

For Class Struggle Against Capitalist Reaction!



Labour protest in Vancouver, May Day 2004. Inset: Federal party leaders at pre-election debate.

www.nefac.net

Hayward/CP

NDP in Bed With Bosses' Parties

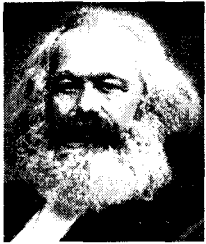
After ousting the scandal-ridden Liberals in the January 23 federal election, Stephen Harper's new Conservative government is preparing to escalate the attacks of the capitalist ruling class on workers, women, minorities and the poor. Among the first items on the Tories' agenda are canceling the national childcare program, ramping up "law and order" racism against black youth and moving to overturn legal gay marriage. More broadly, they aim to make Canadian capital-

ism more "competitive" by further savaging the working class and dismantling social programs, notably medicare.

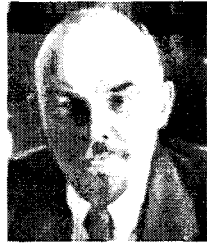
The Tory cabinet is full of hard-right ideologues including veterans of the former Ontario Conservative regime of Mike Harris, whose slash-and-burn onslaught on social services devastated the lives of hundreds of thousands. Harper's caucus is also rife with religious reactionaries who think homosexuality is a plot to destroy the "traditional family" and that the Christian bible contains the last word in science. The Tories promise to align Canada's foreign and "security" policies even more

(continued on page 8)

Down With Anglo Chauvinism—Independence for Quebec!



Marx



Lenin



Trotsky

The Fraud of Bourgeois Democracy

The reformist left pushes the lie that the Canadian capitalist state can be made to represent the interests of working people and the oppressed by means of pressure campaigns or tinkering with the composition of the bourgeois parliament. But parliamentary democracy is only a fig leaf for the class dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. The calls raised by the trade-union bureaucracy and its "left" tails to give political support to the pro-capitalist NDP and even the bourgeois Liberals are flagrantly counterposed to advancing the struggles of the working class, which requires a revolutionary perspective of overthrowing the capitalist state. In his 1918 polemic against German social democrat Karl Kautsky, V.I. Lenin, leader of the October 1917 Russian Revolution that established the first workers state in history, unmasked the fraud of bourgeois "democracy," counterposing to it the proletarian democracy of the early Soviet workers republic.

It is obvious that we cannot speak of "pure democracy" as long as different *classes* exist; we can only speak of *class* democracy. (Let us say in parenthesis that "pure democracy" is not only an *ignorant* phrase, revealing a lack of understanding both of the class struggle and of the nature of the state, but also a thrice-empty phrase, since in communist society democracy will *wither away* in the process of changing and becoming a habit, but will never be "pure" democracy.)

"Pure democracy" is the mendacious phrase of a liberal who wants to fool the workers. History knows of bourgeois democracy which takes the place of feudalism, and of proletarian democracy which takes the place of bourgeois democracy....

Bourgeois democracy, although a great historical advance in comparison with medievalism, always remains, and under capitalism is bound to remain, restricted, truncated, false and hypocritical, a paradise for the rich and a snare and deception for the exploited, for the poor. It is this truth, which forms a most essential part of Marx's teaching, that Kautsky the

"Marxist" has failed to understand. On this—the fundamental issue—Kautsky offers "delights" for the bourgeoisie instead of a scientific criticism of those conditions which make every bourgeois democracy a democracy for the rich....

Take the fundamental laws of modern states, take their administration, take freedom of assembly, freedom of the press, or "equality of all citizens before the law," and you will see at every turn evidence of the hypocrisy of bourgeois democracy with which every honest and class-conscious worker is familiar. There is not a single state, however democratic, which has no loopholes or reservations in its constitution guaranteeing the bourgeoisie the possibility of dispatching troops against the workers, of proclaiming martial law, and so forth, in case of a "violation of public order," and actually in case the exploited class "violates" its position of slavery and tries to behave in a non-slavish manner. Kautsky shamelessly embellishes bourgeois democracy and omits to mention, for instance, how the most democratic and republican bourgeoisie in America or Switzerland deal with workers on strike....

Under bourgeois democracy the capitalists, by thousands of tricks—which are the more artful and effective the more "pure" democracy is developed—*drive* the people away from administrative work, from freedom of the press, freedom of assembly, etc. The Soviet government is the *first* in the world (or strictly speaking, the second, because the Paris Commune began to do the same thing) to *enlist* the people, specifically the *exploited* people, in the work of administration. The working people are *barred* from participation in bourgeois parliaments (they *never decide* important questions under bourgeois democracy, which are decided by the stock exchange and the banks) by thousands of obstacles, and the workers know and feel, see and realise perfectly well that the bourgeois parliaments are institutions *alien* to them, *instruments for the oppression* of the workers by the bourgeoisie, institutions of a hostile class, of the exploiting minority.

—V.I. Lenin, *The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky* (1918)

Subscribe Now to Spartacist Canada/Workers Vanguard!

- \$15 joint *Spartacist Canada/Workers Vanguard* subscription
 - \$3/4 issues of *Spartacist Canada* (overseas airmail \$8)
 - \$14/21 issues of *Workers Vanguard*, biweekly newspaper of the Spartacist League/U.S.
 - \$5/4 issues of *Le Bolchévique* (includes French-language *Spartacist*)
- SC and WV subscriptions include English-language *Spartacist*.
WV subscriptions also include *Black History and the Class Struggle*.

Name _____

Address _____

_____ Apt. _____

City _____ Prov. _____

Postal Code _____ Ph. _____

Order from/pay to: Spartacist Canada Publishing Association,
Box 6867, Station A, Toronto ON M5W 1X6

SC148

SPARTACIST CANADA

Newspaper of the Trotskyist League/Ligue trotskyste
Canadian section of the International Communist League
(Fourth Internationalist)

Editorial Board: C. Galarneau, Tynan Maddalena, John Masters,
Miriam McDonald (Editor), Jon Seville (Editor, Young Spartacus pages),
Russell Stoker (Production Manager)

Circulation Manager: C. Galarneau

Published four times a year by Spartacist Canada Publishing Association,
Box 6867, Station A, Toronto ON M5W 1X6. Opinions expressed in signed
articles or letters do not necessarily express the editorial viewpoint.

Printed in a union shop by union labour.

Publications Agreement No. 40050911 ISSN: 0229-5415
Spring 2006 Date of issue: February 2006

Court Battle Looms

Mumia Abu-Jamal Is an Innocent Man Free Him Now!



Jennifer Beach

The following is reprinted from Workers Vanguard (No. 862, 20 January), newspaper of the Spartacist League/U.S.

The fight for freedom for Mumia Abu-Jamal, America's foremost class-war prisoner, has reached a critical juncture. On 6 December 2005, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit in Pennsylvania ordered Mumia's legal team to file his appeals brief by January 17. The possible outcome of this appeal could range from overturning his conviction and granting a new trial, or mandating new hearings on his constitutional claims, to reinstating the death sentence, paving the way for a new death warrant.

Mumia Abu-Jamal was convicted on demonstrably false charges of killing Philadelphia police officer Daniel Faulkner on 9 December 1981. As an outspoken journalist and supporter of the MOVE organization, he was known as "the voice of the voiceless." In 1982 Mumia was sentenced to die explicitly for his political views and his past membership in the Black Panther Party. His case must become a focal point of struggle against the capitalist "justice" system and its death penalty—a legacy of black chattel slavery that exposes the naked brutality of this class-divided and racially segregated society. The execution of Stanley Tookie Williams in California last month signaled the rulers' intention to carry out Mumia's execution and to speed up the machinery of legal lynching. In denying Williams clemency, California governor Schwarzenegger cited the fact that Williams had dedicated his 1998 book, *Life in Prison*, to Mumia, Nelson Mandela, Malcolm X and others. **Abolish the racist death penalty!**

In December 2001, U.S. District Court judge William Yohn threw out Mumia's death sentence but left the conviction intact despite mountains of evidence of his innocence. Prosecutors are appealing to reinstate the death sentence. Mumia's lawyers have continued to add to the evidence of innocence, most importantly Arnold Beverly's confession that he shot the Philadelphia police officer for whose killing Jamal was falsely convicted. But the courts have repeatedly refused to allow Beverly's confession to be heard because it would expose the fact that Mumia's conviction was an intentional frame-up of an innocent man.

Due to the Antiterrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act signed by Democrat Bill Clinton in 1996, which dramati-

cally cut back the rights of state prisoners to appeal their cases in federal court, the appeals court is not required to consider all of Mumia's claims. One issue it will hear is the racist jury-rigging in the 1982 trial, where Philadelphia prosecutor Joseph McGill struck at least 10 of 14 eligible black jurors. Of the two black people who made it onto the jury, one black woman was removed during the trial by judge Albert Sabo.

Of the two additional issues the court is allowing, one is the outrageous bias of Judge Sabo. Mumia's legal papers have repeatedly challenged the bias of this racist "prosecutor in robes," which infected every stage of the trial, from blocking important evidence of innocence and saddling Mumia with an incompetent lawyer to barring him from the courtroom for days. Court stenographer Terri Maurer-Carter came forward in 2001 to reveal that during the period of the trial she overheard Sabo say, referring to Mumia, "I'm going to help 'em fry the n---r."

Mumia's post-conviction appeals from 1995 to 1997 were assigned back to Sabo, allowing him to "judge" the fairness of his own conduct. Throughout the post-conviction proceedings, Sabo interfered with Mumia's presentation of new evidence and declared all of the defense witnesses "incredible," with the intent of shielding evidence of his innocence from further court review. The federal appeals court is only hearing the issue of Sabo's bias during the post-conviction hearings and not of the bias so vividly displayed at the original trial.

The other issue the court will hear is McGill's closing argument to the jury, which erased the "reasonable doubt" standard. In effect, McGill argued that jurors should convict Mumia despite any doubts they had, because "If you find the Defendant guilty, of course, there would be appeal after appeal and perhaps there could be a reversal of the case, or whatever, so that may not be final." In earlier death penalty cases, the Pennsylvania Supreme Court had overruled the same arguments by the same prosecutor. But in this case the court and the prosecutors applied "Mumia rules" in their effort to railroad him.

The urgent need to mobilize the social power of organized labor and its allies for Mumia's freedom was a central theme of the Partisan Defense Committee's 20th annual Holiday

(continued on page 13)

Labour: Fight Attacks on Immigrants, Minorities!

Racist "Crime" Hysteria in Toronto

TORONTO—For months, the cops and the capitalist media have been whipping up an "anti-crime" campaign over "gang violence" among black youth. This went into overdrive when a young white woman, 15-year-old Jane Creba, was shot and killed on Boxing Day, apparently caught in the crossfire while shopping in the city's downtown. The Tories, Liberals and NDP cynically manipulated Creba's tragic death, outbidding each other in calls for a "law and order" crackdown during the federal election campaign.

Federal NDP leader Jack Layton railed that anyone found with restricted firearms should get at least four years in jail, and demanded that "bolstered police task forces" be sent to "go after gangs." NDP mayor David Miller repeated his pledge to put 300 more cops on the streets, adding: "We have to ensure that anyone who has a gun is arrested and brought to justice and put in prison and stays there" (*Globe and Mail*, 31 December 2005).

A columnist for a local community paper, Stuart Green, captured the racist subtext to the whole crusade:

"Until the shootout on Yonge Street that took Creba's life, the 50-plus gun murders were largely confined to pockets of the city known as impoverished or troubled and the victims were predominantly young black men, possibly with gang ties....

"Most Torontonians didn't know those kind of people and would never choose to visit one of those neighbourhoods....

"All of a sudden those same Torontonians saw one of 'us' killed in one of 'our' parts of town. And all of a sudden everyone was outraged, shocked and demanding action."

—Villager/*Annex Guardian*, 6 January

The media and politicians talk of a "violent subculture" among Jamaican Canadian youth, and use this racist stereotype to foment anti-immigrant bigotry. But the fact is *there is no crime wave*, either in Toronto or nationally. The latest Canada-wide figures available, for 2004, show that while the homicide rate rose slightly that year, this was after hitting a 30-year low in 2003. The 78 murders committed in Toronto in 2005 were 12 percent fewer than the peak year, 1991, when the city was much smaller. And Toronto's homicide rate was lower in 2004 than cities like Winnipeg, Edmonton and Calgary, where immigrants and minorities are a much smaller proportion of the population.

The phony "Toronto crime wave" played excellently in small-town Canada, where the Tory vote was strongest. Yet Statistics Canada revealed that the 2004 murder rate was *higher* in rural areas than metropolitan ones, commenting that this was "typical." Last year, rural Alberta had more homicides than Edmonton, despite that city's record high. Most were listed as the result of "domestic disputes." In other words, statistically you're more likely to be bludgeoned to death by a relative at the cottage than shot by a gangbanger in the city.

Yet the focus on "gun crime" is no accident. The ruling class, a tiny propertied minority that maintains its rule through coercion, seeks to monopolize the possession of weapons. That means concentrating armed force in the hands of the police, the capitalists' direct agents for enforcing "law



Lautens/Toronto Star

Sinister Toronto police association rally on November 2 included hundreds of armed cops.

and order" against workers and the oppressed. As Marxists, we champion the right of the population to bear arms and to utilize the right of self-defense. We oppose Canada's already highly restrictive gun laws as well as moves to further limit access to firearms. As for "crime," one real one is the fact that Canadian prisons are filled with huge numbers of Natives and black people, locked up for the flimsiest of reasons or no reason at all.

Mass Unemployment and Racist Scapegoating

Reality for black youth in Toronto is constant harassment and violence at the hands of the cops. Driving a nice car, or even an ordinary one, is virtually a guarantee of being stopped, searched and ticketed—or beaten. Much of the police brutality against black youth is carried out in the name of the "war on drugs." The issue here isn't drug use: whites partake of recreational drugs as much as blacks. The "war on drugs" battle cry is intended to give the cops license to stage raids, make sweeping arrests and otherwise terrorize the population of the city's heavily-minority inner suburbs.

We oppose the criminalization of "crimes without victims"—drugs, prostitution and consensual sex including between adults and youth. The state has no business dictating what anyone does with his or her own body. The rulers' "war on drugs" also serves to make the "illicit" drug trade all the more profitable. This brings increased violence stemming from competition among "gangs," be they the various

Letter

Ontario Liberals Savage Health Care

Toronto
February 6, 2006

Dear comrades,

This is a short summary on the current attacks that the Liberal government is carrying out on healthcare workers and sick people in Ontario.

Some of you may be familiar with the proposed LHIN Act (Local Health Integration Networks) "method" which will "plan, co-ordinate and fund health care services" across Ontario. Although the Act has not yet passed, many hospitals are already following its mandate, since it gives the administration tools to attack their workers. So far the development and endorsement of this proposal has cost over \$100 million. It was developed without any consultation or communication with workers, patient groups or unions (not as if that would make any difference). It will appoint 14 regional boards, which will spend 2/3 of the province's healthcare budget. However, its real objectives are union busting and, to make an already degenerated healthcare system even more ineffective, creating an environment that will assist the government to further privatize Ontario health care. In the interests of "efficiency," individual hospitals will reduce the range of services offered, focusing only on those that they have been ordered to provide by the LHIN committee. As a result, patients must travel even greater distances for simple medical procedures. This raises obstacles for patients, particularly the elderly, immobile and poor.

Basically, a LHIN committee is appointed for each geographic region, and the hospitals in that region will compete with each other for government funding. The committee is responsible to the government, not to the community that the hospitals serve. The mandate is to reduce costs, not improve patient care. Hospitals are financially rewarded

for spending as *little* as possible on health care. Hospitals will spend the LHIN money on non-clinical, non-patient functions such as management and administrative policing of nurses and other healthcare providers.

Already cafeteria, housekeeping, and portering services are being contracted out to low-paid non-unionized workers. Nurses who vacate a position are being replaced with non-unionized middle management "professionals." Under the LHIN Act, hospitals can force workers to justify the financial cost of their position, as opposed to the needed service that they provide to sick people. Basically, health care has lost its clinical mandate. It's no wonder that hospitals are also hiring more security guards to deal with angry patients and their families.

Hospitals will make more money by admitting patients today and discharging them tomorrow, since there would be very little left over for the administrators if patients were to actually receive adequate treatment. So patients are discharged before they get well. Doctors are punished if their counterparts in other hospitals are discharging their patients in fewer days. Hospital statisticians do not even look at readmission rates, they focus more on length of stay.

However, the Ontario Medical Association (professional association for doctors) endorsed the LHIN Act, presumably because of the rewards for those doctors who are most successful in reducing lengths of stay.

The leaders of the Ontario Nurses' Association and other healthcare unions are opposing these attacks by appealing to the very government that is implementing them. But what is actually needed is for all workers to take a stand in defense of socialized health care. Under capitalism, health care is tied to profit. Only a socialist society is capable of providing free quality health care for all. Therefore, it is in the interests of all workers to build a workers party that will lead the fight for socialism.

An Ontario nurse

mafias, biker gangs or groups of street traffickers—or the cops, who are themselves often knee-deep in the drug and sex trades.

It is the capitalist ruling class that makes life cheap and dangerous by keeping whole communities in desperate economic straits, to be used as cheap labour in times of need, then thrown on the scrapheap when the economy turns sour. Substantial numbers of immigrants from Jamaica and other poor "Third World" countries were finally able to come to Canada after the rulers ended their racist colour bar in the 1960s. They used to find employment in the factories of King Street, the Lakeshore and the Junction. Those are gone, transformed into lofts and condos for the upwardly-mobile yuppie crowd created by the parasitic financial, insurance and marketing concerns.

In January alone, more than 40,000 industrial jobs—often unionized and relatively well-paid—disappeared in Canada, mainly in Southern Ontario. In their place are, at best, part-time, poorly paid, demeaning McJobs in the service industry. The collapse of industry hits minority youth particularly hard. Statistics from 1996 from Toronto City Council show that black youth of 15 to 24 years had a jobless rate of about 38 percent, double that of whites in the same age group. This is likely even worse today, as overall youth

unemployment reached a ten-year high last year. These deteriorating conditions underlie the desperation and violence found in areas like Malvern, Jamestown and Jane-Finch, where many of the recent shooting deaths of black youth have occurred.

Labour Must Oppose Racist Police Terror!

Hysteria over "black crime" was central to the Toronto Police Association's campaign for a new contract with the city last fall. This included the usual array of intimidation and threats, and culminated in a 4,000-strong demonstration by the police "union" on November 2. Contingents of cops, many armed and in uniform, paraded through the streets waving "Get tough on crime, not tough on cops" placards. The provincial and city governments responded by promising to hire yet more cops.

The same police who rampage against black youth are used against strikers on picket lines, against any social struggle that threatens capitalist order and private property. It is in the direct interest of Toronto's multiracial labour movement to oppose the cops' anti-crime crusade, and to defend their victims among the specially oppressed. This includes defending minority youth against racist cop terror and fighting for full

(continued on page 12)

Young Spartacus

Afghanistan, Haiti: All Canadian Troops, Cops Out Now!

MAWO Honours Imperialist Top Cop

VANCOUVER—For the last two years Vancouver's Mobilization Against War and Occupation (MAWO) has postured as an alternative to the flagrantly Canadian nationalist Stop-War.ca coalition. We always said this was a fraud, and their recent antics have really driven this home. On 26 November 2005, MAWO issued a statement calling for "TWO Emergency Picket Lines" to protest, not imperialist brutality in Afghanistan, but the "tragic death" of *one* Canadian soldier there. The headline of their press release read: "Protest the death of Canadian Soldier Braun Scott Woodfield" and added, "B.C. mourns Canadian Soldier Killed in Afghanistan."

A month later, MAWO met the killing in Haiti of "retired" RCMP officer Mark Bourque with still greater lamentations. Bourque was a member of the "special elections team" of 25 Canadian ex-cops, an adjunct to the 125-strong RCMP force that is part of the brutal racist United Nations occupation there. Yet, equating the enforcers of imperialist depredation with their victims, MAWO bemoaned his death as "another senseless and tragic loss on top of the thousands of Haitian lives that have already been lost through the occupation of Haiti" (20 December 2005 press release). Incredibly, MAWO even called to "honour the life of Mark Bourque" who, as head of security at the 2002 G-8 meeting of imperialist leaders in Kananaskis, Alberta, led the largest peacetime security operation in Canadian history against leftist protesters.

MAWO's obscene salute to this ex-RCMP officer and their sympathy for the imperialist forces whose crushing occupation has cost untold thousands of Afghan lives are the antithesis of anti-imperialism. At bottom, this demonstrates MAWO's reformism and ultimate loyalty to this country's racist ruling class. Equating oppressed and oppressor is part and parcel of MAWO's conception that everyone can become part of their "movement against occupation." Likewise, their call to "Bring the Troops Home Now" is a social-patriotic demand meant to engender in opponents of the Afghanistan occupation a false sense of common interest with the imperialist armed forces, while concealing their murderous role.

As revolutionary internationalists, the Spartacus Youth Clubs welcome blows suffered by our "own" ruling class in its neocolonial adventures. Such setbacks to the imperialists coincide with the interests of the working class and all the oppressed. The armed forces are the instrument of imperialist occupation and conquest, and the enforcers of the capitalist system of exploitation. Along with the police and prison guards, they constitute, in the words of Russian Bolshevik leader V.I. Lenin, "the armed bodies of men" that defend private property and capitalist class rule. They are the core of the capitalist state, breaking strikes, enforcing the national

subjugation of Quebec, persecuting Natives and spying on immigrants and leftists. They cannot serve the interests of the working class or oppressed anywhere. The SYC stands for the working class smashing the capitalist state through socialist revolution, the only way to end imperialist war once and for all.

In both Afghanistan and Haiti, Canadian military interventions serve to uphold the predatory interests of their senior



Abassi/Reuters

Canadian cops, part of brutal, racist UN occupation force of Haiti.

partners in Washington. In the last year, the Canadian imperialists have adopted a more flagrantly bellicose posture in Afghanistan, where the Canadian forces are propping up the warlord-infested U.S. puppet government. Canada's generals speak openly of bloody offensive actions in the Kandahar region, where 2,200 fresh troops are arriving as Canada prepares to assume command of the NATO brigade headquarters. In Haiti, Canada joined the U.S. and France in ousting the president, Jean-Bertrand Aristide, in 2004, and its cops are part of the UN's ongoing occupation force. Whenever the Canadian imperialists intervene abroad, including when this is cloaked as "peacekeeping," they do so to uphold neocolonial oppression. Canadian troops, cops: out of Afghanistan and Haiti now!

In our interventions at antiwar protests and forums, the SYC has fought tooth and nail against the pernicious myth that the Canadian rulers are more benevolent and peace-loving than their U.S. counterparts. From the start of the military buildup against first Afghanistan and later Iraq, we said these were wars of imperialist aggression on the part of the U.S. and its allies. We called to defend these desperately

poor neocolonial countries against imperialism while giving absolutely no political support to the Afghan Taliban fanatics or Iraq's bloody dictator Saddam Hussein.

Today, insofar as the disparate Iraqi "resistance" forces target the imperialists and their lackeys, we call for their military defense against the imperialist occupiers. At the same time, we oppose the murderous communal violence against ethnic, religious and national populations, often carried out by the same forces fighting the occupation. We take a parallel stance in Afghanistan with regard to the woman-hating Taliban and Al-Qaeda fanatics, remnants of the U.S.'s cutthroat *mujahedin* allies against the former Soviet Union's wholly progressive intervention in the 1980s. Throughout, we have emphasized that the key way to deal blows to the imperialist onslaught is through *class struggle* here at home—the independent mobilization of workers against their "own" capitalist exploiters.

Canadian Nationalists in Third World Garb

For all its talk about solidarity with struggles of "Third World" peoples, Fire This Time (FTT—MAWO's parent group) did *not* side with Iraq while the bombs were falling on Baghdad, i.e., *when it counted*. Enscorced in StopWar.ca, the local antiwar coalition that embraced everyone from Liberal cabinet minister Stephen Owen to then mayor Larry Campbell, FTT promoted the dead-end politics of bourgeois pacifism. They even bragged, ludicrously, that the Vancouver peace crawls "effectively influenced imperialist politics" (*Fire This Time*, May 2003).

As soon as the bombs started dropping, the antiwar "movement" largely evaporated and the "respectable" bourgeois endorsers decamped. As war became occupation, FTT and then its front group MAWO began their uncritical and vicarious cheerleading of the "resistance" forces in Afghanistan and Iraq, hailing the reactionary Islamic fundamentalists and Ba'athist thugs as "anti-imperialist" fighters.

For FTT/MAWO there is no real contradiction between honouring both the agents of imperialist occupation and the forces sometimes resisting them. Behind their class-collaborationist pursuit of "building a broad and popular movement" against war and occupation is the view that a wing of the bour-

geoisie in one country or another can unite with the oppressed in a genuine struggle against the perceived excesses of capitalist exploitation. Absent is any perspective of mobilizing workers in revolutionary struggle against their own rulers, here or anywhere else.

In days of yore MAWO raised cheap criticisms of the overt Canadian patriotism at antiwar rallies. Like the Toronto-based June 30 Coalition (J30—now Toronto Solidarity Project), MAWO claimed to be an alternative to the mainstream antiwar outfits. But without a revolutionary working-class program, they proceeded to peddle abject reformism with an activist face. MAWO promotes "Third World" nationalism punctuated by Canadian nationalist lunges. As for J30, by last spring they were putting out leaflets telling people to "Contact your MP and protest Canadian taxpayer subsidies of SNC Lavalin," a major Canadian military producer. Hardly militant opposition to war profiteering, this was nothing but a liberal lobbying campaign to pressure the Canadian government.

Cut of the same political cloth is FTT/MAWO's call for an "Independent Public Inquiry" into the Afghanistan occupation. They claim such an inquiry is the way to "build an effective anti-war movement in Canada against Canadian imperialism." On the contrary, channeling anti-militarist sentiment into pleas for the government to essentially investigate itself can only serve to refurbish the image of the racist, capitalist state.

The Spartacus Youth Club challenged the nationalist politics of MAWO's UBC affiliate, Coalition Against War on the People of Iraq (CAWOPI), at their January 26 meeting titled "Canada Out of Afghanistan." Initially CAWOPI tried to cover their rotten politics by excluding us. When our comrades protested this attempt to bar communists, CAWOPI, exposed in front of their own supporters and student onlookers, backed down. The SYC then entered the meeting to intervene with a revolutionary, internationalist and proletarian understanding of how to fight imperialism.

In the discussion period, an SYC speaker indicted MAWO's pleas to honour a Canadian cop in Haiti and protest the death of a Canadian soldier in Afghanistan. "That's not anti-imperialism," he said, "It's in the interests of workers that the Canadian army gets delivered a defeat in Afghanistan, that the imperialist forces suffer defeats and setbacks in Iraq. That's what taking a side with oppressed people means, and that's manifestly not what MAWO does in practice."

The CAWOPI supporter chairing the event then interrupted, not to defend the group's politics, but to state that such criticism was impermissible. Following this show of political bankruptcy our comrade concluded:

"What's necessary to end the occupations of Afghanistan and Iraq, and the innumerable occupations that will ensue unless capitalism is overthrown, is the mobilization of workers. We need a working-class revolutionary vanguard party that calls things by their right names, that draws a class line and says the Canadian cops, army and prison guards are the enemy. And this vanguard party can weld together the struggle for Quebec independence, full citizenship rights for all immigrants and self-determination for all nations, and have an anti-capitalist perspective that can actually deal a death blow to this wretched system of exploitation and create socialism in its place." ■



SC photo

TL/SYC at 2003 Vancouver antiwar demo. We called to defend Iraq; FTT gave left cover to Canadian nationalist StopWar.ca.

Class Struggle...

(continued from page 1)

tightly to the U.S.'s neocolonial military adventures and repressive "war on terror." And behind their claimed new "openness" to Quebec—a pitch for so-called soft nationalists that produced a few Tory seats in the province—stands an ultra-hard line against Quebec's democratic right to self-determination.

Harper's Conservatives won only a narrow minority, having failed yet again to expand from their largely rural/small-town base into the main urban centers (not one Tory was elected in Toronto, Montreal or Vancouver). But the idea that the Tories are uniquely reactionary, or that their attacks can be thrown back by looking to the NDP social democrats—or, worse yet, the Liberals—is a fantasy. For the last 13 years, a series of Liberal governments carried out the most sustained attacks on workers and the poor in postwar Canadian history. They looted more than \$40 billion from the Employment Insurance fund to "fight the deficit," i.e., pay off the Bay Street bankers. They presided over the destruction of hundreds of thousands of manufacturing jobs, 200,000 of them in the last three years. Canada's vaunted "prosperity"—which rests heavily on booming Western resource industries, notably Alberta's oil sands—masks a vast, growing gap between rich and poor.

As for the NDP, whenever they have ruled provincially, they have enforced the savage dictates of the capitalist profit system. Workers still remember with bitterness the wage-slashing, anti-union attacks of Bob Rae's Ontario NDP regime. In B.C., the NDP cut social programs, whipped up anti-immigrant hysteria and brought down massive state repression at Gustafsen Lake against Native people struggling to assert their rights. Paul Martin's Liberal government only made it through its last year thanks to support from the federal NDP, which backed a Liberal budget centered on nearly \$13 billion in new military spending. Not surprisingly, the NDP's election campaign was the most overtly right wing in its history (which takes some doing!). Party leader Jack Layton echoed the Tories' racist "anti-crime" diatribes, pushed "fiscal responsibility" and openly endorsed the anti-Quebec Clarity Act. There was no basis for workers and oppressed minorities to give the NDP even the most savagely critical support this election.

It is the *class struggle*, not parliamentary maneuverings, that will determine whether the Tories are able to continue and deepen the Liberal attacks. Thanks to its central role in production—in the factories, resource industries, transport systems—the working class uniquely has the social power to lead successful struggle against the ruling-class onslaught. Across the country, there is great anger at these attacks, and an evident will to struggle. This was shown in class battles from the summer 2005 Vancouver port truckers strike (which cost the capitalists \$75 million a day), to the "illegal" two-week B.C. teachers strike last fall, to the one-day city- and province-wide general strikes in Quebec and B.C. over the last two years.

But the labour movement's ability to fight for its interests and those of all the oppressed is hamstrung by a leadership that ties workers to the so-called "national interests" of capitalist Canada and promotes the NDP and even the Liberals as "progressive." The working class must come to the political understanding that it has interests that are separate from and counterposed to those of the capitalist exploiters. Successful



Bull/Toronto Star

NDP in power rules for bosses. 1993: Health-care workers protest Ontario NDP's anti-worker attacks.

defense of the workers' gains, social programs and the rights of the oppressed hinges on the fight for a new working-class leadership, one that is prepared to unleash labour's social power as part of a struggle against the entire capitalist system.

Quebec: Empty Promises and Chauvinist Threats

The protracted "crisis of Canadian unity"—the Quebec national question—was the key underlying issue in the election. The Liberal government fell thanks to its sponsorship scandal, which lined the pockets of party operatives in Quebec and widely discredited "pro-Canada" federalism there. But while the Liberals were reduced to a rump, mainly in heavily anglophone parts of Montreal, the Tories' surprising (even to them) surge in eastern Quebec meant the bourgeois nationalist Bloc Québécois did a bit worse than expected, losing three seats.

This has led gleeful English Canadian pundits to proclaim, again, that "separatism" has suffered a body blow. Hardly. The Bloc won a majority of Quebec seats for the fifth straight time—this time, nearly 70 percent—and polls continue to show support for sovereignty hovering near 50 percent. An article in the London *Guardian* (6 February) titled "Quebec Holds Key to Harper's Future" noted how the Tory leader "won power after promising more autonomy and money for the predominantly French-speaking province." "Whether he is able to deliver," it added, "could influence how long he remains prime minister, and whether the country breaks up on his watch."

Quebec is a nation with its own language and culture and an increasingly distinct political economy. Ever since the social struggles of the 1960s broke the hold of the Catholic Church and created a modern, self-confident francophone society, its development has been sharply away from integration into English-dominated Canada. Over the same period there has been a clear if uneven rise in support for political independence, especially among the working class. At every step, the English Canadian labour leaders—and especially the NDP—have joined with the Tories and Liberals to promote reactionary "Canadian unity." In enacting the Clarity Act six years ago, Ottawa formally declared that it will not recognize

Quebec's elementary right to determine its own future, including by a democratic referendum.

The chauvinism that dominates in English Canada has divided the working class on national lines, severely damaging prospects for united struggle against the exploiters. The Maple Leaf nationalism of the central labour bureaucracy ties English Canadian workers to their own capitalists, and has driven the more militant Québécois working class deeper into the arms of *its* bourgeois nationalist would-be rulers, represented by the Bloc and Parti Québécois. As consistent fighters against national oppression, Marxists advocate independence for Quebec. This would create conditions for the workers in both nations to see that the enemy is not "the French" or "*les anglais*," but their own national capitalists—an understanding that is crucial for anti-capitalist class struggle.

The Tories' latest plan to "solve" the national question by pledging "decentralized" autonomy, as well as standing for Quebec on international bodies like UNESCO, will be no more successful than the multiple other schemes pushed by governments in Ottawa over the years. These have ranged from naked repression—the military occupation of Montreal under the War Measures Act, ordered by Pierre Trudeau's Liberal government in 1970—to attempts at co-optation, notably the constitutional maneuvers of Brian Mulroney's Progressive Conservative (PC) regime in the 1980s and early '90s.

At the time, even Parti Québécois founder René Lévesque called to take the "*beau risque*" of abandoning independence and backing Mulroney's call for "special status" for Quebec. But the government's plans, codified in the Meech Lake accord, collapsed amid a chauvinist anti-Quebec uproar, especially strong in Western Canada. Mulroney's PC party imploded, with its Western base rallying to the new, right-wing Reform Party (for which Harper was an early ideologue), while most of the Quebec wing split to form the Bloc Québécois. Ever since, Reform—later renamed the Canadian Alliance and now, after swallowing the PC remnants, the Conservative Party—has electorally dominated the West, while the Bloc is entrenched as the main Quebec party in the federal parliament.

The Bloc's slight decline this election masked two distinct developments. The Tories' autonomy gambit won them some former Bloc seats in Quebec City and rural areas of eastern Quebec. These include the stomping grounds of the right-wing nationalist Cr ditiste party in the 1960s and '70s, and more recently of Mario Dumont's provincial Action D mocratique du Qu bec (ADQ). The ADQ called for a Yes vote in the 1995 sovereignty referendum but now, like Harper, pushes decentralization of powers to the provincial level combined with hard-line economic austerity.

At the same time, the Bloc took seats from the Liberals in heavily immigrant areas of Montreal, including the downtown riding of Papineau where a Bloc candidate of Haitian origin beat the Liberal foreign minister. This is a notable breakthrough for the Bloc and PQ, who have long sought to shed their deserved image as anti-immigrant bigots, symbolized by ex-premier Jacques Parizeau's rant against "the ethnic vote" after narrowly losing the 1995 referendum. After three decades of provincial legislation promoting French as the main language of work and restricting access to English schools, Quebec immigrants now overwhelmingly integrate into the dominant francophone society. Polls show a sharp increase in support for sovereignty among second- and third-generation immigrants.

The Liberals and Tories will now compete to cohere a viable "pro-Canada" alternative to the Bloc and PQ. With a Quebec election likely next year, the very unpopular provincial Liberal regime could well be ousted by the PQ, leading to a possible third referendum by the end of the decade. The stick to the Tories' autonomy carrot is a threat to declare such a referendum illegal, in line with the Clarity Act. *Globe and Mail* (25 January) columnist John Ibbitson outlined the new Tory policy and its risks for the rulers in Ottawa:

"A Harper government would not recognize a Yes vote, regardless of the size of the majority. It would refuse to enter into sovereignty negotiations with the Quebec government, and if compelled to enter those negotiations—by the Supreme Court, say—it would not accept sovereignty as a possible outcome."

Ibbitson warns that "such an extreme position could deliver a Yes vote in the next referendum, followed by a unilateral declaration of independence," and even raises the spectre of "Harper's obduracy" leading to civil war.

While the Tory leader cynically claims to be "reaching out" to Quebec, his caucus is full of unreconstructed Western yahoos who cut their political teeth in campaigns against bilingualism and "special status" for Quebec. Harper's newly appointed parliamentary secretary for official languages and la Francophonie is a unilingual anglophone from Alberta! However matters play out immediately, yet another "crisis of Canadian unity" is a political certainty. The national question can only be removed from the agenda and the crucial *class* questions brought to the fore if the proletariat of English Canada firmly upholds the rights of the oppressed nation and champions the call for Quebec independence.

NDP, Labour Bureaucracy and the Reformist Left

The New Democrats' flagrantly right-wing and Anglo-chauvinist campaign, on top of its recent history of propping up the Liberal government, did not stop the reformist left from once again calling on workers to vote NDP. In a statement titled "Elect an NDP Government! Fight for a Workers'

(continued on page 10)



Cl ment Allard

April 14, 2004: Quebec workers protest attacks of provincial Liberal government of Jean Charest.

Class Struggle...

(continued from page 9)

Agenda!”, Socialist Action made the absurd claim that “an NDP government has the potential to open the road to social change by removing the levers of government from the parties of big business.” The International Socialists (I.S.) were marginally more critical, writing that “Workers in English Canada and in Quebec should hold their collective noses and vote for the NDP on January 23,” while calling to “build the mass movements which are the foundation of real political change—and real democracy” (*Socialist Worker*, 14 January).

The NDP is a *bourgeois workers party*—a party that has an organic base in the labour movement but upholds and enforces the dictates of capital. “Real political change,” let alone “removing the levers of government” from the capitalists, will not come through putting more New Democrats in the bourgeois parliament, or by building an amorphous movement for “real democracy.” It requires ending the rule of the capitalist exploiters and their state through a socialist revolution. That, in turn, requires forging a *genuine* workers party—a revolutionary party rooted in the Marxist understanding of the class struggle and built through breaking the working class from pro-capitalist social democracy.

The NDP’s modest increase in seats (to 29) mainly came in heavily unionized parts of urban Ontario and B.C., like the steel city of Hamilton where they swept all three ridings. This was no thanks to Buzz Hargrove, leader of the CAW auto union, who publicly backed the outright capitalist Liberals in order to “stop the Tories.” In one infamous photo-op, Hargrove campaigned on behalf of Liberal cabinet minister Belinda Stronach, whose family owns the notoriously anti-union Magna auto company. Telling auto workers, who have recently lost tens of thousands of jobs, that they can advance their interests by electing anti-union auto bosses to parliament is a truly grotesque instance of class collaboration.

Most of the labour bureaucracy opposed Hargrove’s stance, though in the end the difference was more posture than substance. The CAW president did call for votes to the NDP in a few dozen “winnable seats”; his crime was to be flagrant (and rather bumptious) about what has long been the not-so-secret maximum goal of the NDP and their top labour allies: to win enough seats to act as an effective pressure group on a Liberal government. This is precisely what the NDP did in propping up the last Liberal regime. Having fallen short this time, and with Harper emerging on top, Layton now talks of backing *the Tories* on issues where they have “common objectives.” This would notably include the racist “war on crime” and chauvinist “Canadian unity” campaigns against Quebec.

While calling to back the NDP, the I.S. complained that party leader Layton has “lowered his credibility in the anti-war movement” (*Socialist Worker*, 19 November 2005). It was these reformist leftists who built up this phony “credibility” in the first place. During the build-up to the U.S. attack on Iraq, the I.S. buffed up the NDP’s phony posture as the “party of peace,” even as the New Democrats called for a United Nations force including Canadian troops to be sent to Iraq. After backing the huge hike in military spending in last summer’s budget, Layton hailed Armed Forces chief Rick Hellier’s rant about unleashing the Canadian army to kill “detestable murderers and scumbags” in Afghanistan. Nor has the NDP leader breathed a word against Canada’s

role in the brutal military occupation of Haiti. All Canadian troops and cops out of Haiti and Afghanistan, now!

With the Bush administration so unpopular in Canada, the Liberals played up their opposition to U.S. policies in Iraq during the election, claiming that a Harper government would act as Washington’s lapdog. At a fundamental level, the Liberals’ anti-U.S. posturing was smoke and mirrors. Under their rule Ottawa was, as ever, a loyal junior partner of U.S. imperialism. The Liberal government formally opposed the attack on Iraq because it feared that the massive antiwar sentiment in Quebec would lead to a surge in support for independence. Nonetheless, Canada did more to aid the U.S. war effort than most countries that officially signed on to Bush’s “coalition of the willing.” Canadian patrol aircraft helped guide U.S. troop carriers in the Gulf, while Canadian officers attached to U.S. Central Command were directly involved in planning the attack.

At another level, however, Washington was clearly irked by the Liberals’ posturing, and insofar as anyone in the U.S. administration gives a moment’s thought to Canada they are clearly glad to see the back of the Martin gang. Harper will seek better relations with the U.S., perhaps by formally signing on to the continental missile defense program, though he claims to have no intention of sending troops to help the occupation of Iraq. It certainly didn’t help the Tories’ attempt to sell the Bush administration in Canada when, a few days after the election, American troops shot up a car carrying the Canadian chargé d’affaires inside Baghdad’s U.S.-controlled Green Zone.

For a Revolutionary Workers Party That Fights for All the Oppressed!

With a very right-wing Tory regime in Ottawa, we can anticipate a surge of class-collaborationist “fight the right” rhetoric from the labour tops, echoed by the fake leftists who tail them. Given the sharply different national terrains and fractures in the labour bureaucracy, “fight the right” will variously translate into more or less open support for the NDP, the Liberals, the Bloc/PQ or Québec Solidaire, the new left-nationalist party launched at a Montreal conference in early February (see article on opposite page).

All these options are dead ends. We Trotskyists seek to win workers and oppressed minorities to the understanding that the capitalist system is inherently irrational and unjust, enriching the owners of industry and commerce while condemning to poverty the vast majority of mankind. The only way to smash the all-sided assault on social programs, to assure free, quality medical care, childcare and jobs and a decent living standard for all, to end the neocolonial pillage of the “Third World,” is by ripping the means of production from the hands of the capitalist class and putting them in the hands of those whose labour makes society run. A collectivized economy with centralized planning where production is for human need, not profit: that is the real solution for the working people.

“Unity” with the parties of the oppressors, or with their social-democratic political agents, is the road to defeat. In the course of the coming struggles the advanced elements of the working class must take up the fight for a Marxist workers party that can unite the many victims of this exploitative system—women, immigrants, Native people, the Québécois—behind the social power of the proletariat, in the fight for socialist revolution. That is the perspective of the Trotskyist League/Ligue trotskyste. Join us in this struggle!■

Québec Solidaire: A Populist Trap

A conference at the Université de Montréal on the February 3-5 weekend saw the birth of a new “progressive” party, Québec Solidaire. Launched jointly by the Option Citoyenne movement of feminist leader (and one-time Maoist) Françoise David and the Union des Forces Progressistes (UFP), Québec Solidaire claims to offer a left alternative to both the ruling Quebec Liberals and the bourgeois-nationalist Parti Québécois. Workers and oppressed minorities have plenty of reason to hate both these parties. The “deficit zero” attacks of the PQ governments of the 1990s and early 2000s meant weeping attacks on social programs. Since the Liberals took over in 2003, they have deepened these attacks, producing widespread anger and protest. For all their differences on Quebec sovereignty, the Liberals and PQ are dual parties of capitalism in Quebec, enforcing exploitation and oppression against workers and the poor.

But Québec Solidaire isn’t even a half-step on the road to anti-capitalist struggle: it is a populist roadblock that fosters terrible illusions in a “reformed” bourgeois rule. The 1,000 delegates who gathered in Montreal adopted a declaration of principles that doesn’t even pay lip service to the class struggle, let alone socialism. Instead it pushes nostrums like “participatory democracy,” “an alternative globalization” and “promoting the public interest.” Quebec’s powerful union movement gets one passing mention, merely as one of the “citizen-based organizations” that are an “indicator of the health of a democracy.” When, prior to the conference, a UFP local proposed adding a vague reference to “socialist and progressive values,” this was dismissed out of hand. UFP and Option Citoyenne leaders deemed it “beyond the agreements negotiated between the two organizations,” adding that “no allusion to socialism exists in the founding texts.” Indeed.

Yet a host of self-proclaimed socialist groups have hailed the founding of Québec Solidaire. The Communist Party of Quebec, Gauche Socialiste (GS—affiliate of the fake-Trotskyist United Secretariat) and the Quebec wing of the International Socialists (I.S.) all immersed themselves in the UFP several years ago and have now, in turn, thrown themselves into Québec Solidaire. GS’s *La Gauche* website gushes, “Québec Solidaire, A Left Alternative on the March!” (6 February). GS’s international co-thinkers are long-practised in servile class collaboration: in Brazil, they even have a “comrade” minister in the Lula government, which is enforcing IMF austerity against the worker and peasant poor!

In order to sidle up to the UFP and now Québec Solidaire, the I.S. has quietly (and with no public explanation) shelved its long-standing opposition to the call for Quebec independence and now endorses sovereignty in its French journal *Résistance*. Of course this didn’t stop them from campaigning for the grossly Anglo-chauvinist NDP in the recent federal election—including, specifically, in Quebec.

In the lead-up to Québec Solidaire’s founding convention, the I.S. claimed this would be a “historic meeting.” It would mean “pulling together the anti-neo-liberal forces into one, united organization” (*Socialist Worker*, 5 November 2005). Unity of “anti-neo-liberal forces” means unity with those supporters of capitalism who aim to co-opt the workers with



Skinner/La Presse

Founding conference of Québec Solidaire: not a hint of socialism or class struggle.

chatter about “social solidarity.” The Stalinists used to dress this up as the “people’s front” (against monopolies, fascism, etc.). The idea is the same, only the jargon has changed. Such subordination of the workers’ interests to a wing of the enemy class has brought only disaster and defeat.

From the Mouvement Socialiste of the ’80s to the Parti de la Démocratie Socialiste of the ’90s and the UFP, Quebec has seen multiple failed attempts to construct a “left” reformist outfit on the PQ’s fringes. The counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union, the world’s first workers state, in the early 1990s has added a new dimension to these maneuvers. This historic defeat for the working class has thrown consciousness among workers and especially left-wing intellectuals far back on an international scale. In Quebec, ex-“Marxist-Leninists” like Françoise David (and Bloc Québécois leader Gilles Duceppe!) have long abandoned the radicalism of their youth, and now most self-styled socialist groups no longer even claim to uphold such basic concepts of Marxism as working-class independence from the exploiters.

So it’s a sign of the times that Québec Solidaire eschews even the vaguest reference to socialism and working-class struggle in favour of ecological/feminist-tinged petty-bourgeois populism—and that so many nominally socialist outfits have rushed to join and promote this farce. Workers in Quebec and throughout Canada need a proletarian revolutionary party, not another class-collaborationist obstacle to their consciousness and struggle. ■

Trotskyist League/Ligue trotskyste	
Toronto:	Box 7198, Station A Toronto, ON M5W 1X8 (416) 593-4138
Vancouver:	Box 2717, Main P.O. Vancouver, BC V6B 3X2 (604) 687-0353
Email:	spartcan@on.aibn.com
Website:	www.icl-fi.org

Racist "Crime" Hysteria...

(continued from page 5)

citizenship rights for all immigrants.

Yet far from giving a lead against state repression, sections of the labour bureaucracy have openly backed the cops' campaign. In a grotesque example, leaders of the 8,000-strong Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU) Local 113 brought a union contingent to join the November 2 cop demonstration. The *Toronto Star* (3 November 2005) quoted ATU local president Bob Kinnear saying, "We want to support them [the cops] in their contract negotiations so that we can have safe streets and a safe city." The more the cops are unleashed on the streets of Toronto, the *greater* will be the danger for workers and the poor!

Cops are not "workers," and neither are their auxiliaries, such as prison and security guards. Yet unions including OPSEU, the Steelworkers and the CAW include just such forces in their ranks. We Marxists say: Cops, prison and security guards out of the unions!

For a Class-Struggle Fight Against Racial Oppression!

Sections of the media have pushed the reactionary idea that social problems in the inner suburbs stem from a "break-down of the black family." They hyped the mid-January visit of right-wing black Boston preacher Eugene Rivers, who held church rallies and met with local politicians to push for "parental responsibility" and yet-tougher drug laws. Such "blame the victim" rhetoric will do nothing to improve the material conditions of black people, and can only strengthen the hand of the capitalist oppressors.

Against Rivers' rants, many community activists have pointed to the dire consequences of cuts to social programs and the reactionary Safe Schools Act passed by the Ontario Tory government in the 1990s. Under this law, children of any age can be permanently expelled from school for the most inoffensive of misdemeanors. This has affected black youth with a particular vengeance.

Opposition to such attacks was a theme of a January 26 "Racialization of Crime" meeting, called to counter the racist victimization of black people in the "gun violence" hysteria. An overflow crowd heard speeches and cited their own examples of racist scapegoating. One speaker called to make an electoral difference at City Hall, while a common message was to look to the NDP as a vehicle for change, despite Layton's "law and order" campaign. But racist capitalism cannot be fundamentally "reformed" through parliamentary tinkering. The NDP social democrats, who have effectively been in power at City Hall for the last two years, offer only the oppressive status quo, or worse. No wonder at least some in the audience left rather disgruntled.

In the 1980s and early '90s, the Black Action Defence Committee (BADC) led by Dudley Laws organized a series of angry protests against police shootings of black people. The Trotskyist League joined in many of these demonstrations. As we pointed out at the time, however, BADC's alternative was always limited to making the police more "accountable" through bodies like civilian review boards. Such boards have existed in Toronto for many years, yet they have done nothing to stop police brutality—because they too are part of the capitalist injustice system, simply trying to give it a cleaned-up façade.



Bull/Toronto Star

Racist Toronto cops brutalized dozens of homeless in 1999 raid on Allan Gardens tent city.

Recently, Laws and BADC have more openly looked for common ground with the capitalist powers-that-be. In 2000, they signed on to an agreement with Toronto police to promote "non-lethal" force in dealing with "crime"—e.g., very lethal stun guns. Last year, BADC helped form the Coalition of African Canadian Organizations, which has lobbied for a "High Level Summit" with government leaders to discuss an "action plan" to address the causes of gun violence through a "partnership" with "government, public institutions and the private sector."

No solution to the degradation of black people and other oppressed minorities can come through pleading for "partnership" with the exploiters. The struggle against racial oppression requires unleashing the social power of the multi-racial working class *against* the capitalist rulers. Despite the wave of factory closures and layoffs, black and Asian workers remain a key component in many powerful industrial unions in the region, including transit and auto. City workers, school support staff, hotel workers, teachers are all integral to the struggle to end racial inequality.

Success in this struggle hinges on a political fight against the pro-capitalist NDP and labour misleaders—the forging of a class-struggle leadership that understands that there are no "common interests" uniting the workers with their oppressors. Such a leadership will by necessity look both to mobilize and champion the poor and dispossessed as allies in the fight for better living conditions—demanding jobs for all at union rates, union-run recruitment and training programs for minorities and women, free and full access to higher education, affordable housing. Capitalism stands in the way of fulfilling these most basic demands. In fighting for such elemental rights, workers and the oppressed will begin to see this, and realize that putting an end to exploitation and racist oppression requires the construction of a fighting workers party that can lead the struggle for a socialist revolution that alone can create the preconditions for the liberation of humanity. ■

Mumia...

(continued from page 3)

Appeal for Class-War Prisoners, held December 2005 in New York City, Los Angeles, Chicago, Oakland and Toronto. We print below a speech at the New York City benefit, edited for publication, by Rachel Wolkenstein, staff counsel for the PDC and formerly a member of Mumia's legal team.

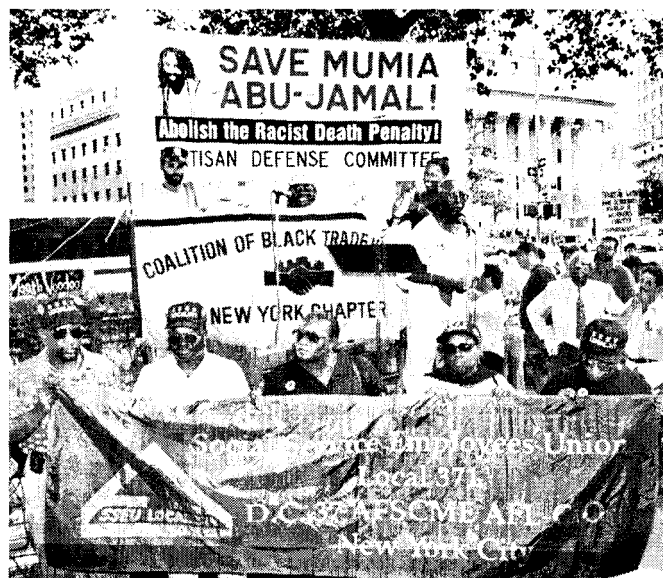
Today marks the 24th anniversary of Mumia's arrest for the murder of police officer Daniel Faulkner, a crime the police, the prosecution and the courts know Mumia did not commit. For over 23 years Mumia has been on death row. All elements of the "criminal justice system" have colluded to kill this man for the crime of being an eloquent and effective critic of racist oppression. Mumia has said that he is "fighting to create revolution in America. Revolution means total change." To the American capitalist state, that means Mumia is a dead man on leave.

It is necessary and urgent, now more than ever, as Mumia's case moves into the last stages of the legal proceedings, to mobilize on the basis that Mumia is an innocent man, known as the voice of the voiceless. He's on death row because of a political, racist frame-up. The federal appeals court has now put Mumia's case on what they call a "fast track" for decision. That means within about six months' time the court will decide what is next for Mumia: death, life in prison or more legal proceedings.

The federal appeals court is not required to consider all the issues that Mumia has raised—and virtually every right guaranteed by the Bill of Rights was violated in Mumia's case. Nor is the appeals court considering the evidence of Mumia's innocence or the state frame-up. It is going to decide in the first instance whether or not to uphold Mumia's death sentence. It is very good and important that the appeals court is now allowing other challenges. These are based on the racially biased jury selection; the D.A.'s prejudicial summary argument to the jury in which he falsely stated that Mumia would have "appeal after appeal," meaning that it didn't matter if he was convicted by the jury; and lastly, a challenge to the kangaroo, lynch mob appeal hearings before the notorious judge Albert Sabo in 1995, '96 and '97. Sabo was popularly known as the King of Death Row. But the real point is that Mumia should never have been arrested, tried or convicted. And our fight is to free Mumia, *now!*

The courts do not sit in judgment and rule in isolation. There has been and continues to be a concerted effort by all wings of the capitalist class—represented by both the Democratic and Republican parties—to see Mumia executed. It will take the social power of organized labor and its allies to create the type of pressure needed to obtain Mumia's freedom—a mass movement centrally based on the power of the working class. The power to withhold labor—to strike. Imagine what it would mean if New York transit struck—not only to secure a decent wage, health care and job conditions, but to demand Mumia's freedom!

The danger faced by Mumia today began back in 1969 when he was a 15-year-old spokesman for the Black Panther Party, targeted by the FBI's murderous COINTELPRO campaign. The message to the Black Panther Party by FBI director Hoover was: "The Negro youth and moderate[s] must be made to understand that if they succumb to revolutionary



Workers Vanguard

August 1995: PDC-initiated labour-centered mobilization in New York City, part of international outpouring of protest that helped stay the executioner's hand.

teachings, they will be dead revolutionaries." This was the policy of the Democratic Party president, Lyndon Johnson, and his attorney general, Ramsey Clark. Because Mumia appeared and spoke in public at the age of 15 and 16, the FBI put him under daily surveillance. They put him on the Security Index, which was then the version of a terrorist list—those to be rounded up and thrown into a concentration camp if there is a national emergency. Despite the state's efforts shown in some 900 pages of FBI COINTELPRO files on Mumia, which the PDC secured on Mumia's behalf, the state could not come up with even one offense to pin on him.

Mumia's case is a textbook case of police frame-up, an object lesson in the class nature of the capitalist state, which is by no means neutral. The state is an instrument for the organized violence by one class, the capitalist class, defending the profit system—against the working people, against minorities. In the United States, the segregation of the majority of the black population at the bottom of society is key. This state violence is expressed in the terror and frame-ups carried out by racist, brutal, corrupt police and enforced in the capitalist courts.

Understanding this, and acting on this understanding, provide the only way forward to victory—to Mumia's freedom. While all legal proceedings and legal remedies must be pursued on Mumia's behalf, we cannot have any illusions in or reliance on the capitalist courts, nor in bourgeois politicians, whether they be black or white, Democratic, Republican or Green. The fight to free Mumia must be undertaken independent of the racist capitalist state.

The capitalist injustice system is neither fair nor reformable. Demands for a new trial will not lead to Mumia's freedom. These demands only breed illusions in the capitalist courts, and these illusions demobilized a movement of millions around the world. They were raised by many so-called socialist organizations and their front groups, organizations such as the Workers World Party, the International Socialist Organization, Socialist Action and the like. The mass movement has to be built anew on the basis that Mumia's conviction

(continued on page 14)

Mumia...

(continued from page 13)

and death sentence were politically driven, and that it is in the interests of all working people, black and white, citizen and immigrant, to join together and fight for his freedom. The fight for Mumia's freedom is part of the fight for black equality in America, which itself is part of the broader fight against the capitalist system.

That truth has been shown over two decades of court appeals in Mumia's case. His case has been through the Pennsylvania courts to the U.S. Supreme Court three times, including three post-conviction evidentiary hearings. Each and every court has rejected evidence of Mumia's innocence, evidence of police and prosecutorial frame-up, of trial and appeal proceedings which denied even a scintilla of due process. And over the past three years, courts—federal and state—refused to consider the confession of Arnold Beverly that he, not Mumia, shot and killed police officer Faulkner. Federal court judge Yohn overturned Mumia's death sentence over three years ago. But while the government appeals, Mumia is still on death row, 23 hours a day, locked in solitary in a cell which he has described as if you're living in a bathroom.

Mumia Was a Marked Man

So I want to talk a little bit about what happened on the early morning hours of 9 December 1981. The prosecution's story is a pretty simple one, and that story has been exposed over and over as false—as lies based on witnesses who were threatened or bought, on non-existent ballistics evidence and on a totally fabricated confession invented by police some two months after the shooting. According to the D.A., two people were on the street corner at Locust and 13th in Philadelphia at approximately 4 a.m.: Mumia's brother Billy Cook and police officer Daniel Faulkner. Mumia reportedly ran across the street when he saw his brother being beaten by the cop. Then, according to the police, Mumia—some 26 years old, known for his mild manner and level-headedness—supposedly shot the cop in the back. Then the cop shot back at Mumia, and then Mumia stood over the fallen cop and shot him "execution style" several times in the head. This is all lies—even by close examination of the cops' and D.A.'s own "evidence."



Owens/Philadelphia Bulletin

Philly mayor Rizzo lashed out at Mumia (far left) at press conference defending murderous 1978 cop raid on MOVE home.

Now, to understand the frame-up of black radical journalist Mumia Abu-Jamal, you need to remember COINTELPRO and some of the particulars of Philadelphia. In many ways it's a Southern city up North. The Philly police and its intelligence division provided a model for the FBI's COINTELPRO. Mumia was personally very well-known to the Philly police and the FBI as a key founder and leader of the Philly Black Panther Party. He was known for things like protesting the December 1969 Chicago cop and FBI murders of Fred Hampton and Mark Clark and for mobilizing students to change the name of Benjamin Franklin High School to Malcolm X High School. Also for writing for the Black Panther national newspaper and then becoming an award-winning radio journalist, exposing the rampant cop brutality, including the attacks on the MOVE organization and the frame-up trial of the MOVE 9.

The Philadelphia Police Department is also uniquely the only police department in the country that the federal Justice Department tried to put into receivership because of its racial bias, police brutality and corruption. That was 1979. At the time of the murder of Faulkner in 1981, there were at least *three* ongoing federal investigations into police corruption, including police and mob connections. Police working as FBI informants were victims of hits in the early '80s. A former federal prosecutor acknowledged that the Feds had a police informant whose brother was a cop, just as Faulkner had a brother who was a cop.

An FBI informant who worked the prostitutes in the red light district, under police protection, confirms that at the time of Faulkner's shooting the word was out that the Feds had a police informant. The commanding officer of the Central Police Division, where the murder of Faulkner took place, the chief of the homicide division and one Inspector Alfonzo Giordano were all under investigation at the time of federal corruption charges. These cops were literally the chain of command in the frame-up of Mumia.

Inspector Giordano was the ranking officer on the scene. He was the central witness against Mumia at the preliminary hearing after Mumia's arrest. He not only was one of the cops under investigation for corruption, but he had been Frank Rizzo's right-hand man. Rizzo had been Philadelphia police chief and then became a notorious mayor. Giordano was involved in the daily surveillance of Black Panther Party members, leading the police "Stakeout" squad in the

**CLASS-STRUGGLE
DEFENSE NOTES**

**No. 33,
Spring 2005**

**50¢
(24 pages)**

**Order from/make checks
payable to:**

Partisan Defense Committee
 Box 314, Station B
 Toronto, ON M5T 2W1

Contents for this issue:
 In the Shadows of Abu Ghraib Prison 5
 Down With Racist Frame-Up of
 RNC Prosecutor Jamal Haidari! 6
 9/11: A Partisan Defense Committee History Appeal
 That's Not Being Raised for Cheka Way Prisoners! 11
 Another Police Beatdown: RUC Sings and Recites
 Free Leonard Peltier! 18

1970 attacks on the Black Panther Party headquarters. And Giordano was also the police supervisor of the year-long siege of the MOVE Powelton Village house through 1978. He knew just who Mumia was.

It is with these facts in mind that the confession of Arnold Beverly must be considered. Beverly states that he and another man were hired by the police and the mob to murder Faulkner, and that Faulkner was a problem for the corrupt police and the mob because he interfered with the graft and payoffs in the Center City area.

The proof of Mumia's innocence is more than Beverly's confession or the lie detector test that Beverly passed. It is the volumes of previous, internally contradictory witness testimony, of physical evidence that did not fit the prosecution's story but which clearly supports Beverly's version of what happened on 9 December 1981.

Faulkner was shot and killed by more than one hired hitman in the Center City red light district as the after-hours clubs were closing. Billy Cook confirms that there was a plan to kill Faulkner that night and that the other person in his car, Ken Freeman, was involved in that plan. Witnesses said that a second person was in Cook's car and ran away. Many police were either on the scene or close to the scene to make sure the hit went off without any problems. This included members of the police Stakeout unit and undercover cops.

Prosecution's Web of Lies

Even with police and prosecution threats and favors at the time of the 1982 trial, no witnesses testified that they saw Mumia actually shoot Faulkner, and only one witness, the prostitute Cynthia White, testified that she thought she saw a gun in Mumia's hand when he ran to the scene. Since then, several other prostitutes have sworn that she admitted she lied due to police and prosecution threats and favors. Witnesses have said that the shooter ran away, and some five witnesses, including two of the cops, have said that the shooter wore a green army jacket. Both Beverly and Freeman were wearing green army jackets that night. But Mumia was wearing a red quilted ski jacket with wide vertical blue stripes, and Billy Cook wore a blue Nehru-style jacket with brass buttons. There is no green army jacket in any of the police evidence.

Beverly states that Faulkner was shot and killed before Mumia ever got on the scene and that Mumia was not shot by Faulkner but by another police officer. Homicide cops on the scene told the medical examiners that Mumia was shot by an arriving police officer. That evidence was suppressed. A witness said that Faulkner's gun was still in his holster when he was taken away. And, moreover, the gun that was allegedly Faulkner's was likely a "throwaway"—it was inoperable and dirty.

The available ballistics and blood evidence at the scene is contrary to the prosecution's frame-up version of what happened. The trajectories are wrong—the ballistics supports more than one shooter of Faulkner. The bullets and bullet jackets found do not fit with the prosecution theory. There is absolutely no evidence that Mumia's gun was fired that night. And Mumia's wounds do not fit at all with him being shot by Faulkner. The Stakeout officer who purportedly found Mumia's gun in fact testified at trial that the bullets in Mumia's gun were of a different make than those listed even

on the cops' own ballistics report.

So what else happened on the scene after Faulkner was shot? The cops tried to kill Mumia. He was shot in the chest. He was taken and rammed into a light post and then taken in a police van. Giordano beat Mumia in the police van. He later said that Mumia had confessed to shooting Faulkner and throwing his gun on the ground. The other cop who was in the van with Giordano said there was no such confession.

Giordano arranged the supposed identification of Mumia by the cab driver, Robert Chobert, who became a witness having been promised favors and protection by the police. Later, Chobert admitted that he never saw the shooting. And Giordano also was the first cop who reported that Mumia's gun was found on the street. According to the police radio records, this was some 14 minutes after hordes of police had arrived on the scene, thus contradicting the official police story that Mumia's gun was found within a minute. Giordano's intention was to finish Mumia off by taking him to



Susan Schary

Artist's depiction of attorney Rachel Wolkenstein being ordered to jail by Judge Sabo at 1995 hearing seeking overturn of Mumia's conviction.

police headquarters for further questioning. Mumia's only crime was that he survived the cops' attempt to kill him, too.

To complete the picture: Despite Giordano being the senior officer at the scene, despite allegedly hearing Mumia confess and finding the murder weapon (and testifying to that in a preliminary court hearing), Giordano never testified at Mumia's trial. In fact, he was put on desk duty in about May 1982 while the trial was about to take place, and he resigned from the police force the day after Mumia's trial was over. In 1986, he copped a plea on federal charges based on his receiving tens of thousands of dollars in illegal payoffs during the period of 1979-80, and he didn't spend a day in jail.

Mumia's former lawyers, so-called radical leftist lawyer Len Weinglass and Dan Williams, found this evidence too hot and unbelievable. Williams said it could lead to actually arguing that the police knowingly framed up an innocent man! Now I don't have to tell people here that not only is this not unbelievable, but it's the reality of the cops and the courts. And furthermore, just for some empirical fact, as we litigated the 1995 post-conviction hearing in Philadelphia in

(continued on page 16)

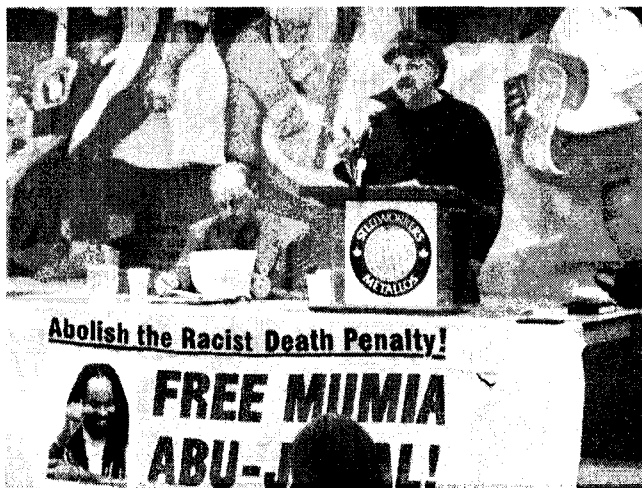
Thousands Raised for Class-War Prisoners

The Partisan Defense Committee's 20th annual Holiday Appeal netted over \$10,000 (U.S.) at December fundraisers in New York, Chicago, Oakland, Los Angeles and Toronto, as well as a smaller informal gathering in Vancouver. The funds raised for the PDC's Class-War Prisoners Stipend Fund are a concrete expression of solidarity with those imprisoned for standing up to racist capitalist repression, reflecting the PDC's character as a class-struggle, non-sectarian legal and social defense organization.

Greetings from Mumia Abu-Jamal were read to the Toronto benefit. Dave Bleakney, national representative of the Canadian Union of Postal Workers, spoke of the need for the labour movement to take up his cause, and "actually to take job action if Mumia is put on the block and the execution date approaches." A Spartacus Youth Club speaker addressed the case of Leonard Peltier, imprisoned for nearly three decades because of his activism in the American Indian Movement. His frame-up trial for the deaths of two FBI agents at the South Dakota Pine Ridge Reservation in 1975—after being denied asylum and extradited from Canada—is yet more proof that there is no justice in the capitalist courts.

The benefit also saw a video of leftist U.S. attorney Lynne Stewart, who faces sentencing on trumped-up charges of "aiding terrorism," and heard greetings from Sophie Harkat, wife of Mohamed Harkat, one of several men who have been detained for years without charges as part of the Canadian government's racist crackdown on Muslim immigrants.

A Trotskyist League speaker noted how the NDP has "embraced key aspects of the 'war on terror,' actively pro-



SC photo

Dave Bleakney, Canadian Union of Postal Workers National Union Representative, speaks at Toronto Holiday Appeal.

moting imperialist militarism in backing the last Liberal budget"—proof that "the working people need their own multiracial workers party." Tracing the history of the PDC's work in Canada since the late 1980s, she urged everyone to "Work more closely with the Partisan Defense Committee: join the fight to free Mumia, Leonard Peltier, to make sure Lynne Stewart doesn't spend a day in jail!"

Those who would still like to contribute can send a check or money order, earmarked "Class-War Prisoners Fund," to: PDC, P.O. Box 314, Station B, Toronto, ON M5T 2W1. ■

Mumia...

(continued from page 15)

the summer of 1995, daily we shared the headlines in the papers with the exposés of cop frame-ups of blacks on false drug charges, of which over 300 cases were overturned. Then of course there's the L.A. Ramparts case, the Boston cop with mob ties, and more recently in the news, two New York homicide detectives who murdered while on Mafia payroll.

There is more, much more that the investigation that I and Jon Piper, with some help from comrades in the PDC, turned up, none of which has yet been presented in court. It's filed in court, but the court has refused to hear it.

Mobilize to Free Mumia!

Now, what is the significance of the Beverly evidence and why has it been suppressed? There is a really simple answer: It exposes the fraud that the American legal system can provide justice. It demonstrates the unity of purpose of the cops, the prosecution and the courts to uphold the capitalist rulers' interest. It makes it clear that the injustice to Mumia was not the action of one rogue cop, or prosecutor or judge, but the entire functioning of the so-called criminal justice system, the capitalist system of injustice. Democrats, including former mayor, former D.A., now-Pennsylvania governor Ed Rendell and former president Clinton, as well as Republicans are united in seeking Mumia's execution, no less than they are

united in increasing government repressive powers, in seeing leftist attorney Lynne Stewart locked away for life, and, most importantly, in continuing the capitalist system, which can only lead to increased poverty, racial oppression and war.

I want to make it clear that the courts will not free Mumia, nor grant him a new trial or new appeals on the grounds that are before them, without the weight of an international mobilization of the masses, centrally based on the labor movement. The power of international mobilization based on labor, from South Africa to Europe to the U.S., helped stay the hand of the executioner when Mumia was but ten days away from execution in August 1995. So now we need to mobilize again to exert the type of pressure that will impact this appeals court—a mass movement based on labor and its allies. That Mumia is innocent is the truth. That the capitalist state has spent decades framing him up is the truth. That the state will use its lying, corrupt, class- and race-biased forces to see Mumia dead is the truth. But we need to use those truths to bring out more power—social power—to fight for Mumia's freedom *now!*

Send badly needed contributions for Mumia's legal defense, made payable to "National Lawyers Guild Foundation" and earmarked for "Mumia," to: Committee to Save Mumia Abu-Jamal, 130 Morningside Drive, Suite 6C, New York, NY 10027.

If you wish to correspond with Mumia, you can write to: Mumia Abu-Jamal, AM8335, SCI Greene, 175 Progress Drive, Waynesburg, PA 15370. ■

Venezuela...

(continued from page 24)

colonel now head of the capitalist state, he is an *enemy* of the struggle for socialism—i.e., the fight for workers revolution to expropriate the bourgeoisie. In fact, Chávez is very much in the mold of a string of bourgeois military officers who have come to power on the basis of nationalist populism, from Col. Juan Perón in Argentina in the 1940s to Col. Gamal Abdel Nasser in Egypt in the 1950s. In the 1950s and '60s, as Soviet-backed nationalist movements swept the semicolonial world, virtually every Third World capitalist demagogue claimed to be a “socialist” or “Marxist-Leninist” of some description. Nasser promulgated “Arab socialism,” seized the Suez Canal from the French and British imperialists in 1956 and instituted a series of nationalizations. He nevertheless presided over the exploitation of the Egyptian toilers on behalf of imperialism—breaking strikes, subordinating the unions to the capitalist state, arresting and torturing Communists.

In the face of another U.S.-backed coup, we, as Marxist internationalist opponents of U.S. imperialism, would again call on the working class to mobilize in military defense of the Chávez government (see “CIA Targets Chávez,” *WV* No. 787, 20 September 2002). At the same time, we politically oppose the bourgeois-nationalist Chávez regime. In regard to the 2004 recall referendum organized by the regime’s right-wing opponents, we argued for abstention rather than a no vote, which would have been an expression of confidence in Chávez. As we wrote in “U.S. Imperialism’s Referendum Ploy Fails—Populist Capitalist Ruler Chávez Prevails” (*WV* No. 831, 3 September 2004): “The immediate perspective that is urgently posed is not only to oppose U.S. imperialist incursions into Venezuela and elsewhere, but to fight to shatter the support of the workers movement to either Chávez or the opposition, and to forge a revolutionary internationalist workers party to lead the working class to power.”

In contrast, the vast majority of self-described socialists and revolutionaries act as the “leftist” marketing department of Chávez’s “Bolivarian Revolution.” Foremost among these

is Ted Grant’s British-based International Marxist Tendency (IMT—represented in Canada by the Fightback group), now led by Alan Woods, author of a paean titled *The Venezuelan Revolution—A Marxist Perspective* (2005). While other opportunists offer the occasional criticism of Chávez, Woods and his outfit actually boast of being “Trotskyist” advisers to the left-talking *caudillo*. In foisting Chávez off as a champion of the poor and oppressed, *the IMT et al. help set workers up for slaughter*. Tying the working class and its organizations to any bourgeois ruler only serves to impede independent working-class struggle. In opposition to groups like the IMT, Marxists seek to prepare the Venezuelan working class to effectively combat the murderous forces of bourgeois reaction, whether led by Chávez or his bourgeois opponents.

Chávez and Imperialism

Examining the arguments used by fake Marxists like the IMT to justify their support to the “Bolivarian Revolution” will help clarify the difference between populist nationalism and authentic proletarian Marxism. In a 1 March 2005 article on their website (www.marxist.com) titled “President Chavez Reaffirms Opposition to Capitalism,” IMT spokesman Jorge Martin asserts that when he came to power in 1998, “Chavez did not start from a socialist standpoint. He was committed to solving the problems of inequality, poverty, and misery of millions of Venezuelans. But he initially thought that could be done within the limits of the capitalist system.” Martin continues:

“Since President Chavez was seriously committed to solving these problems, the oligarchy, en masse, went over to the side of armed insurrection against the democratically elected government....

“It has been this rich experience of the revolutionary movement, faced with the constant provocations of the ruling class, that has pushed Chavez and many in the Bolivarian revolutionary movement to draw the conclusion that ‘Within the framework of capitalism it is impossible to solve the challenges of fighting against poverty, misery, exploitation, inequality’....

“This dynamic of action and reaction of the Venezuelan revolution reminds us in a very powerful way of the first years of the Cuban revolution. In a process of attack and counter-attack, the leadership of the Cuban revolution, which did not start with the intention of overthrowing capitalism, was forced, in order to solve the most pressing needs of the masses, to overthrow capitalism.”

Aside from the point that Chávez did not (and does not) “start from a socialist standpoint,” every statement in this passage is false or misleading. We will address later in this article the notion that “the leadership of the Cuban revolution” should be a model for Latin American revolutionaries. For now it is enough to show how the IMT’s comparison of Castro’s Cuba with Chávez’s Venezuela twists the facts into a pretzel. When Castro’s rebel army marched into Havana on 1 January 1959, the bourgeois army

(continued on page 18)



AP

Joseph P. Kennedy II carrying fuel oil hose to kick off program providing cheap Venezuelan fuel to low-income Massachusetts residents, as described in newspaper ad.

Venezuela...

(continued from page 17)

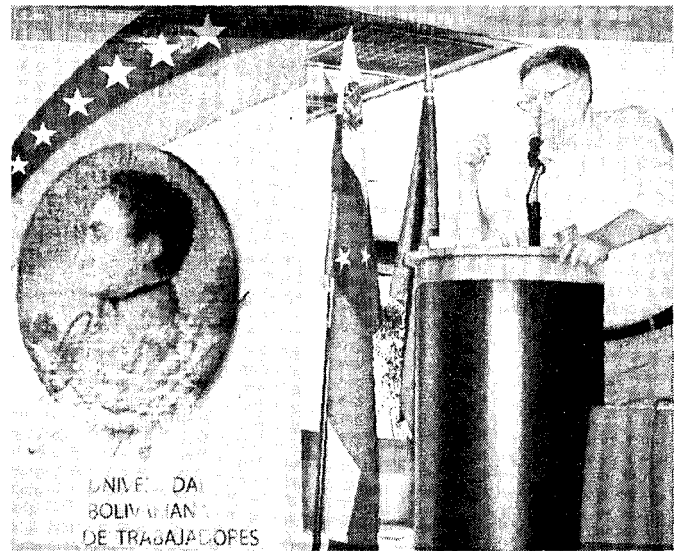
and the rest of the capitalist state apparatus that had propped up the U.S.-backed Batista dictatorship collapsed in disarray. By the time Castro declared Cuba “socialist” in 1961, the Cuban bourgeoisie and the U.S. imperialists and their CIA and Mafia henchmen had all fled and every bit of capitalist property down to the last ice cream vendor had been expropriated. What was created in Cuba was a bureaucratically deformed workers state. In contrast, Chávez came to power and rules *at the head of* the capitalist state, the Venezuelan bourgeoisie is alive and kicking, and the imperialists continue to carry on a thriving business with Venezuela, White House threats and provocations notwithstanding.

Chávez’s principal concern upon coming to power was to “solve the problem” of the country’s faltering oil profits, the lifeblood of the Venezuelan bourgeoisie. He moved immediately to discipline the oil workers union and to otherwise increase the efficiency of the state-owned oil industry, while pressing the OPEC oil cartel to jack up prices. It was for such efforts, and to enforce political stability, that Chávez was initially *supported* by much of the ruling class. This included not least his former comrades in the military high command, who were instrumental in restoring him to power after the 2002 coup. As oil prices climbed, Chávez did siphon off some of the enormous profits to finance a series of social measures: tripling the budget for education, setting up free health clinics and free food distribution programs for the poor, etc. But the aim of such measures is not to effect, but rather to *deflect*, a social revolution—by binding the dispossessed masses more firmly to the Venezuelan state.

However much the lily-white Venezuelan oligarchy may detest this upstart junior officer who boasts of his *zambo* (mixed African and indigenous) heritage, Chávez serves the class interests of the Caracas bourgeoisie—and, through that class, world imperialism. While speaking of “restlessness in the boardrooms” over the regime’s populist policies, a *New York Times* (3 November 2005) article headlined “Chávez Restyles Venezuela With ‘21st-Century Socialism’” reported soberly: “So far, no noticeable exodus of foreign companies operating in Venezuela has occurred. Banks and oil companies are making record profits thanks to oil prices that have left the country, the world’s fifth-largest exporter, awash in petrodollars.”

In his Porto Alegre speech, Chávez was quick to assure the Venezuelan bourgeoisie and its imperialist overlords that his is not “the kind of socialism that we saw in the Soviet Union”—i.e., a planned, collectivized economy based on the overthrow of capitalist rule—which he denounced as “state capitalism” and a “perversion.” He made it very clear that his friendship with Cuba’s leader did not extend to its collectivized economy, saying, “Cuba has its own profile and Venezuela has its own.” He lauded and identified with Brazil’s Lula, the one-time populist who enforces imperialist-dictated austerity measures. In short, as Chávez declared on his *Alo Presidente* TV show on 22 May 2005, his vision of “21st-century socialism” is “not in contradiction with private companies, it is not in contradiction with private property.”

Indeed. And so long as capitalist private property prevails, the masses will remain subject to exploitation and oppression, and economic development will be subordinated to the dictates of the world capitalist market, particularly the impe-



In Defence of Marxism

April 2005: Fake-Trotskyist Alan Woods, chief left booster of bourgeois-nationalist “Bolivarian Revolution,” speaking at solidarity conference in Venezuela.

rialist oil monopolies. There can be no permanent amelioration of the plight of the urban and rural poor without the smashing of the capitalist state and the overthrow of the capitalist social order, leading through a series of proletarian revolutions internationally to a global classless order in which all forms of exploitation and oppression have been eliminated.

Trotsky and Permanent Revolution

This understanding animated the October Revolution of 1917. Led by the Bolshevik Party of Lenin and Trotsky, the workers of Russia—organized around their own class interests and through democratically elected workers councils (soviets)—swept away the capitalist state and replaced it with a workers state. The Bolshevik-led workers stood at the head of all the oppressed, not least the vast army of poor and landless peasants, and saw their revolution as the opening shot of a necessarily international struggle of labor against the rule of capital.

This is a far cry from what happened in the Cuban Revolution, where Castro’s July 26 Movement consisted of peasant guerrillas and declassed petty-bourgeois intellectuals who had become estranged from the bourgeoisie and were independent of the proletariat. Under ordinary conditions, the Castroite rebels would have followed in the footsteps of countless similar movements in Latin America, wielding radical-democratic rhetoric to reassert bourgeois control. It was only as a result of exceptional circumstances—the absence of the working class as a contender for power in its own right, hostile imperialist encirclement and the flight of the national bourgeoisie, and a lifeline thrown by the Soviet Union—that Castro’s petty-bourgeois government was able to smash capitalist property relations.

The existence of the Soviet degenerated workers state was crucial in this, providing economic assistance and a military shield that helped stay the hand of the imperialist beast just 90 miles away. Unlike the Soviet Union, where the original revolutionary and internationalist program of October was trampled underfoot by a conservative, nationalist bureaucracy that usurped political control in 1923-24, in Cuba the workers

state was bureaucratically deformed from its inception.

In overthrowing capitalist rule, the Cuban Revolution stopped the plunder of the island by the imperialists and the local bourgeoisie. As with the Soviet degenerated workers state when it existed, we call for the unconditional military defense of Cuba and the other remaining deformed workers states—China, North Korea and Vietnam—against internal counterrevolution and imperialist attack. It is the Stalinist Castroite bureaucracy that undermines the defense of Cuba, not least by cozying up to and providing a “revolutionary” cover for all kinds of anti-working-class capitalist regimes. As we state in the International Communist League “Declaration of Principles and Some Elements of Program” (*Spartacist* [English-language edition] No. 54, Spring 1998):

“Under the most *favorable* historic circumstances conceivable, the petty-bourgeois peasantry was only capable of creating a bureaucratically deformed workers state, that is, a state of the same order as that issuing out of the political counterrevolution of Stalin in the Soviet Union, an anti-working-class regime which blocked the possibilities to extend social revolution into Latin America and North America, and suppressed Cuba’s further development in the direction of socialism. To place the working class in political power and open the road to socialist development requires a supplemental *political* revolution led by a Trotskyist party. With the destruction of the Soviet degenerated workers state and consequently no readily available lifeline against imperialist encirclement, the narrow historical opening in which petty-bourgeois forces were able to overturn local capitalist rule has been closed, underscoring the Trotskyist perspective of permanent revolution.”

Trotsky’s theory of permanent revolution, confirmed by the Russian Revolution, holds that in those countries where capitalism emerged belatedly, the tasks historically associated with the bourgeois-democratic revolutions of the 17th and 18th centuries can only be carried out under the class rule of the proletariat. No matter how radical-sounding their political representatives, the bourgeoisies in the backward countries are too weak, too fearful of the rising proletariat and too dependent on the imperialist order to resolve the problems of political democracy, agrarian revolution and independent national development.

In its own way, it is rather appropriate that the capitalist demagogue Chávez idolizes Simón Bolívar, a man described by Karl Marx in a February 1858 letter to Friedrich Engels as “the most dastardly, most miserable and meanest of blackguards.” As Marx makes clear in a contribution on Bolívar written for *The New American Cyclopaedia* of 1858, the founding father of Latin American nationalism embodied many of the attributes of the late-emerging semicolonial bourgeoisie of South America. He was venal, corrupt, cowardly and imperious. He repeatedly deserted his troops under fire, stabbed his comrades in the back and relied on the forces of British imperialism for his victories. Following his first triumph in 1813, he allowed himself to be publicly honored, drawn in a carriage by 12 young ladies from the first families of Caracas, and proclaimed himself “dictator and



Glinn/Magnum

Rebel army led by Castro enters Havana, Cuba, on New Year's Day, 1959.

liberator of the western provinces of Venezuela.”

The Bolivarian “Marxists” of the IMT turn permanent revolution on its head, arguing that if a bourgeois formation is *really* committed to fighting for democracy, it can somehow overcome its historic limitations and achieve not only democracy but even socialism. Thus IMT spokesman Jorge Martin writes, “The central idea of the theory of Permanent Revolution is that in colonial and ex-colonial countries the struggle for the bourgeois democratic tasks, if it is pursued to the end, must lead (in an uninterrupted or permanent manner) to the socialist revolution.” The programmatic essence of permanent revolution is the struggle for the *class independence of the proletariat* from *all* wings of the semicolonial bourgeoisie—no matter how “progressive” or “anti-imperialist” their proclamations. That struggle can be realized only through forging a revolutionary, internationalist workers party in opposition to all variants of bourgeois nationalism.

Reform vs. Revolution

The task of Marxists is to rip the “socialist” mask off the Chávez regime, to warn that he represents the class enemy. If the IMT’s opportunist competitors do not simply fawn over Chávez and his “Bolivarian Revolution,” they nevertheless join in depicting the left-talking *caudillo* as a potential, albeit partial and unreliable, ally of the working class. Thus Peter Taaffe’s British-based Committee for a Workers’ International (CWI) lauds Chávez for launching a “debate on the development of socialism” that is “crucial for the further development of the Venezuelan revolution” but complains that, “unfortunately,” Chávez “has no perspective of spreading a socialist revolution to other [!] countries of Latin America” (“Venezuela: Socialism Back on the Agenda,” 6 October).

Then there is the League for the Fifth International (L5I) centered on the British Workers Power group, which titles a chapter in its *Anti-Capitalism: A Rough Guide to the Anti-Capitalist Movement* (2005) “Hugo Chávez: A New Leader for the Anticapitalist Movement?” Polemicizing against admirers of the Mexican Zapatistas who believe that it is

(continued on page 20)

Venezuela...

(continued from page 19)

possible to effect social change without taking power, the LSI writes:

“Chávez at least shows that genuine reforms cannot come by pleading, which have brought the precious few results for the Mexican peasants, but rather come from seeking to take hold of power. Chávez’s faults lie in his unwillingness to destroy all those elements of the Venezuelan state—the judiciary, and police above all—which hamper and frustrate progress.”

Chávez will not destroy the agencies of repression that are at the core of the bourgeois state—the judiciary, the police, the prison system and, “above all,” the army—because he *administers* the bourgeois state. Sweeping away the dictatorship of capital in Venezuela means sweeping away the bourgeois regime through *proletarian* revolution, not lecturing the capitalist strongman as though he were a wayward apprentice. Indeed, as his left camp followers complain, Chávez has not even purged many individual recalcitrants from his military and police command, as happens after almost every Latin American coup.

Under its patina of pseudo-Leninist rhetoric, the LSI promotes the essence of social-democratic reformism—the notion that the bourgeois state need not be smashed on the anvil of proletarian revolution but can be reformed into serving as an instrument of social transformation. In Britain, Workers Power’s home terrain, this has historically taken the form of slavish loyalty to the pro-capitalist, parliamentarist Labour Party (in which the IMT’s British group remains deeply buried). In Venezuela, it means whitewashing the fact that populist strongman Chávez is the class enemy of the proletarian struggle for socialism.

Populism, Neoliberalism—Two Sides of a Coin

The popularity of Chávez and his “Bolivarian Revolution” among idealistic young leftists—and wizened opportunists—must be understood against the backdrop of the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union. Among radical youth, nurtured by more than a decade of “death of communism” propaganda from the “left” and the right, the October Revolution is widely perceived to have been a “failed experiment.” They reject as well the Marxist understanding that the working class is the unique agency for social revolution



Reuters

Hugo Chávez embracing Fidel Castro in Bolívar City, Venezuela, 2001.

against the capitalist order. Moreover, capitalism has, by and large, been equated with that particular set of economic policies known as “neoliberalism”—widespread privatization of public facilities, destruction of social welfare programs, untrammled imperialist aggrandizement.

The recent history of Venezuela amply demonstrates that neoliberalism and populism are nothing but two faces of the same coin, sometimes carried out by the same bourgeois regime in different periods. Carlos Andrés Pérez of Democratic Action (AD), for example, is remembered as the president who nationalized oil and mining in the mid 1970s and also as the president who introduced IMF shock treatment. AD spouted social-democratic rhetoric and controlled the corporatist CTV trade-union federation. Buoyed by a surge in oil revenues in the 1970s, the bourgeoisie amassed enormous wealth. At the same time, the AD and the bourgeois, pro-Catholic COPEI party, which was at different times the AD’s rival and its partner, presided over the highest wages for workers anywhere in Latin America, as well as extensive price controls and subsidies for food, transportation, education, health care and other necessities.

But in the 1980s, the oil boom turned to bust and the huge imperialist debt bomb exploded, leading to a plunge in living standards for working people, massive cuts in social services

ICL Declaration of Principles and Some Elements of Program

— Now available in Tagalog! —

The Declaration of Principles of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist) is a concrete expression of our purpose: to build national sections of a democratic-centralist international which can lead the struggle for worldwide socialist revolution.

Chinese	\$1.25	Japanese	\$2.50
English	\$2.50	Polish	\$1.25
French	\$2.50	Portuguese	\$1.25
German	\$2.50	Russian	\$1.25
Greek	\$1.25	Spanish	\$1.50
Indonesian	\$1.25	Tagalog	\$1.25
Italian	\$1.25	Turkish	\$1.25

Make checks payable/mail to: SCPA, Box 6867, Station A, Toronto ON M5W 1X6

SPARTACIST

NUMBER 21 ENGLISH EDITION SPRING 2001

For New October Revolutions!

Third International Conference of the ICL
SEE PAGE 2

Declaration of Principles and Some Elements of Program
International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist)
SEE PAGE 2

On the Origins and Development of Leninist Organizational Practices
SEE PAGE 2A

Organizational Rules and Guidelines
International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist)
SEE PAGE 31

Women and Permanent Revolution in South Africa
SEE PAGE 48

SPARTACIST

Deklarasyon ng mga Prinsipyo at Ilang Elemento ng Programa
International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist)

1. Pangangailangan ng Sosyalistang Rebolusyon at ang Internasyonal Komunistang League (Fourth Internationalist)

and other stringent austerity measures. The portion of the population living below the poverty line nearly doubled, from 36 to 66 percent, between 1984 and 1995. As industry and agriculture declined, large numbers of formerly unionized workers and the rural dispossessed were driven into the low-wage “informal economy,” trying to eke out an existence as street vendors, servants, temporary workers, etc. The rate of trade-union membership dropped from 26.4 percent in 1988 to 13.5 percent in 1995, leaving the CTV as the preserve of a relatively privileged layer of oil and other public-sector workers.

In 1989, Pérez introduced his *paquetazo*, the “big package” of austerity measures. This provoked mass protests, the *Caracazo*, which were brutally suppressed. In an essay in *Venezuelan Politics in the Chávez Era* (ed. Steve Ellner and Daniel Hellinger [2003]), Kenneth Roberts writes:

“The combination of social polarization and political detachment proved to be highly combustible after 1989, as Venezuelans turned on the political establishment and threw their support to a series of independent leaders and protest parties. By the end of the 1990s, widespread disillusionment produced a ground swell of support for the consummate political outsider: a former paratrooper commander who captured the popular imagination by leading a failed coup attempt against a discredited democratic regime.”

These were classic conditions for the emergence of a populist strongman like Chávez.

Another example of a Latin American populist nationalist was Mexico’s Lázaro Cárdenas, who nationalized foreign oil companies and made significant land distributions to the peasantry in the 1930s. He also broke strikes and subordinated the working class through the corporatist CTM labor federation. In a May 1939 article titled “Nationalized Industry and Workers’ Management,” Trotsky noted:

“In the industrially backward countries foreign capital plays a decisive role. Hence the relative weakness of the *national* bourgeoisie in relation to the *national* proletariat. This creates special conditions of state power. The government veers between foreign and domestic capital, between the weak national bourgeoisie and the relatively powerful proletariat. This gives the government a Bonapartist character of a distinctive character. It raises itself, so to speak, above classes. Actually, it can govern either by making itself the instrument of foreign capitalism and holding the proletariat in the chains of a police dictatorship, or by maneuvering with the proletariat and even going so far as to make concessions to it, thus gaining the possibility of a certain freedom toward the foreign capitalists.”

Bonapartism in Venezuela

In Venezuela, AD founder Rómulo Betancourt, who talked of socialism, governed in league with the military in the 1940s and purged the unions of Communists, turning the CTV into a tame corporatist labor adjunct of AD. Reading from the same script, Chávez advanced social reforms aimed at consolidating a base of support among the plebeian poor. His aim was to use this base as a battering ram not only against his enemies in the oligarchy but particularly against the CTV labor federation, whose top leadership was not only part of AD but also tied to the CIA through the AFL-CIO labor bureaucracy in the U.S.

Under the battle cry of bringing “democracy” to the CTV, Chávez sought to bring the unions to heel. He assumed office in 1998 declaring that the CTV “must be demolished” and tried, unsuccessfully, to ram through a union-busting referendum two years later. For their part, the notoriously pro-imperialist CTV union tops joined with the oil bosses and other anti-Chávez sectors of the bourgeoisie and military in the botched 2002 coup and the lengthy strike/lockout in the oil industry that began later that year.

In April 2003, the Bolivarian Workers Force (FBT) in the CTV and other *chavista* union bureaucrats set up a new union federation under the umbrella of the government. The Unión Nacional de Trabajadores (UNT—National Union of Workers) garnered fully 76.5 percent of labor agreements signed in 2003-04, according to Chávez’s Ministry of Labor, while the CTV captured a bare 20 percent. The UNT has now won the favor of the UN’s International Labor Organization and the pro-imperialist Trades Union Congress tops in Britain. It has also been enthusiastically touted by the fake left internationally, including those groups that offer some tepid criticism of Chávez himself. In particular, such groups hail the occasional plant occupations and the UNT’s call for “*cogestión*” (misrepresented as “workers control”) as evidence that the “Bolivarian Revolution” is not simply a product of government policy but is driven by working-class struggle at the base of Venezuelan society.

Socialist Worker (5 August 2005), newspaper of the U.S. International Socialist Organization (ISO), reported rhapsodically that UNT leaders had called for the “formation of a mass workers party that can fight for the socialist revolution in Venezuela.” Striking a slightly more critical pose, the Internationalist Group (IG) writes in the *Internationalist* (September-October 2005): “The UNT has adopted socialist language, and even criticizes government plans for ‘co-management,’ calling for ‘workers control.’ However, none of the main sectors of the UNT has adopted a revolutionary (continued on page 22)

Workers Vanguard

Marxist biweekly of the
Spartacist League/U.S.

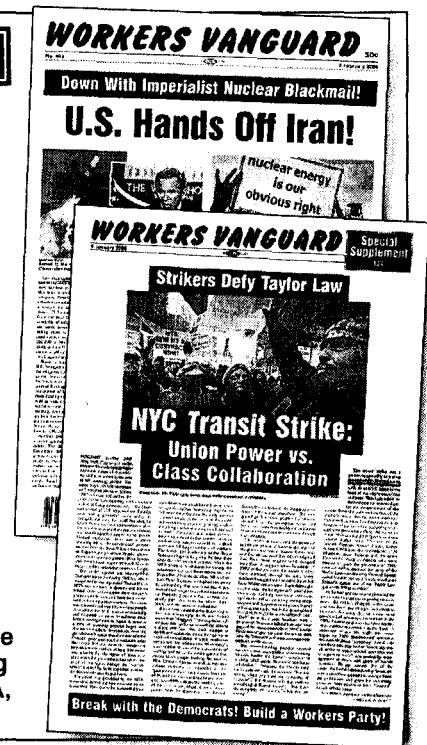
No. 863,
3 February 2006

50¢

Includes
New York Transit
Strike Supplement

Subscription:
\$14 for 21 issues

Order from/make checks payable
to: Spartacist Canada Publishing
Association, Box 6867, Station A,
Toronto ON M5W 1X6



Venezuela...

(continued from page 21)

program aiming at preparing the socialist revolution. Rather they seek to pressure the Chávez government to the left." Particularly coming from the IG, this is a rather mild way of describing a union federation that was established under the wing of the Chávez government.

You would not know it from reading its latest article, but the IG was singing a different tune in a November 2000 article titled "Against Chávez, the Stock Market and the IMF—Venezuela: Mobilize Workers Power to Defeat the Anti-Union Referendum!" That article, which appeared in Spanish on its Web site, depicted the Venezuelan populist as simply a stooge of the Caracas stock exchange and the imperialists and played down the dangers of U.S. imperialist intervention, as well as the CTV's organic ties to the bourgeois AD and its historic connections to the CIA's "labor" fronts in Latin America.

What particularly caught our eye at the time was that the IG did *not* describe the CTV as corporatist, an omission all the more remarkable given its use of that label as a justification for *not* defending the Mexican CTM labor federation against government attack. We observed: "Given its history of lining up behind 'anti-imperialist' nationalists from Mexico to Puerto Rico and beyond, one could have expected the IG to cozy up to the nationalist-populist Chávez" ("IG on Venezuela: Opportunism Makes Strange Bedfellows," *WV* No. 787, 20 September 2002). Having finally sniffed which way the wind is blowing, the IG is now racing to place itself on the left flank of the Bolivarian Revolution fan club. The IG now consigns the CTV to the dustbin.

The UNT leaders certainly talk a more radical line than the CIA-connected CTV tops, but they are no less tied to the capitalist government. In September, the UNT and FBT organized a "political education workshop" in Caracas "with the collaboration of the Ministry of Labour," according to a report by Jorge Martin (www.handsoffvenezuela.org, 26 September). A resolution passed there talked of "the historical struggle for the emancipation of the working class," "socialism as the hope of the oppressed classes of the world" and the need to expropriate the means of production. Prefacing all of this fiery rhetoric was an abject promise to "ratify the leading role of our president Hugo Chavez Frias in this

democratic and participatory revolution." All talk of socialist revolution and a mass workers party is simply hot air in the absence of a struggle for *the complete and unconditional independence of the proletariat from the capitalist state and its political parties.*

The "Cogestión" Scam

In trumpeting the scam of "*cogestión*" (co-management), which is promoted by Chávez and the UNT as "workers control," the reformist left helps strengthen the stranglehold of the capitalist state over the Venezuelan labor movement. In the U.S., the Workers World Party exults that "Workers Are Taking Control in Venezuela": "Everywhere in Venezuela today workers are forging ahead with new formations of workers' organization. They are taking over factories here, experimenting with co-management there. Workers are challenging the old class relationships and coming to a collective realization of their historic role in the struggle for socialism" (*Workers World*, 5 May 2005).

In Marxist terms, workers control is not an institution, nor is it a demand to be raised for implementation by the bourgeoisie. It is dual power at the point of production in a revolutionary crisis—i.e., the workers have the power to veto management actions they oppose. It can only end in the workers seizing state power through a socialist revolution or in the capitalists reasserting their power through a counter-revolution. What is being passed off as "workers control" by the cynical pro-Chávez "left" is in fact a scheme to *institutionalize class collaboration* and more tightly bind the workers organizations to the capitalists and their state. There is nothing new in this. In Trotsky's unfinished 1940 article "Trade Unions in the Epoch of Imperialist Decay," he wrote:

"The management of railways, oil fields, etc., through labor organizations has nothing in common with workers control over industry, for in the essence of the matter the management is effected through the labor bureaucracy which is independent of the workers but, in return, completely dependent on the bourgeois state."

In Venezuela today, the main example of "workers control" is the paper supplies factory Venepal (now Invepal). Formerly employing 1,600 workers, by the time this bankrupt company was nationalized in January, only 350 workers remained. The company, in dire straits since 1997, had simply not been able to restart production after supporting the



Rochkind/Polaris



Prensa Presidencial

Left: State-owned ALCASA aluminum mill, where workers elect some managers and directors. Right: Chávez with workers at Invepal paper factory following January nationalization of bankrupt company. "Co-management" schemes help prop up bourgeois order.



Viktor Bulla

Working class in power: Putilov factory workers meet to elect representatives to Petrograd Soviet, 1920.

2002 lockout against Chávez. The workers finally turned to Chávez, who went on to nationalize the company. However, the company was to be directly run initially by the state, and only at a later stage would it be converted to a co-management structure between workers and the state under the direct supervision of Labor Minister María Cristina Iglesias. Six months after the IMT originally cried “socialism!” over the Venepal nationalization, the Grantites were forced to acknowledge in an Internet article (18 July) that “the leaders of the union have taken the step of disbanding the union and are hoping to buy off the state’s stake in the company so that they can be the sole owners and keep any profits from production” (Jorge Martin, “Chavez Announces Expropriation of Closed Factories”).

Another example of “co-management” is the ALCASA aluminum mill in Ciudad Guayana, whose board now includes two directors elected by the workers and four appointed by the state, according to a report in the *Militant* (15 August 2005), newspaper of the U.S. Socialist Workers Party. One local leader of the Sintralcasa union said that he was not for wholesale nationalization, explaining: “We depend a lot on the U.S. economy, so we’re not for bringing down the empire.” Another said, “Now that we have co-management, the union no longer speaks only of raising wages” and continued, “we have to increase production and lower costs.”

The ISO’s *Socialist Worker* assures its readers that “co-gestion has nothing in common with socialdemocratic co-management.” In fact, that is essentially what it is, a variant of what is known in Germany as *Mitbestimmung* (co-determination), implemented through plant councils (*Betriebsräte*) that by law, if not always in practice, include representatives of management. Perhaps even more pertinent to the situation in Venezuela is the example of “autogestion” (self-management) in post-colonial Algeria in the early 1960s. The Union Générale des Travailleurs Algériens (UGTA) organized independent workers’ self-management committees in the factories and on the agricultural estates abandoned by the departing French colonialists. Fearful of a challenge to its rule, the very left-talking bourgeois-nationalist

FLN (National Liberation Front) regime of Ahmed Ben Bella pushed through the institutionalization of self-management and ever greater state regimentation of the UGTA. Once the power of the working class had been shackled, the “socialist” Ben Bella was ousted through a palace coup.

A central role in the betrayal of the Algerian workers was played by Michel Pablo, who served as an adviser to the capitalist FLN government. Pablo’s pamphlet *World in Revolution* boasted that he “helped codify and institutionalize self-management in Algeria, and draft the Algerian Reform Law and economic and social policy in the country between 1962 and 1965” (see “They Never Learn,” *WW* No. 86, 21 November 1975). Some years earlier, as a central leader of the Trotskyist Fourth International (FI), Pablo authored the liquidationist program that was responsible for the destruction of the FI. Today, Alan Woods’ IMT, whose political lineage goes right back to Pablo, aspires to play Pablo’s role in Venezuela.

History will reserve a harsh verdict for those “leftists” who promote one or another left-talking capitalist *caudillo*. The way forward for the downtrodden throughout the Americas does not lie through painting nationalist strongmen as revolutionaries and populist forays as revolutions. It lies instead in constructing national sections of a reformed Fourth International in the spirit of uncompromising revolutionary hostility to any and all kinds of capitalist rule. South of the Rio Bravo, such parties will have to be built in political struggle against widespread illusions in populism and nationalism. In the United States, the belly of the imperialist beast, a revolutionary workers party will be built in the struggle to break the proletariat from the Democratic and Republican parties of capital and to replace the pro-imperialist AFL-CIO tops with a class-struggle leadership. ■

Toronto Spartacus Youth Club Class Series

Mar. 1: For Women’s Liberation Through Socialist Revolution! Free Abortion on Demand!

Mar. 15: From Berlin to Moscow—The ICL’s Fight Against Capitalist Counterrevolution—For New October Revolutions!

University of Toronto, Sidney Smith Bldg., Room 2112,
100 St. George Street, Wednesdays, 6:30 p.m.

**Trotskyist League/Ligue trotskyste Forum:
Canadian Imperialists: Out of Afghanistan, Haiti!**

Saturday, April 8, 7:00 p.m., OISE, 252 Bloor St. West
(at St. George Subway), University of Toronto

For more information on Toronto events, contact the
TL/SYC at 416-593-4138 or spartacan@on.aibn.com

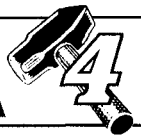
Vancouver Spartacus Youth Club Class Series

Mar. 8: For Women’s Liberation Through Socialist Revolution! Free Abortion on Demand!

Mar. 22: Trotskyism vs. Bourgeois Nationalism:
For International Workers Revolution to
Defeat Imperialism!

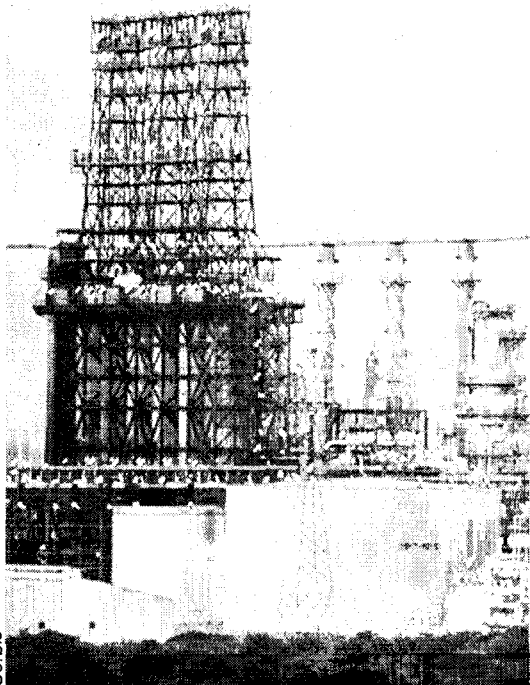
University of British Columbia, Student Union Bldg.,
Room 224, Wednesdays, 5:00 p.m.

In Vancouver, call 604-687-0353 or email tllt@look.ca



Venezuela: Populist Nationalism vs. Proletarian Revolution

— White House Vendetta Against Chávez —



Corbis



AP

Oil refinery in Puerto La Cruz, Venezuela, world's fifth-largest oil producing country. Right: Populist strongman Hugo Chávez speaks to massive demonstration in Caracas, 2004.

The following is reprinted from Workers Vanguard (No. 860, 9 December 2005), newspaper of the Spartacist League/U.S.

U.S. imperialism continues to pose a clear and present danger to the government of Hugo Chávez in Venezuela. Since being elected president in 1998, Chávez has survived a short-lived coup (in 2002), a months-long effort by a section of the Venezuelan bourgeoisie to shut down oil production, and a well-financed recall referendum, all backed by Washington. And if it were not bogged down in Iraq, the Bush gang might well have organized further provocations.

The very things that have made Chávez a thorn in the side of the arrogant U.S. rulers have made him an idol for masses of impoverished barrio residents in Venezuela and for large numbers of young leftists around the world. Chávez has called Bush an imbecile (*pendejo*) and ostentatiously embraces Washington's chief nemesis in the Western Hemi-

sphere, Cuban leader Fidel Castro. Chávez has condemned the U.S. occupation of Iraq and denounced the "neoliberal" economic policies promoted by the U.S. in Latin America and elsewhere. He has launched social programs benefiting the rural and urban poor in Venezuela and embarrassed the Bush administration by offering to provide relief for the dispossessed people of New Orleans. Most recently, through its CITGO affiliate, Venezuela has begun supplying the poor of the Bronx and parts of Massachusetts with cheap gas and oil for heat this winter.

This last January [2005], when Chávez, speaking under the auspices of the imperialist-funded World Social Forum in Porto Alegre, Brazil, proclaimed that capitalism must be "transcended" through socialism, his largely leftist audience burst into delighted soccer-style chants of "Olé, Olé, Olé, Chávez, Chávez." But Chávez is no socialist. A former army

(continued on page 17)