

The Workers International League: Who We Are and What We Fight For

We have entered the most convulsive period in history since the end of the Second World War. The terrorist attacks in New York and Washington, DC, the “war on terrorism”, the quagmire in Iraq, the massive job losses and stagnating economy entirely confirm this perspective. Overnight the entire world situation seems to have been turned upside down. Far from the “new economic paradigm” we were promised of endless growth, jobs, and prosperity, we are faced with war, terror, paranoia, attacks on our wages and conditions, attacks on our civil rights, and on and on. Politically, economically, and socially, the capitalist system is in crisis and millions of people are looking for a solution to improve their conditions of life. The events of the past few years has already dramatically shaken people’s consciousness, and they are more and more open to the ideas of scientific socialism. And this is only the beginning. Due to the inherent instability and crisis of the capitalist system, even more momentous events are on the horizon.

Revolutionary movements have erupted in Argentina, Venezuela, Bolivia, and elsewhere, and the process of revolution is not yet finished. In one country after another, the working class and poor have had enough with cuts and attacks of the ruling class. As far-fetched as it may seem to some, even the United States cannot avoid a revolutionary explosion in the future. Events internationally will have a powerful influence on events here in the US. In an epoch of global capitalism and global economic crisis, global revolution is also on the agenda.

But getting the ideas of Marxism across and building an alternative to capitalism will require serious organization on a national and international scale. There is a pressing need for a nation-wide organization in the US which can unite the best elements of youth and labor in the struggle for socialism. In the summer of 2001, a small group of American Marxists, in full political solidarity with the ideas of the *In Defence of Marxism* website (www.marxist.com), formed the Workers International League. The most important result of this founding congress was the formulation of our program. As explained in Alan Woods’ *Bolshevism: the Road to Revolution*:

“A party is not just an organizational form, a name, a banner, a collection of individuals, or an apparatus. A revolutionary party, for a Marxist, is in the first place program, methods, ideas and traditions and only in the second place, an organization and an apparatus (important as these undoubtedly are) in order to carry these ideas to the broadest layers of the working people. The Marxist party, from the very beginning, must base itself on theory and program, which is the summing up of the general historical ex-

perience of the proletariat. Without this, it is nothing. The building of a revolutionary party always begins with the slow and painstaking work of assembling and educating the cadres, which forms the backbone of the party throughout its entire lifetime.”

The US working class has a proud and militant tradition. We look to the accumulated experiences of the American working class - the great railroad strikes, the mine wars, the formation of the Teamsters and the CIO, the Flint sit down strikes, and more for inspiration. We rest on the traditions of William Sylvis, Albert Parsons, Mother Jones, Joe Hill, Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, Big Bill Haywood, Eugene Debs, John Reed, Louise Bryant, and the millions of rank and file workers who led and participated in the great struggles of the past. And we are confident that the greatest days of the US labor movement are still to come. We also base ourselves on the ideas of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky, and on the further development of these ideas by the supporters of the *In Defence of Marxism* website. The ideas of scientific socialism have been tarnished in the minds of millions by the horrific experience of Stalinism and the continued lies and distortions of the ruling class. We believe that Stalinism was a historical aberration and a criminal totalitarian caricature of genuine socialism. We fight for international socialism, where the world working class has full democratic control over the means of production, distribution, and exchange, in harmony with the environment. Without democracy there can be no socialism! A workers’ government in the US would take over the vast wealth now owned by just a handful of individuals and democratically use it in the interests of everyone.

Our newspaper, *Socialist Appeal*, which was the name of the first Trotskyist paper in the United States, fights to defend and re-establish the ideas of revolutionary Marxism and Trotskyism in the United States. We invite you to subscribe to, sell, and read the printed version of our paper. You can also visit us online at www.socialistappeal.org. The times are changing quickly, and earth-shaking events are on the order of the day. The ideas of scientific socialism are as vibrant and valid as ever - even more so. But we lack the numbers and resources to take full advantage of the opportunities which will open up in the coming period. We must redouble our efforts to ensure that the tremendous fighting potential of the working class is channeled into the socialist transformation of society. We invite all workers and youth who are in agreement with the ideas expressed in *Socialist Appeal*, and who are serious about building a revolutionary Marxist alternative to capitalism to contact us about working with or joining the WIL.



SOCIALIST UNION
APPEAL YES

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www.socialistappeal.org

Our Program: What We Fight For

For the right to strike, union representation, and collective bargaining

Repeal all anti-union laws including Taft-Hartley. End compulsory arbitration and the victimization of trade unionists and those forming new unions. Unionize now!

For trade union democracy

All union officials to be regularly elected with the right of immediate recall by the membership. All officials to receive the average wage of a skilled worker, plus vetted expenses.

For a mass party of labor based on the unions to power with class-independent and socialist policies

The labor movement must break with the Democrats! Gain genuine support by adopting socialist policies that can really answer the needs and aspirations of workers and youth. For a fighting program against the attacks of big business and the bosses' political parties.

Full employment and housing

For a 30 hour work-week with no loss of pay. Abolish temporary employment agencies. The right to a secure full-time job, full benefits, or a place in education. Union control over hiring and firing! For voluntary retirement at age 55 with full retirement benefits for all. No lay-offs! No to privatization! Eradicate homelessness. For a massive program of public works to rebuild our infrastructure and provide quality housing for all.

A living wage for all

A national minimum wage of at least two-thirds of the average wage. No exceptions. For a sliding scale of wages tied to inflation.

Free, quality health care for all

For a nationally-funded, single-payer, socialized health care system. Abolish private health care and HMOs. Full access to the latest medical technology, treatments, and discoveries. Free science from the dead hand of corporate greed. Massively fund research and treatment for AIDS, cancer and other curable and preventable diseases. Nationalize the pharmaceuticals giants that squeeze their profits out of the health of working people.

Free, quality, education for all

Fund our schools and colleges. End corporate encroachment into the classroom. End tuition fees and loans, for living grants and life-long learning for all. No to privatization of our public schools and universities! No to vouchers!

Outlaw all forms of discrimination

Equal pay for equal work. For equality of the

sexes. Invest in quality child care, housing and domestic facilities for all. For full reproductive rights including abortion. End all racist immigration and asylum controls. Full rights and amnesty to immigrant workers and their families. Place police under democratic public control and end racist law enforcement. No to police racism and brutality! End the phony war on drugs in the US and internationally. Abolish the death penalty and release all political prisoners. Defend our civil liberties. No to attacks on our civil rights in the name of the "war on terrorism"! Mobilize the labor movement to combat racism! Workers' unity is the way forward!

A socialized plan of production for agriculture and natural resources

Protect the environment and jobs. End the anarchy of the market in the resource industry. Nationalize the food distribution giants and agri-chemical companies that destroy farmers' livelihoods. Initiate a voluntary socialized plan of production for farming that would protect farmers' jobs and security.

Nationalization of the commanding heights of the economy: the top 150 banks and corporations

Break with the anarchy of the capitalist free market. No compensation to the millionaires, only to those in genuine need. For the democratization and nationalization of the resources to print and broadcast information, free from censorship. All nationalized enterprises to be run by workers' control and management and integrated through a democratic, socialist plan of production.

Action to protect the environment

Only public ownership of the land, major industries, oil, mining and logging companies, energy and transport, can form the basis of a genuine socialist approach to the environment. Socialist planning would ensure democratic control of production, using all available information and technology. Environmental plans would be measured in generations, not fiscal quarters!

Socialist Internationalism

Pull out of WTO, NAFTA, MAI and other bankers' deals that are the tools of imperialist exploitation. No to the World Bank and International Monetary Fund! No to the FTAA! Cut the military budget and strike back against imperialism and militarism. No to the war on working people at home and abroad! Nationalize the industrial giants and unite with Canadian and Mexican workers. For a Socialist Federation of the Americas as part of a World Socialist Federation!

Contact the WIL

For more information on joining or working with the WIL please send your contact information to our national office. For information on local meetings and activities, please contact the WIL in your area.

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