would be led by the bour-

geoisie and the role of the proletariat would be simply to support and encourage the bourgeoisie in the overthrow of the nobility and the establishment of a democratic republic. For the Mensheviks, this first stage would be followed by a period of years or decades, thus the second stage, proletarian revolution, was relegated to some day in the future.

Lenin and the Bolsheviks advocated a “democratic dictatorship of the proletariat

possible for the revolution to stop at democratic demands—the re-distribution of land, or the right of nations to self-determination—because the bourgeoisie would mobilise against the proletariat and to defend itself the proletariat would of necessity have to attack the institutions of private property. The only way to do so would be through the dictatorship of the proletariat—in other words the seizure of state power.

great urge for struggle, but also fear of repression by the tsarist autocracy. The Bolshevik, Menshevik and Socialist Revolutionary (SR) layers were planning speeches, leaflets and underground meetings. However thousands of women textile workers in Petrograd hit the streets in a massive, militant strike. By 25 February there was a general strike throughout Petrograd. Shootings were taking place on the street, the reaction was mobilising, and the workers were beginning to arm themselves.

On 26 February, the tsarist government arrested the principal Bolshevik and Menshevik leaders and dissolved the Duma, the advisory body established by the tsar that had no legal power. By the way, Duma in Russian comes from the word *dumat*, which means to think, it’s like in England, parliament means to talk, not to do anything that would challenge the power. The next day the garrison mutinied, the soldiers who were in Petrograd came out in the streets and joined the workers, carrying their guns with the barrel slung down to indicate that they were with the revolution. On 27 February, all political prisoners were freed and a very interesting thing happened. All the Bolsheviks released from jail headed to the workers districts to organise the workers in struggle. The Mensheviks went the other way, to the Duma headquarters to set up the provisional executive committee of the Petrograd Soviet. These opportunists were quick to take advantage of the fact that the revolution of 1905 had deeply imbued the proletariat with respect for soviets. On 28 February, the tsarist ministers were arrested; on 1 March a Petrograd soldiers’ soviet is set up, and also the Moscow Soviet; on 2 March, the tsar abdicates and a provisional government is formed, between the provisional committee of the Duma and a provisional committee of the soviets. Everything was “provisional”, because the outcome was going to be decided by the proletariat who were armed and in the streets. You had the spectacle of the Menshevik and SR leaders going to the Cadet Party, the bourgeois liberal party, demanding they set up a bourgeois government, which they did.

The February Revolution was led by the working class, who in fact had been trained by Lenin’s Bolshevik Party, had read *Pravda* for many years, and had a perspective of soviet power. They knew that the cops were their enemy, that it was necessary to split the army and win the soldiers to the side of the revolution, that the bourgeoisie was the enemy, and that they had to fight the bourgeoisie as well as the landlord. So how come they didn’t get power? How come the government that issued out of this revolution was a government of big landlords and capitalists, headed by a prince? This was mainly because the proletariat were not sufficiently conscious of the role of the Mensheviks and SRs as forces loyal to the bourgeois order within the camp of the proletariat. Lenin had fought against this layer and since the start of the First World War he called for a break with parties like the British Labour Party, the French Socialist Party and the German Social Democracy, who supported their “own” bourgeoisie in war. The Russian proletariat was not aware of how to fight



Novosti

7 November 1918: Red Army soldiers parade in Moscow. Russian Revolution gave flesh and blood reality to programme of communism.

and peasantry”. Unlike the Mensheviks, Lenin recognised the need for the peasants to rise up and overthrow the landlords and that a key task of the coming revolution was to break the nobility and the tsarist autocracy to give land to the peasants. While agrarian revolution would be a large part of the Russian Revolution, the allies of the proletariat were not the liberal bourgeoisie, as the Mensheviks thought, but the poor peasantry. As distinct from the Mensheviks, Lenin saw the Russian revolution as part of European and world-wide revolution. But Lenin’s theory of a joint proletarian-peasant dictatorship had problems, which Trotsky pointed out. First of all, the peasantry is not an independent class, it is a petty-bourgeois sector and pretty atomised. The political perspective of the peasantry has to flow from a lead given by the city—either by the bourgeoisie, or by the proletariat.

Trotsky’s perspective, (the one implemented in reality by the Bolsheviks) is known as Permanent Revolution. It was embodied in his understanding of the class forces involved in the 1905 Revolution, in which he was Chairman of the Petrograd Soviet. He insisted that the bourgeoisie in Russia would back the nobility out of fear of the proletariat, and because they shared the landlords’ commitment to private property. *Only the working class could lead the revolution.* They could not do this by ignoring the peasantry, the proletariat would have to lean on the peasantry, and it would not be

Like Lenin, Trotsky’s perspective was internationalist. They both understood that a proletarian revolution would find itself surrounded by a potentially hostile sea of peasants who were ideologically in favour of private property and who could become a knife at the throat of the proletariat. Unless the proletariat of Russia could find support in a proletarian revolution outside Russia, particularly in the advanced centres of Europe such as Germany, it would be virtually impossible to maintain power.

The paradox of the February Revolution

By early February 1917, there was a palpable sense of revolutionary struggle in Petrograd. Russia was a participant in World War I from 1914 as an imperialist power and there was seething anger against the war, which was very, very bloody. There were situations where in the course of days, 700,000 people were killed. That impacted on the consciousness of the proletariat throughout Europe, including in Russia. The bourgeoisie were raking in vast profits, while working people were living in starvation conditions. I recommend a book by Alexander Shlyapnikov, *On the Eve of 1917*, who was the principal Bolshevik underground organiser inside Russia in the period up to 1917. You get a sense of the anger in the proletariat by February. On 23 February (on the old calendar, which in the new calendar is 8 March, International Women’s Day) there was a

this layer. And the Bolshevik Party was not sufficiently conscious or organised to prevent them from politically expropriating the proletariat and handing power to the bourgeoisie. This touches on the deep significance of Lenin's 1914 call for a break with the social traitors and the forging of a new, communist international.

The February Revolution resulted in dual power. On the one hand you had the Provisional Government, on the other hand the soviets. The proletariat was overwhelmingly loyal to the soviets but the leadership it looked to was unwilling to take power. The situation was further complicated by the fact that the bourgeois state apparatus had basically collapsed and the army garrison had gone over to the proletariat. If you think of a state as armed bodies of men, preserving specific property relations, who had state power in Russia after February 1917? The bourgeoisie could only exercise it in so far as it was delivered to them by leaders of the Petrograd Soviet. What was the programme of the Provisional Government? On the land question, it was to preserve private property, and decide the question later, after the war. On the war, it was to pursue the war to defend "democracy", with a promise of a Constituent Assembly later to decide all problems. On the oppressed nationalities, they said for the time being, everyone has to stay within Great Russia, because of the war. And when it came to the question of who's going to wield the power the bourgeoisie said "us"!

In *The History of the Russian Revolution* Trotsky talks about a political erosion that took place in the Bolshevik cadres inside Russia as a result of the war and the repression by the tsarist authorities. The leadership on the spot initially advocated support to the Provisional Government, even though it was a bourgeois government of landlords and capitalists. The proletarian base of the Bolshevik Party was not particularly happy and motions were passed in the proletarian districts of Petrograd protesting it. But that was the line of the party. When the Executive Committee of the Petrograd Soviet passed a motion basically saying that anybody who advocated defeatism — the defeat of one's "own" government — in the war (in other words anybody who didn't support the war effort) was against the revolution, because now that we've got rid of the tsar, now that we have a bourgeois democracy, you have to defend the revolution, right! The Bolshevik cadres on the spot voted for that.

Things got worse in mid-February when Kamenev and Stalin arrived back from exile in Siberia. They took over *Pravda*, the Bolshevik paper in Petrograd, and support to the Provisional Government "in so far as" it defended the revolution became the official line. The leadership advocated unity with the Mensheviks from whom Lenin had been advocating a decisive split. Again there were protests from workers; for example the Vyborg District Soviet sent a letter to the paper denouncing the line of support to the government, advocating expulsions of people who had that line, but they were in a minority.

Lenin was still in exile in Switzerland, in what Trotsky calls his "Zurich cage". What Lenin was advocating was completely at variance with the party's perspective in Russia. I really advise comrades to read *Letters from Afar* and *The April Theses*. Basically what Lenin advanced was: no support to the Provisional Government — it's a government of capitalists and landlords; arm the proletariat, no reliance on anybody except the armed people; opposition to all forms

of defensism, the war remains an imperialist war and the only perspective of the revolutionary proletariat is for *defeat* of the Russian bourgeois forces in the war; self-determination for all the national minorities — down with Great Russian social patriotism, which is used to fuel the war drive; no annexations; no rapprochement with the Mensheviks, for forging the Third Communist International. And to top it all off, he said anybody who doesn't advocate this — we split.



Lenin speaking in 1918 on first anniversary of Russian Revolution. Bolsheviks under Lenin's leadership successfully mobilised workers' opposition to World War I, leading socialist revolution and establishing Communist International.

Lenin got back to Russia from Switzerland in a sealed train that went through Germany and immediately wrote up his proposals in *The April Theses*, to which he added the demand for peasant seizures and for a government based on the soviets and the *dictatorship of the proletariat*. Lenin abandoned the slogan of "*democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry*", which now disappeared from the party's propaganda, and he launched a fight to rearm the comrades and to win the party over to the perspective of proletarian revolution. It was not an easy task. The fight opened on 4 April, but on 8 April *Pravda* dissociated itself from the theses of Lenin and even Zinoviev, Lenin's closest collaborator in exile, refused to sign them. Lenin ridiculed the Old Bolsheviks, who could not escape the framework of old, out-of-date slogans. But beginning in the industrial suburbs the local party bodies increasingly started endorsing and by the party conference in Petrograd at the end of April the theses prevailed. The perspective adopted was one of advocating power to the soviets and the soviet-based government because the armed power was in the hands of the proletariat. The immediate seizure of power was not posed, so Lenin advocated a period of patient explanation. Having carried out a revolution in the consciousness of the Bolshevik Party itself, the task of the party now was to win the majority of workers to the Bolsheviks' perspective.

In Trotsky's *Lessons of October* he makes the point that it's almost a historic rule that there will be a party flinch when a revolutionary party has to move from the period of preparation to the actual seizure of proletarian power, and if the leadership can't overcome this conservatism then the revolution will go down to defeat. But comrades might ask how Lenin was able to do it so rapidly. It's testament to the fact that those people drawn to the Bolshevik Party were drawn precisely on the basis of struggle against the bourgeoisie, and for a proletarian per-

spective, and this paved the way to overcome the party's inadequate theory.

The illusions among workers that the government was committed to peace began to fade rapidly as, on May Day, Miliukov, head of the bourgeois Cadet party and Minister of Foreign Affairs, issued a letter to the Allied powers assuring them that the Russian government was dedicated to victory in the war. From this point on the soviets and factory committees began to shift towards the Bolsheviks. Trotsky arrived on 4 May, the

He meant the Mensheviks and SRs should take power. This was followed by the "July Days", which Lenin said amounted to more than a demonstration and less than a revolution. It began as a spontaneous protest from the working-class districts of Petrograd; the Kronstadt garrison sailors arrived, and like many of the workers' contingents they were armed. The Bolsheviks at first tried to demobilise the proletariat, because the workers and soldiers outside Petrograd were not ready to seize power, but at the last minute were forced to change their line and to support the demonstration, to give it structure and minimise the damage to the proletariat. The Bolsheviks assessed that this was not an appropriate moment for revolution. Within days, regiments were brought into the city from outside. Regiments that had been neutral during the July Days were now anti-Bolshevik and regiments that had been pro-Bolshevik two days earlier were now neutral. Also, soldiers at the front were not with the Bolsheviks and the peasantry was still hedging its bets. The Bolsheviks had learned from the Paris Commune that the city must not allow itself to be isolated from the surrounding countryside, which could be used to crush the revolution. The Bolsheviks avoided that situation, but the proletariat had to pay a heavy price. The July Days were followed by a wave of reaction — regiments were disbanded, soldiers were atomised into small groups and sent back to the front, where the death penalty was reintroduced. Land committees that had been organising against the landlords were arrested. Bolsheviks were arrested, Lenin was forced into hiding, some were murdered. One young Bolshevik worker was caught by reactionary forces while carrying *Pravda* from the print shop and killed on the street. The Bolsheviks now dropped the slogan "All power to the soviets", which would have meant power to the soviets that were suppressing the working class. The Bolsheviks had to ride out the reaction. And as Trotsky points out, the cadres who basically formed the central core of the party in October were those who stood the test of the struggle in the July Days. With the disarming of the proletariat, power passed into the hands of the military cliques that were organised around Kerensky and Kornilov.

The Kornilov revolt

After the July Days, everybody knew that the bourgeoisie wanted to turn the tables much more in their favour. They sought and found a saviour, General Kornilov, and in late August he sent his troops towards Petrograd to hang the Bolsheviks and crush the proletariat. The response was quite phenomenal. Alexander Rabinowitch's book, *Prelude to Revolution*, says the proletariat formed a Red Guard of something like 40,000 workers; the proletariat even had artillery divisions. The Kronstadt sailors came to Trotsky and basically said, "Kornilov is threatening the government, but we know he is threatening us, we are the real target. Shouldn't we just arrest Kerensky and the Provisional Government and go it alone?" Trotsky said "No, you should use Kerensky as a gun-brace" (used to stabilise a rifle). Now some members of the Bolshevik Party, the right wing, said Kornilov is coming after the government, so let's be with the Provisional Government. Trotsky had to wage a fight: No, we are not with the Provisional Government, we are against it! No political support to the Provisional Government. We will have a military bloc with the government in defence of proletarian inter-

continued on page 8

Bolsheviks...

(Continued from page 7)

ests, a united front. We will march separately, but we will strike together.

There was no mixing of banners, and it is a very clear example of what a united front looks like. It was a tremendous success. The proletariat of Petrograd came out in waves and met the incoming Kornilov troops who just disappeared like butter on a hot grill. They disappeared as they were politically convinced not to mobilise against the revolution. The Bolsheviks and the Red Guard used the event to arm the proletariat. So in early October you have a situation where the reaction has been temporarily disarmed, the proletariat has been re-armed, and the soviets have been re-born as fighting organs for the defence of proletarian interests.

The article by Lenin called "On Compromises" gives you a sense of how fast slogans and tactics have to change sometimes. In early September, overwhelming force is once more in the hands of the proletariat, the Bolsheviks are gaining in the soviets, so Lenin saw the need to raise the call once more for "All power to the soviets". But the soviets are not yet Bolshevik, so he said they should place a condition—say to the Menshevik and SR leaders of the soviets: we will guarantee that we will not organise to overthrow you, which you know is our perspective, if you agree to take power into your hands on the basis of soviets. In other words, establish a Soviet government, in which we have a right to participate, and therefore the possibility of taking the power peacefully. Almost immediately the Mensheviks and the Soviet Executive Committee began negotiating with Kerensky for the formation of a new provisional government. Days later the slogan "All power to the soviets" was withdrawn—5 or 6 September. But on 9 and 10 September, suddenly the Petrograd Soviet has a Bolshevik majority, and it looks like the Moscow Soviet is going the same way, so the slogan "All power to the soviets" goes back on the Bolshevik agenda. In this case it means and is *seen* to mean, power to the *Bolshevik* soviets.

Then in the countryside the peasants decided to take the land into their own hands. And once that had happened it was very, very clear to Lenin that with a Bolshevik majority in the soviets and a land war in the countryside, the only regime that is going to defend the land seizures is a Bolshevik regime, so they had to take the power. And then begins yet another

fight in the Bolshevik Party as the question was posed—how would the proletariat take power? It is not enough just to have a majority in the soviets, it was implicit in the Marxist understanding of the nature of the state that it was necessary to organise an insurrectionary seizure of power that could then pass power to soviet democracy to run the country. Lenin began to argue for this from mid-September. Sections of the Bolshevik Party on the right again disagreed and fought him. Lenin had been in hiding since the July Days, it was still dangerous for him to appear, but he disguised himself and arranged a meeting which passed motions for insurrection and basically put into train the apparatus to overthrow the Provisional Government and seize the power. This was on 10 October.

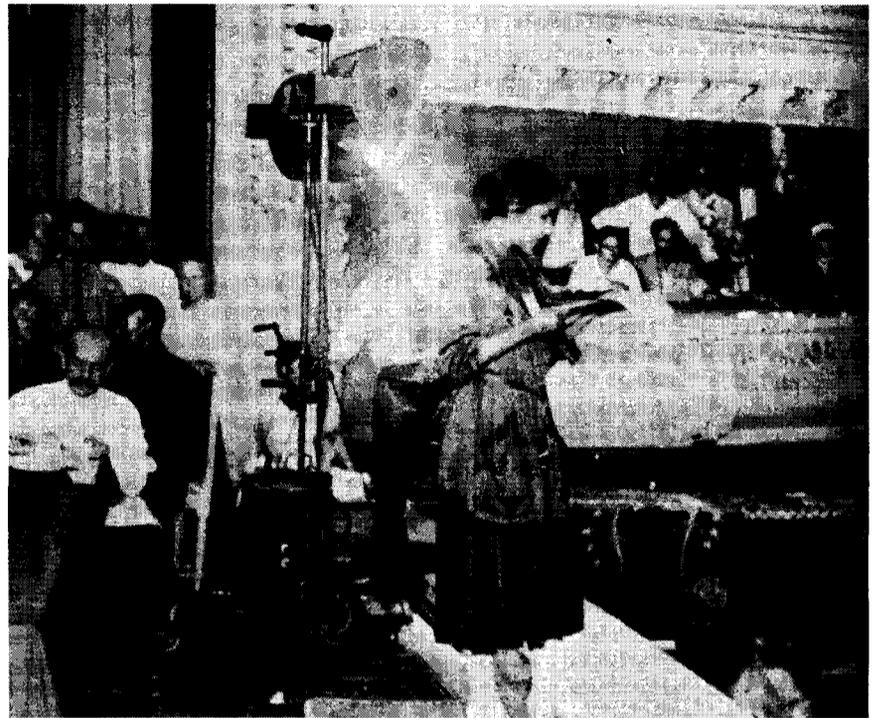
Opposition within the party was so strong that it came out in the open. Kamenev and Zinoviev were the main spokesmen. They feared the break from the bourgeois legality, arguing the Bolsheviks would be isolated and crushed and argued to participate in the Constituent Assembly, which meant becoming a reformist opposition in a bourgeois government—the very perspective that had been defeated in the fight over Lenin's *April Theses*. Zinoviev and Kamenev circulated a letter inside the Bolshevik Party, which was their right, but they also published it, thus advising the enemies of the revolution of the Bolsheviks' plans for insurrection!

In September, Lenin argued the Bolsheviks should just take power in their *own* name as a party, then call a congress of soviets. Trotsky and Sverdlov thought the passing over of power should coincide with the second All-Russian Congress of Soviets of Workers and Soldiers Deputies. Lenin viewed this as a smoke-screen by the Central Committee for *not* organising an insurrection. He was wrong, in fact the revolution was being organised, using the Military Revolutionary Committee (MRC). Set up at the instigation of the Mensheviks, it gave the Bolsheviks exactly what they needed, a body legally identified with the soviets, that had permission to function clandestinely or semi-clandestinely and the Mensheviks boycotted it, which made it a perfect vehicle for the Bolsheviks for organising the insurrection.

But the October Revolution was no *coup d'état*, it was a seizure of power based on the support of the majority of the proletariat, who were very much aware that the Bolsheviks intended to take power. Three days before the revolution, *Pravda* organised a series of ral-

lies throughout Petrograd. Hundreds of thousands of Petrograd workers heard the principal agitators and spokesmen of the Bolshevik Party, whose message was: in the soviets we have passed motions saying that power must exist in a Soviet government, we have said that the upcoming Congress of Soviets will decide the

sheviks, Menshevik Internationalists and Socialist Revolutionary-rights, all stood up and said: how can you do this? You've seized the power, we are alone, we will never survive, and walked out. The Menshevik left wing around Martov said: we have to have unity with everybody who is for soviet democracy. If we



Humbert-Droz Archives

Turkish delegate at 1920 Soviet Baku Congress proposes programme for the liberation of women of the East following the Russian Revolution.

question of power, we are here today to dedicate ourselves to the defence of soviet power. And workers took an oath—they raised their hands and dedicated themselves to the defence of proletarian power based on the soviets—in their hundreds of thousands. The key moment came three days later at 5.30 in the morning on 25 October when the government decided to seal the press of the Bolsheviks. It gave the Military Revolutionary Committee the impetus they needed. They organised a contingent of workers to go down and re-open the Bolshevik Party press. The radio stations in the big battleships were used to broadcast information; the MRC sent out brigades of workers to seize the telephone exchanges. The Bolsheviks took control of communications and took the bridges and principal intersections so they could control the troop flow. More people were killed making Eisenstein's film about the seizure of the Winter Palace than during the actual revolution. At the first session of the All-Russian Congress of Soviets of Workers and Soldiers Deputies, the Men-

don't we will be isolated, the proletariat will be crushed. So Trotsky gets up and says: unity with guys who've been for unity with the bourgeoisie, for class collaboration, for the last eight months? Unity with those guys who would have rather united with the bourgeoisie and the reaction than with the proletariat? No, out! And he gave this wonderful speech where he ends up saying: you and all those other people can leave here, and go where you belong, in the dustbin of history.

The second session began when Vladimir Ilyich appeared. The account from John Reed is very good. When people finally stopped applauding, Lenin began with the very famous statement: "We will now begin to construct the socialist order." That's what they began then, and although we have suffered quite a few losses, the task remains. The experience of the Bolshevik Revolution can arm us to repeat this experience again, to take up the fight to construct a world socialist order, which is what we are all about. ■

Prometheus Research Library Books

Dog Days: James P. Cannon vs. Max Shachtman in the Communist League of America, 1931-1933

Documents from a factional struggle that almost destroyed the fledgling Trotskyist movement in the United States. Includes letters and documents by Trotsky, Cannon, Shachtman and other key figures in the fight, some never before published. Extensive introduction, glossary, list of references and index.

•752 pages; Smyth-sewn binding in cloth and paper.

Cloth: ISBN 0-9633828-7-X

£18 plus £5 postage

Paper: ISBN 0-9633828-8-8

£12 plus £3.75 postage

James P. Cannon and the Early Years of American Communism: Selected Writings and Speeches, 1920-1928

This volume of Cannon's writings covers the period when he was one of the principal leaders of the American section of the Communist International. (1992)

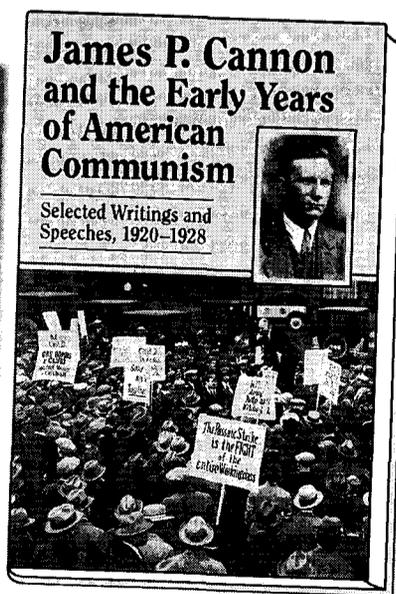
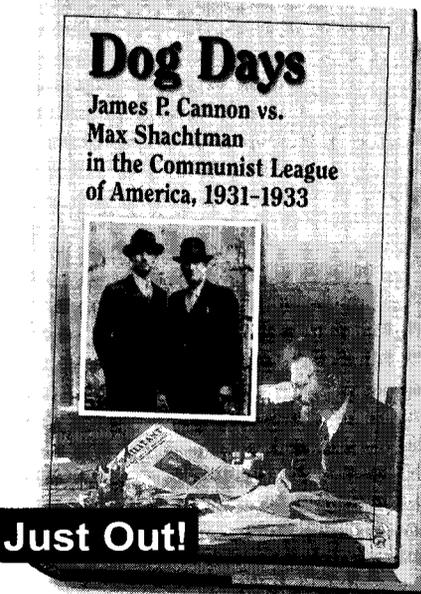
•624 pages; Smyth-sewn binding in paper.

Paper: ISBN 0-9633828-1-0

£10 plus £3.75 postage

Order from/make cheques payable to:

Spartacist Publications, PO Box 1041, London NW5 3EU



Just Out!

FBU...

(Continued from page 5)

layers of this society.

Immigrants, minorities, women — that's where the support is coming from and that's something that's very similar to the 1984-85 miners strike. And the tremendous support the FBU is getting from the public is a measure of the depth of hatred for the Labour government. It is an outpouring of hatred by everybody that's been taking it in the neck from this government for so long. This strike has major international significance as well, precisely because it has the capability to hamper the war preparations against Iraq. The government must not be allowed to break the back of the FBU.

One of the things we want to talk about is how to prevent that from happening and how to get the victory that the FBU needs. We think the government's threat to break the FBU picket lines must be met by mass picket lines. This is one of the lessons of the 1977 FBU strike. The Labour government of the day, of Jim Callaghan, had their strikebreakers repulsed by mass picket lines and they pulled back.

Our second point is that the Fire Brigades Union must not be left to go it alone against the full might of the capitalist state. The public sector unions — the council workers union, the teachers, etc — are longing to give this government a kick up the backside. They work for incredibly low wages. Part of the impact of the defeat of the miners strike is that the trade union movement in this country was weakened; wages and living standards have been really driven down. So all these workers should be mobilised on the FBU picket lines, and in particular, we think, the Tube workers ought to be out on strike.

Calling off the planned strike ballot by those workers was really a betrayal by the Rail, Maritime and Transport (RMT) union leadership. The drivers' solidarity with the firefighters during the first 48-hour strike had a tremendous impact. The situation in London Underground today is that drivers are being forced against their will to drive trains into the tunnels knowing that it's not safe and knowing that their class duty is standing with the firefighters on strike. Especially here in the City of London, to shut down the transport system means that the financial centre of British imperialism cannot function.

the fight for equal pay for equal work, including for immigrants, and for full citizenship rights for all immigrants.

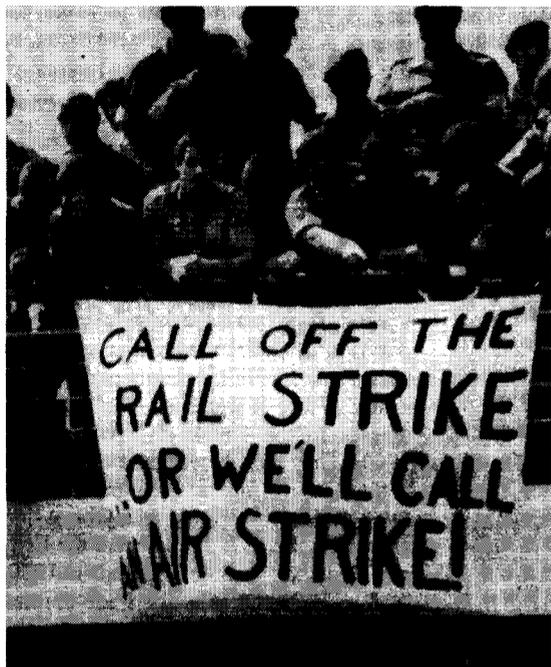
Union "lefts" prop up New Labour

These are tactics to win the FBU strike: mass picket lines and strikes in other unions. The tactics of a strike are not very difficult to work out. It's not rocket science, as any firefighter can tell you. But the real question is, why isn't it

Another point that distinguishes the Spartacist League is that we don't think the economic demands of this strike can be abstracted from the broader social questions of the programme that we fight for, the communist programme. We're not like these fake-left groups who will hold a meeting about the Fire Brigades Union at which the war against Iraq is not mentioned. Or if you go to one of their meetings about the war, the Fire Brigades Union is not mentioned. You go to a

trade union movement in class struggle. That is how the trade union movement was built. If you concede on the picket line question, you may as well concede to Tony Blair — it opens the door to crushing the FBU.

The capitalist state consists at its core of the army, the police, the prison service, the courts, etc. We do not accept that the police are part of the workers movement and just wage earners like anybody else. That's absolutely not true. The actual role



No credit

Left: Soldiers returning from British imperialism's victory in the 1982 Falklands/Malvinas war wield patriotism as weapon against striking rail workers. Right: Train in Serbia destroyed by Nato in 1999. StWC promotes Ken Livingstone, who supported the bombing.



Emil Vas

happening, and that is a political question. And that is one of the central things that we want to address, because the chief obstacle to winning this strike is illusions and ties to Labour. In this instance, that means ties to "Old Labour". Left-wing union leaders, such as RMT head Bob Crow and Andy Gilchrist and the others who have been dubbed the "awkward squad", are simply another expression of the left wing of Labour. They are always being vilified by Tony Blair and the capitalist press simply because they sometimes lead their unions out on strike. That's where the Blairites are coming from: pure class hatred of the trade unions. But our political criticisms of these leaders are based on their ties to Labour.

The question of our attitude to Labour is where we fundamentally disagree. It is where you can see most clearly the distinction between us and the other groups on the left which you might be familiar with — the Socialist Workers

meeting about the unions, and racism is not mentioned. You go to a meeting about racism, and the trade unions are not mentioned. We think that those issues have to be linked up as part of a single struggle led by a revolutionary party against the capitalist system which divides workers.

At a Workers Power meeting the other night on the FBU strike, two strikers from London's Euston Station were present, one of whom spoke out at the end of the meeting to say that he personally pays his political funds to a charity and will never in the rest of his life vote Labour again. But when we asked the Workers Power speaker, "What about you?" he said, oh no, he couldn't say that because that might bring the Tories back in again. So this is the connection between groups like Workers Power's support to Labour in elections and their perspective on the strike.

Now, on Labour's threat to send the army across the picket lines, the question that we disagree on. We understand that

of the police in society was seen most clearly during the miners strike, when they bloodied not only the miners but their families and their villages daily for an entire year. They were known at the time as Margaret Thatcher's boot boys. That's what the state is; it is an instrument of class oppression.

The military top brass have been reluctant to use the army to break picket lines in the FBU strike. That has not been done in Britain since the General Strike in 1926. We think that if the army is asked to cross picket lines, the FBU should appeal to the soldiers not to do that, because there are contradictions within the army, including even the professional army, that do not exist within the police. There's a class contradiction within the army. The soldiers are drawn from the working class. They absolutely hate the public school, Sandhurst-educated officer corps, and it's possible to use that. The soldiers also do not expect that breaking strikes is part of their job.

But there's another point that can be made about this. It is not normally state repression that is used to break strikes in Britain. Trotsky said that in Britain you have an outer policeman and an inner policeman, and the inner policeman is Labour and social democracy, and they have succeeded in most cases in selling out workers struggles. So it's not always necessary for them to use naked state repression.

Defence of Iraq against imperialist attack

On the question of how to stop the war against Iraq, our position is for defence of Iraq against imperialist attack without giving an iota of political support to Saddam Hussein. The best mechanism for fighting for defence of Iraq is through class struggle at home. The connections we make between class struggle at home and opposition to war are much easier to make in the case of the Fire Brigades strike. You have the defence chief complaining that a demoralised army cannot fight on two fronts. If they keep 19,000 soldiers for breaking the FBU strike, then this hinders their attempts to wage war against Iraq. We think that is a good

continued on page 10



Workers Hammer photos

Integrated contingent of Ford Dagenham workers march in support of miners, June 1984. Right: Spartacist League banner at NUM delegate conference. In direct opposition to Labour/TUC traitors, revolutionaries fought to bring out key sectors of the working class alongside miners.

There's another point I want to make about council workers before I move on. A lot of union jobs have been contracted out to private firms. Those workers then work for even less wages and in even worse conditions than council workers whose jobs have not been privatised, and those jobs are often done by immigrants. This proves that it is in the interest of the entire trade union movement to take up

Party (SWP), Workers Power, Socialist Alliance, Socialist Party, etc. In the 2001 elections, even when they stood their own candidates, the Socialist Alliance (supported by the SWP and Workers Power) still called to "vote Labour where you must". We said "No vote for Labour!" and you can bet your life that we won't be voting for them next time around either.

it is the position of at least the national executive of the FBU that they should not try to stop the army from going across picket lines to seize firefighting equipment and vehicles. We said openly in our leaflet that we disagree with Andy Gilchrist on this. First of all, that's not about saving lives. Everybody knows that. I think even Garrett would agree with that. Picket lines are the crucial weapon of the

FBU...

(Continued from page 9)

thing. The semicolonial masses of Iraq and the working people and oppressed of this country have a common enemy in the Labour government and the capitalist class in this country and also, of course, in the United States.

It's worth noting that when over 400,000 people demonstrated against the war here in London on 28 September, nobody in the military establishment or the government batted an eyelid, because

of conversion is being tested right now.

Another area where we vehemently disagree with Andy Gilchrist and Bob Crow and with the rest of the left is that the trade unions should continue to fund New Labour. That's like asking workers to fight with one hand tied behind their back, and it's fairly obscene. To continue funding the organisation that's threatening to crush you is not very appealing. It's noticeable that on the picket lines—and apparently in union branch meetings from what I'm told—there are passionate discussions over this question. The Fire Brigades Union was one of the

When he got the job as mayor of London he appointed a man called Bob Kiley, a former CIA officer and a notorious union-buster from the New York subway, as his man in charge of the Underground. Livingstone supported the war against Serbia. Yesterday, he called for women who are begging in the Tubes to be arrested and their children to be put into government care. And in case you didn't get the picture of what Ken Livingstone is like, he also called yesterday for the Fire Brigades to accept the "modernisation" agenda. So that will give you an idea of what kind of mass workers party the Socialist Party would like to create.

We make the point that Old Labour has always loyally served Queen and Country. Labour supported British imperialism through two world wars. They supported the United States in the 1950-53 war against the North Korean deformed workers state, a war whose ultimate targets were China and the Soviet Union. They presided over the bloody partition of India, which was an untold horror in terms of the numbers of people killed. They suppressed the working masses in the Greek civil war in the 1940s. They introduced some of the most racist measures against immigrants in history, such as virginity tests for Asian women in the 1970s. They sent the British Army to Northern Ireland in 1969. And when it comes to the trade unions, as a firefighter pointed out to us on the picket line, this is the second strike the FBU has ever had and both have been against a Labour government.

The trade union political fund

This question that is being debated within the trade union movement about what to do with the political fund is really about what kind of party the working class needs to actually represent its interests independent of the capitalist class. We fight to build a multiethnic revolutionary workers party to fight for socialist revolution, a Leninist vanguard party modelled on the party that led the Russian Revolution.

It's a fundamentally different animal than any type of Labourite party. For example, on political funds, we think it's fine for a trade union to have a political fund; we don't think that they should pretend to be apolitical organisations. And they should spend them on campaigns on a case by case basis. People could go to the trade union and ask for support for a particular case. For instance, we went to the Fire Brigades Union in Glasgow some years ago and got a huge donation for Mumia Abu-Jamal, a black political prisoner on death row in America.

But there's a fundamental difference between a trade union and a political party. Trade unions are defensive eco-

nomical organisations of the working class; therefore you want to include as broad a swath of the working population as possible. You want industrial unions to be as big as possible. That means they will incorporate people with all levels of consciousness.

The Leninist vanguard party, on the other hand, is based on the most advanced layers of the working class. While the trade union movement is built on the broadest possible basis, the Leninist vanguard party is built by splitting other organisations and winning people away from social-democratic, Labour-type organisations and from organisations that pretend to be socialist. That's not something the Spartacist League invented. It came from Lenin, who definitively broke with the parties purporting to be socialist when they supported their own ruling classes in war in 1914.

A Leninist vanguard party fights against all forms of chauvinism, champions all of the oppressed. What you actually see in the support from the population for the FBU on the picket lines, which you also saw in the miners strike, is that there's a very high degree of support from ethnic minorities—Kurds, Turks and other immigrants, as well as blacks and Asians. What you see there is the potential core of a Leninist vanguard party in this country. That is what it would look like.

In this country, immediately after the greatest success of the working class in history, the Russian October Revolution of 1917, which had huge support among the working class here, the Labour Party Fabians drafted something called Clause IV, which called for common ownership of the means of production. The idea was to fool the working class that socialism here would come through Parliament nationalising industry. It's a con, and that's what it was intended as.

We believe that it really is possible to regenerate and reindustrialise this country and to provide work for people. We believe it's possible to provide decent health care, decent education and decent services including housing, but not within the framework of capitalism. That does require a socialist revolution and establishing a planned economy where you decide to manufacture and produce things based on need, and it has to work within an international socialist system.

It is exactly in the crucible of very important struggles such as this one and such as the miners strike that a revolutionary party will be built. This is a really crucial battle. We want to do everything that we can to fight for the Fire Brigades Union to win against this government and in the course of such battles we seek to build a revolutionary party to fight for a socialist revolution. ■



Hulton Deutsch

Derry 1969: Labour government, which included Tony Benn, darling of the "Stop the War Coalition", sent troops to Northern Ireland enforcing British imperialist rule and oppression of Catholics.

while it's very good to show the level of opposition against the war, demonstrations by themselves don't wield any social power. Trade unions such as the FBU have social power, and that really does cause major concern about the war preparations.

I just want to make a point about the SWP-led Stop the War Coalition. The purpose, the perspective and programme of the groups that built the Stop the War Coalition is for unity not only with bishops and the mosques and the liberals, but above all with the left-wing Labour MPs Jeremy Corbyn and Tony Benn, etc. It ought to be not too difficult to work out that unity with these Labour MPs will not and cannot stop war. The Labour "lefts" as much as the right wing of the Labour Party are tied to the system of capitalism, and imperialist war is intrinsic to capitalism.

It's important to understand politically that national chauvinism, pro-war sentiment, and what was called the "Falklands factor" in the 1982 war with Argentina are used as a club to beat the trade unions with now, as it was used back then. Returning soldiers from the Falklands hung a sign over the side of a ship directed against striking rail workers, saying call off the rail strike or we'll call an air strike. We call for British troops out of Northern Ireland, out of the Near East and out of Afghanistan.

The domestic side of the "war on terror" is pretty clear to most people by now. It's a racist witch hunt against immigrants and against British minorities, targeting blacks and particularly Asians. The ultimate target of the "war on terror" is the trade union movement. That is ultimately what's considered to be the "enemy within".

Under Tony Blair, the Labour Party is being converted into something like the Democratic Party in the United States, which is an outright capitalist party. Lenin described the Labour Party as a bourgeois workers party, with an enormous working-class base but a pro-capitalist leadership and programme. To what extent Blair has succeeded in that process

unions that began the process of cutting off funds to New Labour. They were in the vanguard of it, as was the RMT.

And once again, the so-called socialists have come out to the right of the gut feeling of most of the workers within the unions. Through the Socialist Alliance, the SWP and Workers Power have echoed and supported the position of Andy Gilchrist and Bob Crow—that it's okay to open up the political fund to give a little bit of support here and there but that they fundamentally must not break the ties with New Labour.

There's another group which does say that you should break the ties with New Labour, which is the Socialist Party of Peter Taaffe. They are also a Labourite group; they simply play their hand a little bit differently. They say the unions should stop funding New Labour and build another mass workers party. It would be based on the trade unions, but it should be led by the existing left-wing trade union leaders. They have even called for such a party to be led by Ken Livingstone, of all people.

We're no fans of Ken Livingstone.

Subdrive success!

Points quota: 280 Total: 287



WORKERS HAMMER

Marxist Newspaper of the Spartacist League

- 1-year subscription to *Workers Hammer*: £3.00 (Overseas subscriptions: Airmail £7.00; Europe outside Britain and Ireland £5.00)
- 1-year sub to *Workers Hammer* and 4 issues of *Spartacist Ireland*: £5.00
- 1-year sub to *Workers Hammer* PLUS 22 issues of *Workers Vanguard*, Marxist fortnightly of the Spartacist League/US for £10.00. Sub includes *Black History and the Class Struggle*
- 1-year sub to *WH, WV*, and 4 issues of *Spartacist Ireland*: £12.00

All subscriptions include *Spartacist*, organ of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist)

Name _____
 Address _____
 _____ Postcode _____
 E-mail _____ Phone _____

183
Make cheques payable/post to: Spartacist Publications, PO Box 1041, London NW5 3EU

Korea...

(Continued from page 12)

reopened.

According to press reports, the recent wave of demonstrations in South Korea has been accompanied by a growing sympathy for the North. A *New York Times* (28 December 2002) article quoted one protester saying, "If North Korea would be threatened by the United States with nuclear weapons, North Korea can also have them." But it is vital to distinguish between solidarity with North Korea on a class basis—defence of the deformed workers state against South Korea and the US and Japanese imperialist powers—and solidarity on the basis of Korean nationalism.

Much of the radical student movement in South Korea has supported the North Korean regime as the most consistent purveyor of Korean nationalism against the US and Japanese imperialists. However, nationalist ideology serves to tie the potentially powerful South Korean proletariat to its own ruling class, buttressing the latter's aspirations for a united capitalist Korea.

The combativity of the working class has been demonstrated repeatedly, not least in the enormous struggles of the 1970s and '80s which broke the stranglehold of the CIA-sponsored, corporatist Korean Federation of Trade Unions and gave rise to independent unions, now grouped in the Korean Confederation of Trade Unions (KCTU). These struggles also helped put an end to open military rule in the late 1980s. But the KCTU leadership has increasingly sought to channel the militancy of the workers into support for political representatives of the rapacious South Korean bourgeoisie.

US imperialist belligerence towards North Korea nearly capsized the "Sunshine Policy" of South Korean president Kim Dae Jung, whose attempts at "engaging" Pyongyang were aimed at undermining the deformed workers state through capitalist economic penetration. But Roh won the presidential election vowing to continue Kim's policy.

For their part, the North Korean Stalinists have long called for "peaceful reunification" with the South. This is a recipe for reunification on the basis of capitalist wage slavery and the annexation of the North by the *chaebol*, the giant conglomerates that dominate South Korean capitalism. In an attempt to attract capital investment from South Korea and elsewhere, the Pyongyang regime is now promoting the construction of two large free-trade zones and has made other moves towards Chinese-style "market reforms". Despite continuing severe food shortages, rationing was abolished and housing rents and utility charges have been introduced. Meanwhile, Pyongyang's pleas for the US, Japan and other imperialist powers to adopt policies of "non-aggression" foster dangerous illusions that these imperialists can be appeased.

Democratic Labor Party: left cover for Korean nationalism

During last month's South Korean elections, various left groups in South Korea and abroad touted Kwon Young Kil's new Democratic Labor Party (DLP) as an alternative to both the traditional right wing and bourgeois liberals like Kim Dae Jung and Roh Moo Hyun. In the 1997 elections, Kwon, a former KCTU leader, ran for president under the rubric "People's Victory 21". This was a class-collaborationist lash-up with various liberal groups that promoted nationalist opposition to "foreign interference" and similar rhetoric seeking to deflect class anger away from the domestic

exploiters. This time, Kwon won 3.9 per cent of the vote as the DLP's presidential candidate. While the DLP is based in large part on the KCTU union federation, Kwon from the outset defined it as a "party of progressives" which sought to create a "coalition of liberal forces" with groups such as the Green Party (*Joong Ang Ilbo*, 29 June 2002).

Echoing the reformist verbiage traditionally associated with Western European social-democratic parties, the DLP's fundamental role is to act as a pressure group on the "liberal" wing of the South Korean bourgeoisie. Thus, Kwon saluted former president Kim Dae Jung's "Sunshine Policy", saying: "He achieved historic feats such as reducing military tension on the Korean peninsula and setting the foundation for a peace regime between the two Koreas." The DLP also co-signed a June 2002 "Solidarity Message for Peace from Korean Peace Groups" which stated that "North Korea's nuclear and missile development must be settled to build [a] peaceful Korean Peninsula." Such calls for disarmament of the North and "peaceful relations" ultimately reflect the interests of South Korea's *chaebol* bourgeoisie and its drive for capitalist reunification.

The International Socialists of South Korea (ISSK), affiliated to the late Tony Cliff's Socialist Workers Party, supported Kwon's 1997 candidacy and has more recently liquidated its forces into the DLP. An article on the South Korean elections in the 11 January *Socialist Worker* (which is entirely uncritical of Roh) states: "The division of the Korean peninsula into two states is a relic of the Cold War." And the Cliffites would like nothing more than to get rid of that "relic" through "democratic" counterrevolution.

In fact, the origins of the Cliffite tendency lie in its refusal to defend the North Korean workers state against the counter-revolutionary invasion by the US together with British imperialism—ruled by Attlee's Labour government—begun in 1950, for which it was rightly expelled from the Trotskyist movement. Under the rubric "Neither Washington nor Moscow", the Cliffites went on to embrace every conceivable CIA-backed anti-Soviet force, from Lech Walesa's *Solidarność* in Poland to the Islamic fundamentalist *mujahedin* who fought the Red Army in Afghanistan to the Yeltsin-led counterrevolution in the Soviet Union itself.

In South Korea, the Cliffites have long gone out of their way to make clear that they share the *chaebol* bourgeoisie's hatred for the North Korean deformed workers state. The ISSK demonstrated this in 1993 even as their own comrades were dragged off to prison under the National Security Law (see "Free Choi Il Bung and All South Korean Class War Prisoners!" *Workers Vanguard* no 574, 23 April 1993). They assured the deeply anti-Communist regime that ISSK leader Choi "had not broken the National Security Law by reading banned literature from the North or belonging to a foreign organization. On the contrary, he had published books critical of regimes like North Korea" (*Socialist Worker* [US], February 1993).

Also joining the imperialists' offensive against North Korea is the Committee for a Workers' International. Its leader Peter Taaffe recently published an article in which he not only complained that North Korea is a "threat", but whined that Bush's policies in the region have "directly led to the current conflict. This in turn could lead to North Korea selling 'nuclear secrets', as it has done in the past, to other countries and potential terrorist organisations" ("US hawks plan 'pre-emptive' strike", 15 January).

Striking a much more left posture is the Workers Power (WP) group. While

also presenting support for the DLP as a "positive development", WP calls "for the immediate withdrawal of the USA's troops and for scrapping all military treaties with it", and states that "revolutionaries should stand for the unconditional defence of North Korea. This includes its right to possess nuclear reactors and to develop nuclear weapons, if it can" (*Workers Power Global*, 22 December 2002). This principled defensist position on North Korea stands in sharp contrast to WP's refusal to defend China, whose fate is of even greater significance for the international proletariat. WP declared "Capitalist Restoration Triumphs in China" (*Workers Power*, November 2000). Despite massive inroads by overseas Chinese and imperialist capital, encouraged by the venal Stalinist bureaucracy, China remains a deformed workers state based on a collectivised economy. It must be defended against capitalist counterrevolution.

In fact, far from having a principled Trotskyist position in regard to the deformed and degenerated workers states, WP has a history of sashaying back and forth across the class line depending on the prevailing political climate and its own political appetites. With widespread popular opposition among South Korean workers and youth to the American military presence and significant sympathy for the North, WP today calls for defence of North Korea. At the time of the Soviet intervention into Afghanistan in 1979, WP took a step to the left, breaking with its Cliffite origins and acknowledging that the Soviet Union was a degenerated workers state. But in the end what was definitive for WP was the anti-Soviet political climate at home. Thus, WP simultaneously joined with the Cliffites and other social-democratic apologists for imperialism in denouncing the Soviet military intervention. By the late 1980s, WP was apologising for anti-Soviet Baltic nationalists and touring Russian fascists in Britain. At the time of Yeltsin's pro-imperialist power grab in August 1991, WP boasted that one of its supporters stood on the barricades of counterrevolution outside Yeltsin's headquarters in Moscow.

Well to the right of WP's current stance on Korea is an Internet statement by the International Bolshevik Tendency (IBT) titled "South Korean Presidential Election: Vote for the DLP!! Oust Its Reformist Leadership!!" (18 December 2002). The IBT was formed two decades ago by a handful of defectors from the Spartacist tendency who couldn't stomach our hard Soviet-defensist line at the height of Ronald Reagan's Cold War II. In its lengthy treatise, the IBT nowhere calls for US troops to get out of South Korea or for the right of North Korea to possess nuclear weapons!

The IBT admits that the DLP's stand for "reunification of the fatherland" would mean capitalist reunification. But this doesn't stop the IBT from giving "critical support" to a party that advocates capitalist counterrevolution. The IBT has a *pro forma* paragraph saying that reunification of Korea under capitalism "would be a defeat for the proletariat internationally" and noting that "the working class should defend North Korea against the designs of the South Korean and international bourgeoisies to plunder the deformed workers' state". At the same time, the IBT waxes eloquent about the supposed virtues of the South Korean rulers' "Sunshine Policy": "The realization of the 'Sunshine policy' would have removed a major justification for the 37,000 U.S. troops stationed in South Korea. It would have brought about economic advantage to the North Korean regime and closer relationships between it and South Korea, Russia, Japan, China and EU member nations." Seven pages

later, the IBT laconically concedes that such policies "aim to exploit Pyongyang's endemic difficulties with the object of capitalist reunification".

However, even its warnings against capitalist reunification are motivated solely by the effect it would have on workers in the capitalist South: "Workers in the South would suffer higher unemployment and suppression of wages, while at the same time bearing the social costs of capitalist reconstruction of the North." It speaks to the IBT's sneering indifference to the fate of the workers state itself that it says not a word about the devastating impact counterrevolution would have on the already impoverished North Korean working masses.

Reforge the Fourth International!

The common hostility of US and Japanese imperialism to the North Korean and Chinese deformed workers states does not moderate inter-imperialist rivalry but on the contrary serves as an arena for its intensification, as they jockey over who would get the spoils in the event of capitalist restoration. The fact that Tokyo is currently seeking to counter Washington's bellicosity towards North Korea with attempts to broker a "normalisation" of relations does not mean that the Japanese bourgeoisie's approach is in any way "peaceful". This was underlined when the Japanese coast guard one year ago sank a North Korean ship in Chinese waters. While certainly not excluding military confrontation, Tokyo is today concentrating on economic penetration of North Korea. Japan is North Korea's second-largest trading partner, and Japanese capitalists are increasingly entrusting production to North Korean plants, where labour costs are low and the quality of work is high.

Revolutionaries in Japan have a special duty to defend the North Korean deformed workers state and to oppose growing Japanese militarism and the bourgeoisie's persecution of Japan's ethnic Korean minority. On 31 December, our comrades of the Spartacist Group Japan (SGJ) joined with other Japanese and Korean leftists at a Tokyo demonstration against the US troops in South Korea. Our comrades raised placards calling for US troops out of South Korea, for the right of China and North Korea to have nuclear weapons, for the unconditional military defence of China and North Korea against Japanese imperialism, and for citizenship rights for Koreans, Chinese and all foreign workers in Japan.

Fundamentally, the defence of those states where capitalism has been overthrown requires the extension of proletarian rule to the advanced capitalist countries. Yet it is this perspective that is not only alien but anathema to the nationalist bureaucratic castes that rule in North Korea and China. The Stalinist bureaucrats in Pyongyang and Beijing fear that socialist revolution in South Korea and Japan would quickly inspire proletarian political revolutions that would result in their forced evacuation from their positions of privilege and power. Likewise, a political revolution in China or North Korea would have an enormous impact on South Korea and Japan, the industrial powerhouse of Asia.

What is needed above all is the forging of internationalist proletarian parties around the world. For our part, the Spartacist League/Britain fights to build a revolutionary workers party—part of a reformed Fourth International—that can lead the multiethnic proletariat in socialist revolution to sweep away British imperialism as part of the struggle to overthrow capitalism across the world. Adapted from *Workers Vanguard* no 795, 17 January 2003.

WORKERS HAMMER

Mass protests in South Korea— US troops out!

Defend North Korea's right to nuclear weapons!

JANUARY 17— In the face of Washington's diktats, as revolutionary Marxists we call on the international proletariat to stand for the unconditional military defence of the North Korean deformed workers state against imperialism. This crucially includes the right of North Korea to develop nuclear weapons to defend itself against the American nuclear cowboys. With the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union in 1991-92, which removed a vital military counterweight to US imperialism, America's rulers feel free from all constraints to strut around like the unchallenged masters of the world. Had the former Soviet Union not possessed its nuclear arsenal, the US imperialists could very well have turned countries like North Korea and China— countries where capitalist rule has been overthrown— into irradiated rubble.

Last year, Bush declared that North Korea was part of an "axis of evil", and a few months later the Pentagon published a "Nuclear Posture Review" that openly targets that country along with China, Iraq and others for a potential nuclear first strike. It was patently clear that North Korea was next on US imperialism's hit list after Iraq. After the Pyongyang regime pulled out of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty earlier this month, demanding that Washington resume suspended shipments of fuel oil and begin talks on a "non-aggression" treaty, the *Financial Times* (12 January) quoted a South Korean official who aptly noted: "North Korea is clearly signalling that it wants the US to address these issues now before an Iraqi war starts. The North realises that if the US succeeds in Iraq, it could confront a more aggressive US."

At the same time, we note that the Bush administration's stated intention of pursuing "peaceful diplomacy" with North Korea exposes the utter hypocrisy of its pretext for war against Iraq. While North Korea has kicked out arms inspectors and openly proclaims its right to develop nuclear weaponry, nearly 200,000 US and British troops are already being deployed to wage war against Iraq, which denies possession of any nuclear or biological weapons and has allowed United Nations weapons inspectors in.

The North Korean deformed workers state emerged following the liberation of the northern half of the Korean peninsula from 35 years of Japanese colonialism. Following World War II, Korea was partitioned between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in the north and the Republic of Korea in the south, a capitalist police state under American military occupation. Before the outbreak of the 1950-53 Korean War, the South was swept by massive peasant revolts, and when North Korean forces moved in to reunify the country in 1950, they were greeted as liberators. In a failed attempt to destroy North Korea as well as the 1949 Chinese Revolution, US and British imperialists devastated the penin-

Imperialists: Hands off North Korea!



14 December 2002: Hundreds of thousands protest in Seoul in candle-lit vigil against presence of 37,000 US troops.

sula in the Korean War, killing *more than three million people* and obliterating whole cities, including Pyongyang. Following Chinese military intervention, the war ended in a stalemate at the 38th parallel, and ever since the US has maintained a massive military presence in the South, while North Korea has been subjected to decades of imperialist military encirclement and a starvation embargo.

Despite the rule of a nationalist Stalinist bureaucracy, the overthrow of capitalism in the North was a historic defeat for imperialism and a victory for the working people of Asia and the world. North Korea's planned, collectivised economy brought real advances to its working people, significantly outperforming the South until the mid-1970s and creating a modern industrial infrastructure. At the same time, the situation of a nation bifurcated by a "demilitarised zone" packed with more weaponry per square metre than any place on earth severely distorted the economy in the North. Particularly in the aftermath of the collapse of the Soviet Union, which provided the vast bulk of military and technological aid to North Korea, the situation became dire. In 1992, China cut off shipments of cheap oil to the North as a concession to obtain diplomatic and economic relations with South Korea. Starting in 1995, the country was hit by natural disasters producing a famine of historic proportions.

The disastrous situation in the North has been compounded by the extreme form of economic autarky pushed by the North Korean bureaucracy under the rubric of *Juche* (self-reliance). The political outlook of the bureaucracy was and is rooted in the Stalinist lie that socialism—a classless, egalitarian society based on material abundance— can be built in one or even half a country. This anti-working-class, nationalist dogma undermines defence of what remains of the collectiv-

ised economy and is counterposed to any perspective for international socialist revolution, and particularly to a struggle for workers revolution in the South.

Today, North Korea is ruled by a particularly cultish, nepotistic and bizarre Stalinist regime centred on "Dear Leader" Kim Jong Il. The only road forward for the beleaguered working masses of the North is through the perspective of international socialist revolution. Capitalist counterrevolution can only bring even more extreme hardship and misery to the people of North Korea. Anyone who doubts that can cast a glance at the devastating statistics of life in post-Soviet Russia. By every measure of human progress— infant mortality, life expectancy, income, literacy—the diverse peoples of the former Soviet Union have been brutally hurled back. And given the present economic and industrial backwardness of North Korea, the effects of capitalist restoration there could only be far worse. What is desperately needed is the forging of a Leninist-Trotskyist party to lead the struggle for the *revolutionary reunification of Korea*— for socialist revolution in the South and workers political revolution to oust the Stalinist bureaucrats in the North. The fight for revolutionary reunification must be linked to the struggle for proletarian political revolution in China and the extension of proletarian power to Japan, the industrial heartland of Asia.

A central aim of the imperialists remains the restoration of capitalism in those countries where it was overthrown— mainly China but also North Korea as well as Vietnam and Cuba. For its part, China's ruling bureaucracy has repeatedly emphasised agreement with the imperialists' demands for a "non-nuclear Korean peninsula", and has sought to lean on the Pyongyang regime to "moderate" its policies. Such criminal

appeasement, denying North Korea the right to defend itself by acquiring nuclear weapons, simply emboldens the rapacious imperialists in their drive to foment counterrevolution in China itself.

In today's world, where the nuclear madmen in Washington— with full support from Blair's Labour government— declare their "right" to carry out "pre-emptive" strikes against anyone at any time, the only measure of real sovereignty left is possession of nukes. Indeed, we regret that North Korea's current facilities for nuclear development are exceedingly modest.

South Korea: mass protests against US troops

Increased US belligerence towards North Korea comes in the context of unprecedented mass demonstrations in South Korea against the presence of 37,000 American troops in that country. The protests were touched off after soldiers driving an American armoured personnel carrier killed two schoolgirls during a training exercise last summer, then escalated when a US military court acquitted the soldiers. Hundreds of thousands gathered in Seoul and other cities in early December for the largest anti-American demonstrations in the country's history. The wave of protests formed the backdrop to that month's presidential elections, which were won by Roh Moo Hyun, who beat the US-backed candidate by pledging to renegotiate South Korea's military pact with the US.

The substantial US military presence in South Korea is not only a dagger aimed at the North Korean and Chinese deformed workers states but an assertion of American interests in the region against potential rivals in Asia, chiefly Japan. It also serves as a warning to South Korea's combative union movement, threatening to drown in blood any challenge to the capitalist order. From its suppression of the "autumn harvest" rising in 1946 to orchestrating the bloody Kwangju massacre of 1980, in which some 2000 people were killed to put down an insurrectionary revolt, the US military has been a key force for counterrevolutionary repression on the peninsula.

During the Cold War, the US as well as Japan aided in the rapid economic growth of South Korea as an anti-Communist bulwark against North Korea, China and the Soviet Union. With the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union in 1991-92, the interests of the US in the peninsula have shifted. Counterrevolution in North Korea remains one of its goals, but a stronger South Korean bourgeoisie is not. When South Korea's rulers pleaded for assistance from Washington and Tokyo during the 1997 Asian financial crisis, they had the door slammed in their faces. Indeed, the door to the imperialists' elite club was slammed shut by the 1890s and not since

continued on page 11