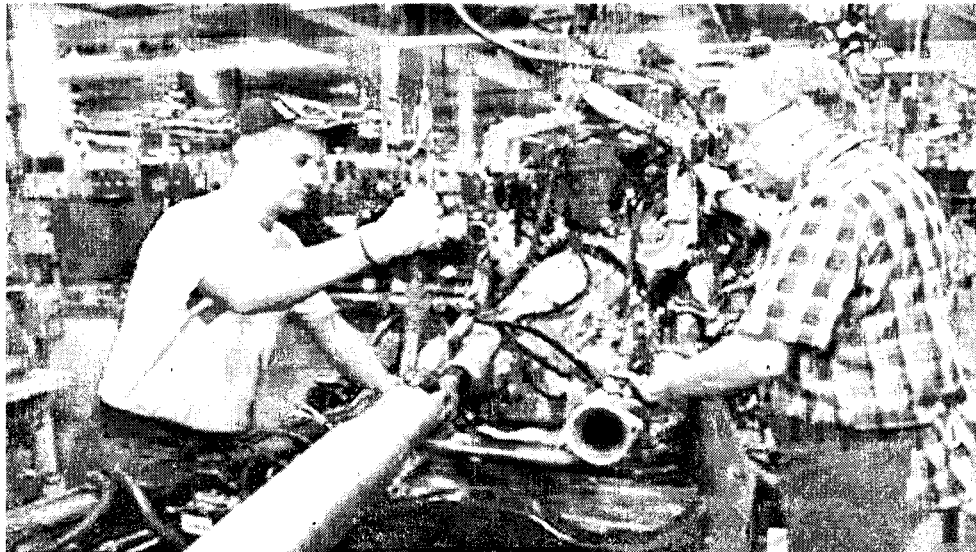


Union Tops Surrender Hard-Won Gains **Bosses Wage War on Auto Workers**



Cassese/Reuters

CAW president Ken Lewenza announces massive givebacks demanded by GM and government, May 22 (top). Workers at now-closed GM truck assembly plant in Oshawa (right).



Bets/Bloomberg News

For an International Planned Socialist Economy!

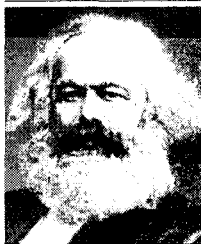
With the most severe economic downturn since the Great Depression growing worse, the capitalists and their governments say that "all must sacrifice." For the ruling class, whose anarchic system of production for profit wrought this disaster, "all" means the working class, who face layoffs, slashed wages and benefits, and draconian cuts in pensions and social services. Meanwhile, the capitalists are being handed billions of dollars in government bailouts.

Atop the agenda of the modern-day robber barons is making unionized auto workers pay for the financial collapse of the Big Three auto producers. From the start, the drawn-out auto bailout proceedings have focused on how best to break the backs of the unions, the United Auto Workers (UAW) in the U.S. and Canadian Auto Workers (CAW) north of the

border. The attacks on these unions, once among the most powerful in North America, are meant to serve as a wedge against all working people, furthering a brutal "race to the bottom" of cascading concessions to the bosses.

The Obama administration in the U.S. and the Canadian and Ontario provincial governments have demanded that tens of thousands more auto jobs be axed and that the benefits and wages of the remaining workforce be reduced to the level of the non-union, mainly foreign-owned auto plants. Criminally, the union bureaucracies have surrendered across the board. The UAW under Ron Gettelfinger has agreed to enormous concessions including 16 plant closures at General Motors alone, in exchange for nearly worthless company stock. The union's health-care trust fund is supposed to get up to a 20 percent "ownership" stake in GM and 55 percent of Chrysler as well as seats on the board. These sellouts, which flow from the union bureaucracy's support for the capitalist system, are a flagrant betrayal of the workers' interests, which can only go forward through class struggle *against* the capitalists.

In Canada, the CAW bureaucracy under Ken Lewenza has
(continued on page 12)



Marx



Lenin



Trotsky

Marxist Leadership and Class Struggle

We print below an excerpt from a 1953 letter by James P. Cannon, founding leader of the then-Trotskyist American Socialist Workers Party, to Hildegard Swabek of the SWP's Chicago branch. At the time, Cannon was heading a factional struggle against an SWP minority which was retreating from the fight for revolutionary proletarian leadership in the face of the difficulties of Cold War reaction in the U.S. These included a sharp decline in union struggle and the anti-Communist purges that had driven the best militants out of the unions.

Cannon's letter centers on the indispensability of the struggle for a programmatically clear Marxist leadership if the workers are to be liberated from capitalist exploitation. These points are wholly pertinent today, as the pro-capitalist misleaders of the labour movement in the U.S. and Canada surrender massive givebacks to the capitalists amid the global economic crisis.

The world knows Marx as the author of *Capital*. But we, his disciples, also know him as the founder and leader of the First International, and the theoretical inspirer of the socialist labor movement which grew up in his lifetime. The struggle of Marx and Engels during the period of the First International, and in the regroupment of the labor movement afterward, to the end of their lives, was a two-fold struggle. On the one hand, they fought for the unity of the working class, summed up in the great slogan of the *Communist Manifesto*: "Workers of the World, Unite!" On the other hand, they fought for clarity of program which alone could make this unity conscious and effective, and in the end victorious. This struggle for clarity of program, which they never relaxed, involved them in unceasing controversies and polemics, which they never sought to avoid. On the contrary, they openly fought against all attempts to smuggle bourgeois ide-

ology into the labor movement under the various guises of anarchism and opportunism.

The great battles of Marx and Engels against the Bakuninist anarchists; against the Lassalleans; against conciliation with confusion in the name of unity, which called forth the classic commentary on the Gotha Program—all this from beginning to end was a factional struggle. Without it the revolutionary political movement could not have been constituted and maintained; the line of continuity of Marx's thought could not have been kept unbroken by successors; and we and our party would not be here today. We owe our political existence to the valiant faction battles waged by the founders of scientific socialism and the two great disciples who came after them.

The main weight of the struggle for the socialist transformation of society is not in the direct struggle of the workers against the bourgeoisie. The workers are such an overwhelming majority, and their strength is multiplied so many times by their strategic position in production, that if they were united to act consciously in their own interests their victory over the bourgeoisie would be a mere pushover. But they are not united, not class conscious. The reason for this is the influence of bourgeois ideology in the ranks of the workers. This influence is carried into the ranks of the workers in various ways, but its most direct representatives are the labor bureaucracy. That is why our main struggle against the bourgeoisie takes the form, in the first place, of a struggle against their agents in the labor movement. Nobody ever improved De Leon's classic definition of the conservative labor fakers as "the labor lieutenants of the capitalist class." Lenin was especially pleased with this striking characterization. And nobody ever emphasized the primacy of the struggle against these labor lieutenants of the capitalist class more than Lenin did....

The experience of 100 years has shown that bourgeois influence and ideology is also carried into the political organizations of the workers, even the most advanced ones, in various indirect forms, and frequently gets the upper hand there, resulting in the transformation of these political organizations into supporting props of the capitalist regime instead of organs of struggle against it.

—James P. Cannon, "Mass Work and Factional Struggle" (1953), reprinted in *Speeches to the Party* (Pathfinder Press, 1973)

SPARTACIST

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Correction

SC No. 160 (Spring 2009) wrongly said that the article "Zionist Bloodbath in Gaza" was reprinted from *Workers Vanguard* No. 927, 27 January. The correct date for WV No. 927 was 2 January.

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China

Charter 08: Program for “Democratic” Counterrevolution

The following article is reprinted from Workers Vanguard No. 933, 27 March.

In December, a document titled Charter 08 appeared on the Internet in China. Signed by some 300 individuals, largely intellectuals and academics, it has since garnered another 8,000 signatories. An English translation was quickly circulated abroad and then published in the *New York Review of Books* (15 January). The capitalist media in the U.S. and elsewhere has heaped praise on Charter 08. An editorial in the *London Financial Times* (7 January) saluted it as “a powerfully written affirmation of universal human rights.” A *Washington Post* editorial (30 January) called it China’s “new democracy movement.”

Charter 08 is an explicit program for capitalist counterrevolution in the Chinese deformed workers state, wrapped in the envelope of “democracy.” Its initiators seek to emulate the imperialist-backed “human rights” dissidents in East Europe who spearheaded the counterrevolutions in the former Soviet bloc in 1989-92. The Charter calls for “free elections” as a political mechanism for capitalist-restorationist parties to attain governmental power. It demands the privatization of the collectivized core of the Chinese economy—the state-owned enterprises—as well as the land. In short, this is a program to reverse the social gains of the 1949 Revolution that, if realized, would plunge China back into imperialist subjugation and exploitation.

Charter 08 retrospectively supports the imperialist-backed Guomindang (Nationalist Party) of Chiang Kai-shek against the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) during the civil war of the late 1940s: “Victory over Japan in 1945 offered one more chance for China to move toward modern government, but the Communist defeat of the Nationalists in the civil war thrust the nation into the abyss of totalitarianism.”

The 1949 Chinese Revolution was a progressive social revolution of world-historic significance. Hundreds of millions of peasants rose up and seized the land on which their forebears had been exploited from time immemorial. The creation of a centrally planned, collectivized economy laid the basis for enormous social progress. The revolution enabled women to advance by magnitudes over their previous miserable status rooted in the old Confucian order in



George Bush in May 2006 hosts Chinese anti-Communist “human rights” dissidents Li Baiguang, Wang Yi, Yu Jie (left to right), later signatories to Charter 08.

Getty

such practices as forced marriage and concubinage. A nation that had been ravaged and divided by foreign powers was unified and freed from imperialist subjugation.

However, the Revolution was deformed from its inception under the rule of Mao Zedong’s CCP regime, a nationalist bureaucratic caste resting atop the workers state. Unlike the Russian October Revolution of 1917, which was carried out by a class-conscious proletariat guided by the Bolshevik internationalism of Lenin and Trotsky, the Chinese Revolution was the result of peasant guerrilla war led by Mao’s Stalinist-nationalist forces. Patterned after the Stalinist bureaucracy that had usurped power in the USSR, Mao and his successors, including today’s Hu Jintao regime, have preached the profoundly anti-Marxist notion that socialism—a classless, egalitarian society based on material abundance—could be built in a single country. In practice, “socialism in one country” has meant accommodation to world imperialism and opposition to the perspective of international workers revolution that is essential for the advance to socialism.

As Trotskyists, we stand for the unconditional military
(continued on page 19)

**Defend the Chinese Bureaucratically Deformed
Workers State! For Workers Political Revolution!**

British MP George Galloway Barred From Canada

We print below a March 21 Partisan Defense Committee letter to Jason Kenney, federal minister of citizenship and immigration, protesting the government's banning of George Galloway. A well-known defender of the Palestinian people in the face of Zionist terror and occupation, Galloway had been invited to speak at meetings in the Toronto area, Ottawa and Montreal. Unsuccessful in overturning this outrageous ban, he addressed the meetings via video link from New York. The PDC is a class-struggle, non-sectarian legal and social defense organization which champions cases and causes in the interest of the whole of the working people. This purpose is in accordance with the political views of the Trotskyist League/Ligue trotskyste.

We protest your refusal to allow British MP George Galloway to enter Canada and the outrageous allegations that he represents a threat to national security and supports "terrorist organizations." His real "crimes" in the eyes of the Canadian government are his opposition to NATO's bloody war of occupation in Afghanistan and his leadership of a convoy of British vehicles which carried food and other aid to the Palestinian

Gaza Strip in the aftermath of the Israeli government's bloody invasion.

The banning of George Galloway is the latest chapter in the Canadian government's attacks on those who defend the Palestinian people against Zionist terror. In February, you targeted CUPE Ontario's president Sid Ryan because of his pro-Palestinian stance. This month, for the same reason, you attacked student organizers of Israeli Apartheid Week and vindictively cut funding to the Canadian Arab Federation's English-language programs for new immigrants.

These actions mark a broadening of the vicious "war on terror" which targets particularly Muslims for state repression. Tamil organizations, too, have been banned as "terrorist." In reality, the "war on terror" is not a "war" at all, but a political pretext to drastically expand state repression and ever-more sharply curtail the democratic rights of everyone.

We stand with millions of workers and others around the world in defense of the Palestinians and all oppressed peoples in their struggles for national and social justice. Down with the ban on George Galloway! Down with the racist "war on terror"! ■

Reinstatement of Death Sentence Still Looms—Free Mumia Now!

Racist Supreme Court Denies Mumia's Appeal

The following statement was issued on April 7 by the Partisan Defense Committee in the U.S. It was first published in Workers Vanguard No. 934, 10 April.

Mumia Abu-Jamal's life is in imminent danger! In a naked display of racist contempt, the U.S. Supreme Court on April 6 summarily turned down without comment Mumia's petition to overturn the frame-up conviction that led to a death sentence for this innocent man. While it took less than one business day for the Court to reject Mumia's petition, which was based on the exclusion of eleven of 15 prospective black jurors from his 1982 trial, the racists in black robes have for weeks been considering the Philadelphia district attorney's appeal to reinstate the death sentence, which was overturned by U.S. District Court Judge William Yohn in 2001. Make no mistake! **The neo-segregationist high court of American capitalism could well be preparing the noose for Abu-Jamal's legal lynching.** What is necessary is the mobilization of the multiracial working class independent of and in opposition to the capitalist state and its political representatives, whether Democrat, Republican or Green. **Free Mumia! Abolish the racist death penalty!**

A former Black Panther Party spokesman, supporter of the Philadelphia MOVE organization and award-winning journalist, Mumia was framed up on charges of killing Philadelphia police officer Daniel Faulkner on 9 December 1981. For 27 years, the cops, prosecutors, bourgeois politicians and their media jackals have howled for Mumia's blood because they see in Mumia a voice of defiant opposition to all forms of racist discrimination. Mountains of evidence, not least the confession of Arnold Beverly that he, not Mumia, shot and

killed Faulkner, have proven Mumia's innocence. But court after court has refused to even consider the evidence. As Mumia put it in an April 6 interview, the Court's decision shows that "law is politics by other means and that the Constitution means nothing, that a fair jury means nothing." Mumia's case demonstrates that **there is no justice in the capitalist courts.** The courts, prisons and police exist to maintain, through organized violence and terror, the rule of the capitalists over working people.

Since taking up Mumia's case in 1987, we have advocated pursuing all possible legal proceedings, while fighting against any illusions in the courts of the capitalist class enemy. Our program of class-struggle defense is diametrically opposed to that of the liberals and reformists, who promote dangerous illusions that the courts can provide justice for Mumia. These illusions have been codified in the subordination of the demand for Mumia's freedom to the call for a "new trial." This has been promoted for many years by the Workers World Party, International Socialist Organization, Socialist Action (SA), International Concerned Family and Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal led by Pam Africa and the San Francisco Mobilization to Free Mumia Abu-Jamal led by SA honcho Jeff Mackler.

We fight for Mumia's freedom as part of the struggle for black liberation based on the program of revolutionary integrationism. We fight against every manifestation of racist oppression, a struggle that can be victorious only through the full social, political and economic integration of black people into an egalitarian **socialist** society. **For black liberation through socialist revolution! Mumia Abu-Jamal is innocent! Free Mumia now! Abolish the racist death penalty!** ■

Down with Racist “Anti-Gang” Hysteria

B.C.’s “Pick-Your-Poison” Elections

The May 12 B.C. provincial elections saw the defeat of the social-democratic NDP at the hands of the right-wing Liberals, who won a third straight majority government. The B.C. political scene remains polarized, a distorted reflection of the history of militant class battles there: at 46 percent of the popular vote, Gordon Campbell’s Liberals won with the backing of virtually all the bosses’ organizations, chambers of commerce, etc., while Carole James’ NDP, scoring 42 percent, retains the support of the union officialdom and much of the working class.

The NDP won in many of the economically devastated regions of Vancouver Island and the Interior, as well as in heavily working-class and immigrant neighbourhoods of the Vancouver area. At the same time, voter turnout was the lowest in history, reflecting cynicism among working people for the electoral charade.

As the Vancouver Trotskyist League’s April 30 statement, printed below, makes clear, “gang violence” was the hot-button issue used by the NDP to demonstrate its commitment to maintaining the “law and order” of this unjust, decrepit capitalist system. In the May 3 televised leaders’ debate, James attacked Campbell *from the right*, accusing him of not putting enough money into “fighting crime.”

For their part, the labour misleaders heavily pushed protectionism as the answer to the devastation of B.C.’s industries. Echoing this, the Fightback group—a pro-NDP outfit that postures as “Trotskyist”—lamented that the NDP is not protectionist enough. “Instead of *banning* raw log exports,” they complained, “the [NDP] platform calls for *restricting* them!” They go on to castigate Gordon Campbell for “allow[ing] lumber companies to shut down mills and send raw logs to China where they are milled in sweatshops, while thousands of workers are laid off here” (marxist.ca, 8 May). This China-bashing is par for the course for these anti-Communist reformists, whose forebears supported capitalist counterrevolution in the former USSR and East Europe. In contrast, our defense of China, a bureaucratically deformed workers state where capitalism was overthrown in 1949, is key to our struggle to render workers conscious of their historic and internationalist interests.

The May 12 B.C. provincial election comes amid the growing capitalist economic crisis. With layoffs mounting and people’s pensions being destroyed by this parasitic capitalist system, the economy is the number one concern on working people’s minds. But there is no party representing the interest of workers in these elections. We of the Trotskyist League oppose on principle voting for the outright capitalist parties—Liberals or Greens—who directly represent the interests of the bosses. The NDP is no choice for workers either, given their treacherous track record of imposing austerity and breaking strikes, and their thoroughly pro-capitalist politics. In power the NDP administers the capitalist state

and out of power they continue to prop up the bourgeois system. We say: No vote to the NDP! The working class urgently needs to forge an authentic class-struggle workers party to sweep away this decrepit capitalist system.

The backdrop for these elections is a racist law-and-order “anti-gang” hysteria in the Lower Mainland that particularly targets South Asian youth. Whipped up by the Vancouver area police, the gutter press and both Liberal and NDP politicians around a few high-profile shootings, this cynical campaign has but one clear and unmistakable objective: to deflect



David Yorke

Victoria, 17 October 2005: B.C. union rally defending striking teachers against Liberal union-busting. NDP opposed strike.

the continued public outrage at killings and abuse at the hands of police—brought to light again with the Braidwood “public inquiry” into the death-by-taser of Polish immigrant Robert Dziekanski at the Vancouver airport in 2007.

With this inquiry, the cops aim to kill Robert Dziekanski all over again, slanderously portraying this man everyone in Poland seemed to love and respect as the stereotypical “drunken Pole.” Thanks only to amateur video footage taken at the time, everything that has come from the RCMP’s mouths—then and now—has been exposed as lies: that Dziekanski had been drinking, that he resisted the officers, that he did not react to the first taser shots—every single statement a lie. Just about everyone in B.C. shook their heads in disbelief as one officer reported being threatened by Dziekanski holding a small office stapler. As Dziekanski’s mother Zofia Cisowski aptly noted about the cops’ testimony, they “had only one thing in mind, which is to blame my son for his death” (*The Province*, 2 April).

(continued on page 16)

No Vote to the NDP! Forge a Revolutionary Workers Party!

For a Socialist United States of Europe! **Down With NATO!**



Sadeq/AP



Winning/Reuters

Left: Canadian soldier in Afghanistan, June 2008. Right: Riot cops attack London protesters during G-20 summit in April.

U.S./Canada/All NATO Troops Out of Afghanistan Now!

Statement of the International Communist League

The following statement was issued on March 27 by the International Executive Committee of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist). The statement was distributed by our comrades of the Ligue Trotskyste de France and the Spartakist Workers Party of Germany, sections of the ICL, at anti-NATO protests in Strasbourg, France. It was also distributed by the Spartacist League/Britain at the London G-20 protests on April 1 and 2, and by the Trotskyist League at an April 4 Toronto protest against the war in Afghanistan (see article, page 9).

To protect NATO's bloody imperialist rulers from justified outrage, the city center of Strasbourg was placed in a state of armed siege days before the summit, while in the suburbs thousands of anti-NATO demonstrators from across Europe were met with brutal cop terror. On April 4, an estimated 50 people were injured by France's notorious CRS riot cops. The French cops had taken their cue from the London cops, who had brutally suppressed the earlier G-20 protests. Ian Tomlin-

son, a 47-year-old man, was killed at the hands of rampaging London police as he walked home from work. A video clip posted on the London *Guardian* website (7 April) shows Tomlinson being clubbed with a baton from behind by a cop wearing a ski mask. Seconds later, the cop violently pushes Tomlinson to the ground. Minutes later he was dead. Over 300 people were arrested during the anti-NATO protests and at least six have been sentenced to three to six months in jail by a Strasbourg court. Such state repression targets the entire workers movement. **Free all the protesters! Drop all charges! For working-class protests against state repression!**

At their April meeting in Strasbourg, France, new U.S. president Barack Obama and the leaders of Germany, France and other NATO member states will celebrate the 60th anniversary of this imperialist alliance. The meeting will be held against the backdrop of the ongoing, brutal neocolonial occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan, the recent slaughter of Palestinians in Gaza, and a growing world economic crisis that threatens the livelihoods of hundreds of millions. Almost 18 years after the fall of the Soviet Union, the incessant bourgeois mantras about the superiority of capitalism notwithstanding, this deeply irrational system is itself proving once



Downing/Reuters

February 2009: Barack Obama and Stephen Harper, CEOs of U.S. and Canadian imperialism, meet in Ottawa.

again that Karl Marx was right.

The *only* way out of the blind alley into which capitalism has led humanity is international proletarian revolution to rip the productive forces from the hands of an exploiting minority and organize society on a rational basis. International workers rule is needed to clean up the mess that decaying capitalist-imperialism has made and to lay the basis for a classless, communist society in which economic scarcity, exploitation, oppression and war are relics of a benighted past. The starting point is the Marxist understanding that the working class cannot wield the capitalist state for its own interests; rather that state must be smashed and replaced by a workers state, the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Tens of thousands are expected to demonstrate against the NATO anniversary summit, and the bourgeois state is preparing to meet them with the jackboot of police repression. But the aim of the protest organizers—who reject the aims of communism and the proletarian, revolutionary and internationalist strategy needed to realize them—is to lobby the imperialists for a little “change” to better sell their system of exploitation to workers and the oppressed. The social democrats, liberal “anti-globalization” types and bourgeois-pacifists peddle hoary phrases about a “policy of peace” and “international cooperation” in order to deceive the masses and advance the interests of their *own* bourgeoisies. The anarchists mobilizing for the demos—with the call, for example, “Smash, we can!”—have nothing to offer but the illusion of “forcing” disarmament under capitalism.

The drive toward war is as inextricably rooted in the capitalist system as the drive to increase profit. Imperialism is the highest stage of capitalism, marked by the domination of the globe by a small exclusive club of capitalist great powers that lord it over the weaker, dependent nations. Twice in the past century, interimperialist competition for resources, markets and spheres of exploitation erupted in cataclysmic world wars. In 1915, in the midst of the first interimperialist war, the outstanding Bolshevik leader V. I. Lenin attacked those who spread illusions in capitalism by preaching “peace in general”:

“Nothing throws more dust in the eyes of the workers, nothing imbues them with a more deceptive idea about the *absence of*

deep contradictions between capitalism and socialism, nothing *embellishes* capitalist slavery more than this deception does. No, we must make use of the desire for peace so as to explain to the masses that the benefits they expect from peace cannot be obtained without a series of revolutions.”

Guided by this revolutionary program, Lenin and the Bolsheviks led the 1917 October Revolution, which overthrew capitalism and ripped Russia out of the First World War.

The NATO war alliance was forged after World War II—and the Soviet Red Army’s victory over Hitler’s Third Reich—as part of the imperialists’ drive to “roll back Communism.” From the Korean War in the 1950s to the military coup in the NATO outpost Turkey in 1980, the U.S.-led anti-Soviet crusade was sealed with the blood of millions of workers, leftists and oppressed nationalities. The imperialist world order of today is shaped by the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union in 1991-92. This was a historic defeat for the working masses internationally, especially for the populations of the former Soviet Union, Eastern Europe and the ex-DDR who have faced mass poverty. Capitalist restoration was accompanied by and further fueled communalist slaughter and fratricidal blood-letting, as seen most recently in the war between Russia and the U.S. client state of Georgia. The collapse of the USSR fueled the imperialists’ appetites to stomp all over the world with impunity. The catastrophic results of counterrevolution underline the vital importance today of the unconditional military defense of China, the most powerful of the remaining bureaucratically deformed workers states, and the other countries where capitalist rule has been overthrown: Cuba, North Korea and Vietnam. We call for proletarian political revolution to replace the parasitic Stalinist bureaucracies with regimes based on workers democracy and Bolshevik internationalism.

Barack Obama: Commander-in-Chief of Racist U.S. Imperialism

Today, it’s necessary to reassert the elementary understanding that the president of the American capitalist state is the *class enemy* of the world’s workers and oppressed, especially of the U.S. proletariat, immigrants and the specially oppressed black population. While the decision to close Guantánamo (within a year) and review the release of some detainees was much-hyped, Obama has endorsed indefinite detention, reminiscent of police-state dictatorships, and he is more generally dedicated to continuing Bush’s “war on terror.” In this, he is in full agreement with the European rulers, who merely wished to give a little “humanitarian” window-dressing for this crusade, which has been used by every imperialist government to strengthen state repression against oppressed minorities and the working class and to ideologically justify imperialist deprecations. The U.S., UN and EU have applied sanctions against Iran and continue to threaten it over its nuclear program. It could not be clearer that Iran *needs* nuclear weapons to deter an imperialist attack.

As U.S. imperialism seeks an “exit strategy” from the quagmire in devastated Iraq, the focus under Obama has shifted to Afghanistan, where a NATO occupation force of 68,000 troops, including a non-U.S. contingent of 32,000, continues in its eighth year of ravaging the country. Obama campaigned and took office pledging to draw down U.S. troop levels in Iraq in order to pursue what a significant section of the U.S. bourgeoisie sees as more strategic aims. Now he is doing just that, sending an additional 17,000 U.S. troops to Afghanistan and escalating murderous U.S. bombing attacks on villages in

(continued on page 8)

Down With NATO!...

(continued from page 7)

neighbouring Pakistan. For years, the U.S. propped up one dictatorial regime after another in Islamabad, simultaneously fostering the growth of Islamic fundamentalist forces favored by the Pakistani military. Now this unstable, nuclear-armed country could well start coming apart at the seams under the impact of Obama's extension of the Afghan war and U.S. pressure on the Pakistani military to clear the Taliban and its allies out of the tribal areas bordering Afghanistan.

The military escalation takes place as the economic base of U.S. imperialism is undergoing a meltdown that has taken on international proportions. The contradiction between U.S. imperialism's overwhelming military might and its weakened economic position is the cause of the heightened irrationality and aggressiveness of the U.S. rulers. They see the Obama presidency as their best bet in this situation for asserting their dominant position. Doing its bit, the reformist left in the U.S. embraced a perspective of "Anybody but Bush." They were over the moon about Obama's victory, as exemplified by the Workers World Party, which gushed in the 20 November 2008 issue of its paper: "As communists and revolutionaries we take joy with the oppressed and other progressives as they gather in jubilation from Harlem to Colombia to Japan to Kenya with the election of Obama."

In sharp counterposition to such grotesque enthusing over the new Commander-in-Chief of blood-drenched U.S. imperialism, the Spartacist League/U.S., section of the International Communist League (ICL), opposed on principle any support to Obama and all other bourgeois politicians, fighting to break workers, youth and oppressed from illusions in the capitalist Democratic Party and to forge the revolutionary multiracial workers party needed to sweep away U.S. imperialism. Our U.S. section told the *truth* about what the Obama presidency will mean, writing directly after the elections:

"From the standpoint of the international working class and oppressed there is *nothing to celebrate* in Obama's victory and much to fear. Enthusiasm among large sections of the bourgeoisie, on the other hand, is justified. After nearly eight years of one of the most incompetent and widely despised regimes in recent U.S. history, they now have in Obama a more rational face for their brutal, irrational system. Obama has also inspired illusions in the trappings of bourgeois democracy, the means by which the capitalists disguise their rule with the appearance of a popular mandate. Abroad, Obama provides an invaluable facelift for U.S. imperialism, the main enemy of the world's working people."

—*Workers Vanguard* No. 925, 21 November 2008

European Reformists Back Their Own Imperialist Rulers

For their part, the European reformists also hail Obama's victory in the name of bourgeois "lesser evil" politics. They view the Obama administration, through the lens of their own capitalist exploiters, as more reasonable and "multilateralist" than its predecessor. Thus Gregor Gysi, Oskar Lafontaine and Lothar Bisky, leaders of the social-democratic Die Linke (The Left party) in Germany, sent Obama their "most heart-felt congratulations": "The world-wide fight to eliminate poverty, for a peaceful resolution of conflicts, against the environmental catastrophe and currently against the most severe international financial crisis in 80 years, require closer cooperation and collaboration by the community of states on the basis of the rule

of international law" (5 November 2008).

Chiming in from the "far left" was Alain Krivine, leader of the Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire (LCR), the French section of the fake-Trotskyist "United Secretariat," which has since liquidated into its own creation, the openly social-democratic New Anti-Capitalist Party (NPA). While acknowledging that Obama is a "defender of capitalism," Krivine enthused in the 22 January issue of the LCR's newspaper *Rouge*: "His popularity and the hopes that it raises are on a scale with the discredit, the disgust even, that Bush's policies left behind. So, let's not sulkily refuse to show our pleasure in finally seeing a total condemnation of what was one of the most reactionary presidencies of the United States. Better late than never."

As these tributes to the new top cop of U.S. imperialism underline, the reformists' opposition to certain U.S./NATO policies, like the invasion of Iraq in 2003 or sending more troops to Afghanistan today, has nothing to do with opposition to the imperialist system. Rather, they see these policies as going against the "national interests" of their own capitalist countries, which they feel would be better served through more independence from the U.S.-dominated NATO, for example through a capitalist French-German-Russian axis as Lafontaine advocates. In mobilizing for the Strasbourg demonstrations, the French NPA demands centrally that "France should renounce its integration in the military command of NATO," while reformist groups in Germany, especially the Communist Party (DKP), *junge Welt* and the Stalinist remnants around the Communist Platform of Die Linke, campaign for German imperialism to "leave NATO."

In late 2002, the LCR, Rifondazione Comunista of Italy and the Socialist Workers Party and Workers Power of Britain joined in signing an appeal "To All Citizens of Europe and to All Their Representatives": "Those who show solidarity with the people of Iraq have no hearing in the White House. But we do have the chance to influence European governments—many of whom have opposed the war. We call on all the European heads of state to publicly stand against this war, whether it has UN backing or not, and to demand that George Bush abandon his war plans." What a whitewash of the German bourgeoisie of Auschwitz, of the French imperialists who soaked Algeria in blood, of the British occupiers of Northern Ireland and the Italian butchers of Ethiopia. The only reason the European imperialists are currently more reserved about embarking on their own imperialist adventures abroad is because their military power is vastly inferior to that of the U.S.

This groveling appeal amnestied the European governments that were up to their necks in the "war on terror" and the occupations of Afghanistan and the Balkans. It objectively aided the massive racist and anti-working-class attacks carried out domestically by these very same capitalist governments. Now that Obama is president, the European reformists seem to think their rulers will have a "hearing in the White House"—if only enough "mass pressure" is applied.

In the lead-up to the 1999 air war against Serbia and the invasions of Afghanistan in 2001 and Iraq in 2003, we of the ICL stood for the military defense of those countries against imperialist attack without giving any political support to the reactionary, woman-hating Taliban cutthroats or the bloody capitalist dictatorships of Saddam Hussein and Slobodan Milosevic. We opposed the United Nations' starvation blockade of Iraq and other imperialist UN sanctions. We underlined that every victory for the imperialists in their military adventures

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“Antiwar Movement” Pushes Illusions in Canadian Imperialism

Two events this spring—a meeting and a demonstration—provided the perfect snapshot of a bankrupt “antiwar movement” mired in Canadian nationalism. On the March 20 weekend the Canadian Peace Alliance (CPA) and the Canadian Federation of Students held a Canada-wide “Student Assembly Against War and Racism” in Toronto. The opening night featured a panel discussion on “Why Occupation Won’t Bring Peace to Afghanistan.” The first panelist, one Abdul Rahman Karim, declared: “I am especially grateful—and I do want to make this point—to the thousands of Canadian soldiers who have conducted themselves with professionalism in Afghanistan.” Karim even endorsed as “a good step” the Obama government’s plans to increase the Afghan army from its current 90,000 to about 200,000! Echoing the Tories’ lying propaganda about how the occupation is bringing great things to the Afghan people, at one point Karim intoned, “We have an obligation to speak out...to protect the gains that we’ve made so far.” Gains?

Presiding over this pro-imperialist rubbish was James Clark, a prominent leader of the International Socialists (I.S.). Clark not only refrained from criticism, but cancelled the promised discussion, ensuring that there would be no adverse comments from the audience. Members of the Trotskyist League and Spartacus Youth Club vocally opposed this cowardly censorship, and many in the audience voted against shutting down the meeting.

Two weeks later, on April 4, the CPA sponsored cross-Canada demonstrations to coincide with the protests against the NATO anniversary summit in Strasbourg. Calling to “Protest Against Canada’s Afghan Surge,” the CPA claimed that “Real security and prosperity will only be possible in Afghanistan when Western governments end their support for NATO’s war,” concluding with the demand that “NATO members must be accountable to their own populations, and not to NATO generals.”

Who, if not the “Western governments,” does the CPA think is running NATO’s war in Afghanistan?! And the plaintive call on the imperialist powers to divorce themselves from their own military alliance is beyond absurd. These demands reflect the CPA’s reformist, Maple Leaf nationalist goals: “redirecting funds from military spending to human needs; working toward global nuclear disarmament; making Canada a consistent leader for world peace; strengthening world institutions for the peaceful resolution of conflict; and protecting the rights of all people to work for peace, social & economic justice.”

The idea that the Canadian imperialists—the junior partners of U.S. imperialism—could be pressured into becoming a force for peace and justice anywhere, at home or abroad, is as vain as it is laughable. Canada long since shed its former “peacekeeping” pretense which in any case *always* served the



Michael McGregor

Toronto antiwar demo, March 2007. Fake-left placard, right-wing National Citizens Coalition billboard both call to support Canadian imperialist troops.

interests of its U.S. senior partners. The main purveyors of this nationalist-pacifist mythology today are the New Democrats and the reformist left groups that hang on their coattails.

It was thus fitting that the CPA’s most prominent speaker in Toronto on April 4 was NDP MP Olivia Chow. Last December the NDP cast off its paper-thin position to “end the war” in Afghanistan in order to climb into bed with the bosses’ Liberal Party in a short-lived coalition against the Tories. Soon after, the Liberals climbed out of bed. Left to themselves, the NDP sought to resurrect their antiwar façade, a farce in which the CPA’s Toronto affiliate graciously assisted by providing Olivia Chow a platform.

The NDP was on the platform that day, but Barack Obama was omnipresent as the fake left’s Holy Spirit of all things feel-good and progressive. When ex-president George Bush visited Calgary and Toronto recently, the CPA organized rallies in protest. In contrast, when Obama, the new Commander-in-Chief of racist American imperialism, visited Ottawa in February, the CPA organized no protest there, but issued a groveling “Tell Obama—Yes we can!” statement politely asking him to “cancel plans to expand the wars in Afghanistan and Pakistan.”

It is the imperialist system of exploitation and subjugation that breeds war and devastation without end. But this basic Marxist understanding is thoroughly alien to the left groups who help lead the CPA, notably the I.S. By spreading illusions in the possibility of “peace” under imperialism, these

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Planeta Publishers

1979 Soviet intervention in Afghanistan marked only war in modern history fought centrally over status of women. Left: Liberated Afghan women march in Kabul. Right: Soviet Central Asian soldiers fought Islamic reaction.



Paris Match

“Antiwar Movement”...

(continued from page 9)

groups reduce themselves to the role of accomplices to the violence and exploitation of this ruling class.

The Fake Left and Afghan Women: Echoes of Imperialist Hypocrisy

Serving the interests of imperialism is hardly new for the I.S. When the Soviet Union entered Afghanistan in December 1979 to fight the CIA-backed *mujahedin* cutthroats, whose insurgency was sparked by the Afghan government’s modest program of social reforms, the I.S. denounced the Soviet “invasion.” This was in lockstep with the imperialists’ drive for the restoration of capitalism in the Soviet Union, which the I.S. went on to celebrate.

The I.S. has been touting one Nikolai Lanine, a former Soviet soldier, who spoke on the CPA’s March 20 panel. Lanine equated the progressive Soviet intervention with the present reactionary NATO imperialist occupation of Afghanistan. Instead of a NATO occupation, Lanine calls for a “genuine long-term UN peacekeeping mission, probably for 15-20 years at least” (*Socialist Worker*, 6 March 2007)—an imperialist occupation in UN colours.

Today’s NATO puppet regime includes many of the same gang of imperialist-backed *mujahedin* warlords who turned the country into a hell for women when they took power in 1992. In April, when this government enacted a horrific law which sanctioned the rape of women by their husbands, a protest by some brave Afghan women was set on by a mob of Islamists who hurled stones and shouted anti-woman filth. Afghan MP Shinkai Karokhail declared that the demonstration “was the first time in the history of Afghanistan that women were aware of their rights.” Nothing could be further from the truth.

The 1979 Soviet intervention marked the only war in modern history fought centrally over the status of women and we Trotskyists backed it, declaring “Hail Red Army in Afghani-

stan!” This was an expression of our unconditional military defense of the Soviet workers state despite its degeneration under a Stalinist bureaucratic caste. The liberating effects of the Soviet presence could easily be measured: in 1988, Afghan women made up 40 percent of the doctors and 60 percent of the teachers at the University of Kabul; 440,000 female students were enrolled in educational institutions and 80,000 more in literacy programs. Western dress was common in the cities, and women enjoyed a real measure of freedom from the veil and subjugation for the first time in Afghanistan’s history. Some 15,000 women joined the militias, taking up arms to defend not only the rights they had won but their very lives. With the 1989 Soviet withdrawal and subsequent triumph of the CIA’s holy warriors, this was all drowned in blood.

It is obscene but all too typical that those like the I.S. (and their pal Lanine), who claim to champion the interests of Afghan women, would promote the fortunes of the Revolutionary Association of the Women of Afghanistan (RAWA). Throughout the 1980s, RAWA stood with the CIA-backed Islamic fundamentalists and fought against the Soviet military. More recently they too have lobbied for UN imperialist “peacekeepers” to occupy Afghanistan. (For the full goods on this outfit, see “RAWA Afghan Feminists Back Imperialist Reaction,” *Workers Vanguard* No. 776, 8 March 2002.)

In Canada as elsewhere, there is an unbreakable link between the fake left’s toadying to apologists for the imperialist occupation in Afghanistan today and their earlier support to the CIA’s anti-Soviet *mujahedin*. The Trotskyist League and Spartacus Youth Club seek to build an organization capable of bringing revolutionary consciousness to the working class, and of leading it to seize power from the most powerful, violent and well-organized ruling class in history: the imperialist bourgeoisie. For revolutionaries in Canada, this means in the first instance fighting to mobilize workers in struggle against the rulers on Parliament Hill and Bay Street. Anti-imperialism abroad means class struggle at home! ■

Down With NATO!...

(continued from page 8)

encourages more predatory wars; every setback serves to assist the struggles of working people and the oppressed the world over. We call for the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of all U.S., NATO, EU and UN forces from Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, the Near East, Central Asia and the Balkans. The chief means of defending the victims of neocolonial oppression against the overwhelming military might of American imperialism and its NATO allies is international working-class struggle, especially by the multiracial U.S. proletariat and its class brothers and sisters in Europe, Japan and elsewhere.

The reformists' social chauvinism and prostration to the imperialist rulers in foreign policy is matched "at home" by their support for class collaboration and protectionism. The global economic crisis is shredding the illusion that there can be ongoing imperialist unity, either within Europe or between Europe and the U.S. Meanwhile, the West European imperialists have told their East European client bourgeoisies to go to hell. And, as always, the labour lieutenants of capitalism stand at the side of their "own" exploiters. In Germany, the SPD, Die Linke and the trade-union bureaucracy campaign for the car manufacturer Opel, currently owned by General Motors, to "become German again." In Britain, the UNITE and GMB trade-union bureaucracies backed strikes in February of construction workers demanding "British jobs for British workers," a slogan long associated with the fascists (who joined in strike rallies) and recently affirmed by Labour prime minister Gordon Brown. Scandalously, the British section of the pseudo-Trotskyist Committee for a Workers International, led by Peter Taaffe, apologized for and *helped lead* these reactionary strikes.

The workers movement has a vital interest in defending foreign workers, fighting for full citizenship rights for all immigrants and mobilizing against racist terror and attacks on democratic rights. The logic of reformism is inherently nationalist, splitting the working class along national, ethnic and racial lines in a scramble for the few crumbs the capitalists are willing to toss their wage slaves. To break through this losing game requires a program of international class struggle against the common capitalist enemy. As Leon Trotsky, co-leader with V. I. Lenin of the October Revolution, wrote in 1934:

"Not to bind itself to the national state in time of war, to follow not the war map but the map of the class struggle, is possible only for that party that has already declared irreconcilable war on the national state in time of peace. Only by realizing fully the objectively reactionary role of the imperialist state can the proletarian vanguard become invulnerable to all types of social patriotism. This means that a real break with the ideology and policy of 'national defence' is possible only from the standpoint of the *international proletarian revolution*."

—"War and the Fourth International"

We fight in this spirit to make the working class conscious of the need to bring down racist Fortress Europe and the capitalist European Union (EU) through workers revolution. The EU is a reactionary anti-working-class alliance centered on the main European imperialist powers, which seek to improve their competitive position against their American and Japanese rivals. For a Socialist United States of Europe and an international socialist planned economy!

For New October Revolutions Worldwide!

In the 1980s, Afghanistan was also in the center of the NATO imperialists' war drive. In late 1979, the Soviet Red Army inter-

vened in Afghanistan after repeated requests from the modernizing nationalist PDPA regime, which sought to introduce minimal social reforms and faced a U.S.-backed *jihad* (holy war) led by reactionary landlords, tribal chiefs and mullahs. The U.S. imperialists seized on the Soviet intervention as a pretext for a renewed anti-Soviet crusade, massively training and funding the reactionary *mujahedin*—mainly through the agency of the Pakistani military and its Inter-Services Intelligence—to kill Soviet soldiers. The Taliban and Al Qaeda are Frankenstein's monsters turned on their former imperialist masters.

The Soviet intervention was unambiguously progressive, underlining the Trotskyist understanding that despite its degeneration under a Stalinist bureaucratic caste, the Soviet Union remained a workers state embodying historic gains of the October Revolution, centrally the planned economy and collectivized property. These were enormous gains, not least for women and the historically Muslim peoples of Soviet Central Asia. During the Soviet intervention, Afghan women militia volunteers fought with arms in hand against the CIA-backed *mujahedin* cuthroats for the basic right to not wear the *burqa* and not be sold like cattle. The international Spartacist tendency, now the ICL, said "Hail Red Army in Afghanistan!" and called to extend the social gains of October to the Afghan peoples.

On the other side, the *mujahedin* and the imperialists were joined by the bulk of the reformist left internationally, who joined with their masters in howling for the withdrawal of Soviet forces. We Trotskyists of the ICL uniquely fought down the line against counterrevolution, from East Berlin to Moscow, seeking on this basis to mobilize the working masses to sweep away the sellout Stalinist bureaucrats and establish the rule of workers councils. In this, we were guided by the same revolutionary internationalist program with which we fight today to forge revolutionary workers parties as sections of a reformed Fourth International, world party of socialist revolution. The road of international proletarian revolution offers the only alternative to the destruction of humanity by imperialism. *Down with imperialism! For new October Revolutions worldwide!*

—International Executive Committee of the
International Communist League
(Fourth Internationalist)
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Auto...

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agreed to unprecedented wage and benefit cuts of **\$19 an hour** to Chrysler and **\$22 an hour** to GM. While complaining of government and company blackmail, including GM's threat to liquidate its Canadian operations, the CAW tops have acceded to just about every demand. Lewenza even touted the massive givebacks to GM as "an agreement that protects the interests of our members" and "an important victory" (caw.ca, 22 May)!

With various corporate bondholders balking at even these terms, Chrysler has gone into bankruptcy in the U.S. and GM is poised to do the same. Moreover, the bailout terms allow the governments to revoke their loans to GM and Chrysler in the event of a strike to stop the bloodletting. This underlines how there is no real difference in impact between bailout and bankruptcy: either the workers will concede "voluntarily" or the bosses' courts will order them to do so.

Fearing that the companies may go under and seeing no way forward, workers have been manipulated into voting to accept such devastating givebacks. Yet to vote for such terms is to give up the sole advantage offered by unionization: the ability to collectively organize and fight to improve the workers' lot. For the capitalists, "restructuring" means restoring profits by eliminating jobs and ratcheting up the rate of exploitation through wage cuts, longer hours and speed-up. Those few hard-won gains that remain today will be up for renegotiation tomorrow as the economy continues to go to the dogs. Not fighting will only assure greater misery in the future.

The Fight Against the Devastation of the Working Class

Auto workers across the globe are under the gun. Sales have collapsed, and company after company is contracting. Toyota reported its first annual loss in nearly six decades; taking its cue from Detroit, it has offered buyouts to some 18,000 workers in the U.S. while announcing wage cuts for those who remain. Auto plants across Europe are threatened with closure. Workers in Mexico, which has a significant auto industry composed of U.S. and other foreign-owned factories, are being hit with layoffs.

The crisis in auto is an example of the anarchy and decay

that reign in capitalist production in general, to which there is no simple trade-union solution. In their drive for ever-greater profits, the capitalist rulers have looted the wealth produced through the workers' labour and sabotaged vital infrastructure by refusing to invest in and modernize basic industries. The deindustrialization of the U.S. and Canada, underway for decades, has only exacerbated the current crisis.

In the U.S., black workers are especially at risk. The 1941 strike at Ford's giant River Rouge plant in Detroit was a turning point in bringing black workers into the UAW and enabling it to become America's most powerful union. That was then. With all but a few auto plants in the Detroit area shut down for good, black male joblessness in the city hovers at **50 percent**. The jails are overflowing and social services and the housing market have collapsed, with the *Detroit News* (23 February) reporting that the average sale price of a house in the city is \$7,000. Once a center of working-class black America, Detroit resembles New Orleans in the aftermath of Katrina; both disasters are the products of racist America's capitalist order.

The auto industry has long been at the core of manufacturing in Canada. Even after the tens of thousands of job cuts over the past decade, last year it accounted for 135,000 direct jobs in Southern Ontario, and at least 300,000 more in industries that supply the assembly plants with materials and services. Now auto production centers like Oshawa and Windsor are becoming industrial ghost towns. Factory closures are similarly devastating the working class in cities like Hamilton, long the heart of the steel industry.

The capitalist economic crisis is throwing hundreds of thousands of workers here, and many millions globally, into the ranks of the unemployed. In this context, the fight for jobs is equivalent to the fight against the devastation of the working people. It is necessary to demand an end to layoffs by shortening the workweek at no loss in pay, as part of the struggle for jobs for all. Unemployment benefits must be greatly increased and extended to everyone who cannot find a job, and all pensions must be completely guaranteed by the government. A massive program of public works at union wages is needed to rebuild roads and bridges, fix the decaying health system and schools and expand public transit.

But such basic and obviously necessary demands, the elements of which were laid out in the 1938 Transitional Program, the founding document of the Trotskyist Fourth International, will not be granted by the rapacious capitalist rulers. The capitalist state, which is the executive committee of the ruling class, exists to defend the rule and profits of the bourgeoisie. It cannot be reformed or wielded to serve the interests of working people. The catastrophe of joblessness, threatening the disintegration of the working class, can be effectively fought only by a workers movement led by those committed to the struggle for socialist revolution and the creation of a rationally planned, socialist economy on an international scale.

While auto workers are in a precarious situation, people still need cars to get around, and the auto industry is vital to the military power of U.S. imperialism and its Canadian junior partner. Armed with a class-struggle program that is based on the understanding that the working class shares no interest with the bosses, unions with the power of the UAW and CAW could spearhead an *internationalist* fight against the ravages of capitalism, by enlisting support from and championing the cause of the rest of the working class and the unemployed.

But Lewenza, Gettelfinger and their ilk in the top echelons

A Spartacist Pamphlet

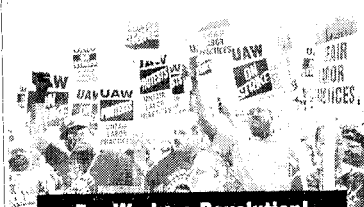
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Wayne State University photos

Heroic 1936 sit-down strike against GM in Flint, Michigan (left). 1937 strike against GM in Oshawa (right). UAW was forged through international class struggle.

of the union bureaucracy are not going to lead such struggle. Aptly described by the early American socialist Daniel De Leon as “labour lieutenants of capital,” the union bureaucrats share with their capitalist masters a belief in the inviolability of the profit system. This belief is concretized in the U.S. by the labour tops’ integration into the capitalist Democratic Party, and in Canada by their fealty to the right-wing social democrats of the NDP or the capitalist Liberal Party. While it is possible, though unlikely, that the union tops may be moved to some militancy if their status is threatened, once that is secure they will again betray.

It is long since time for the labour traitors, complicit in the gutting of the unions, to go. The road forward lies in building a class-struggle leadership in the unions to carry out the vitally necessary battles against the capitalist masters. This will be part of the forging of revolutionary working-class parties on both sides of the U.S.-Canada border and beyond, parties dedicated to the overthrow of decaying imperialism’s world order.

Nationalism and Protectionism: Poison to Labour’s Struggle

The fighting power of auto workers in North America was vastly weakened by the nationalist split in the UAW in 1984, when Canadian director Bob White pulled the 120,000 members of the union’s Canadian region out to form the CAW. The UAW had been forged in the 1930s and 40s through bitter *international* class struggle against the auto companies who brutally exploited workers in both countries. The 1937 Oshawa GM sit-down-strike, pivotal for organizing the UAW in Canada, came hard on the heels of the sit-down by auto workers in Flint, Michigan. Workers won union recognition at Ford in Canada through a bitter strike in Windsor in 1945, four years after the River Rouge strike across the river in Detroit.

By the early 1980s, the UAW had already been weakened by union misleaders on both sides of the border, who kneeled before the bosses’ demands for giveback contracts and watched as the ranks were decimated by plant closures and

layoffs. Playing on his reputation as a supposed militant, White told UAW members in Canada that they would be better off going it alone because, he claimed, he stood for “no concessions” as against the givebacks rammed down the U.S. workers’ throats by the UAW leadership. Thus the union split along national lines, as the leaders of the new CAW deliberately isolated the Canadian locals from the potentially explosive black auto workers who laboured for the same companies in Detroit. We wrote at the time:

“The only winners in the UAW split are the auto bosses. Canadian auto workers are the losers. Now they face the greedy auto companies with **10 percent** of their former potential strength.”

—“Bureaucrats Split UAW,” *SC* No. 63, April 1985

Stepped-up concessions were soon the order of the day in both countries, as the union tops scrambled to “protect” jobs at home at the expense of auto workers abroad. From the start, the CAW tops appealed to the Big Three bosses for more investment in Canada on the basis that auto workers here cost \$7 an hour less in pay and benefits than their U.S. brothers and sisters. They’ve been singing the same tune ever since. A current CAW pamphlet beseeches the companies to keep jobs north of the border because “Canadian auto labour is cheaper than in the U.S., Japan, and Germany” (“Auto Industry on the Brink”).

The union bureaucrats tell workers that such protectionism is the answer to layoffs, closures and the drive to cut wages and benefits. This is false to the core! Protectionism means joining with the enemy class to help shore up profits—profits exacted from the labour of working people whether in Canada, the U.S. or elsewhere. For the capitalist rulers, “free trade” and protectionism are options that can be debated, but for the working class, protectionism is poison. It is a classic means of channeling discontent over job losses into hostility toward foreign workers and also immigrants.

GM has manufacturing plants in 35 countries. The best measure of protection for auto workers in Canada would be to fight *alongside* their working-class allies in other countries, including in the U.S. and in semicolonial countries like Mexico.

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Auto...

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But the only banner the Canadian labour tops have consistently unfurled during the decades-long withering of the union movement has been the yellow one of poisonous chauvinism.

During last year's protests against the closure of GM's Oshawa truck plant, the lead CAW banner read: "World Class Quality + World Class Productivity = OUR JOBS TO MEXICO. THANKS GM." Such agitation for "Canadian jobs for Canadian workers" deeply undermines class consciousness and solidarity, scapegoating foreign workers for the loss of jobs and reinforcing illusions in the supposed benevolence of our "own" capitalists.

The CAW tops' protectionism is especially dangerous when directed against China. The union bureaucracy has long demanded that Ottawa erect tariff barriers to keep out imports from Japan and South Korea; now, with the dramatic growth of China's auto industry, these reactionary nationalist calls are being extended to that country as well. A "fact sheet" on the union website complains: "A growing one-way flood of auto parts from offshore jurisdictions (including China) is destroying thousands of jobs."

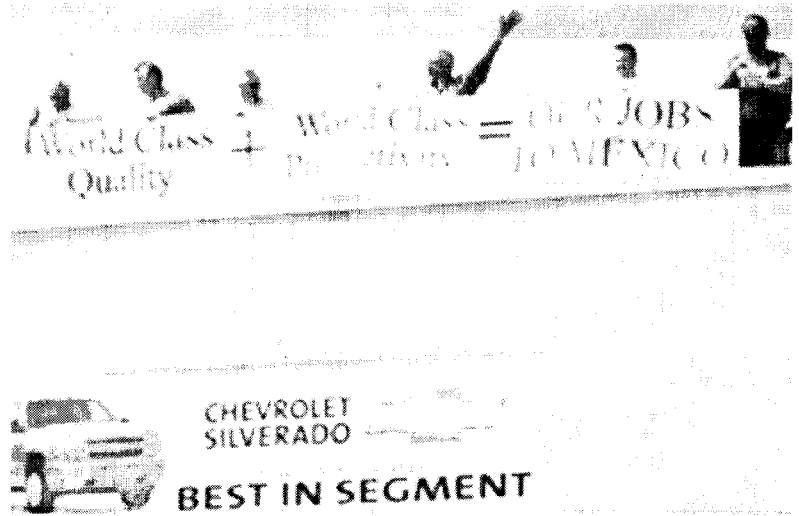
China is a bureaucratically deformed workers state that was forged through the defeat of imperialist-backed rule in the 1949 Revolution. Thanks to its collectivized economy, it has brought hundreds of millions of workers and peasants out of dire poverty into social production and a vast advance in living standards. With their nationalist agitation against China, the union bureaucrats are making an anti-Communist alliance with the Canadian and American capitalist rulers against the gains of the 1949 Revolution.

Albeit on different scales, both the auto unions in North America and the workers state in China are the fruits of historic victories for the proletariat. One resulted from the formation of industrial unions in the 1930s, the other from the expropriation of capitalist class rule in the 1949 Revolution. Both must be defended unconditionally from attacks that seek to undo these gains, despite the fact that each is led by a bureaucratic layer that puts the gains in jeopardy. The bureaucratic misleaders of the unions here must be driven from their positions of leadership and replaced by a class-struggle leadership committed to the overthrow of the imperialist order through socialist revolution. The bureaucratic caste in China must be ousted by a proletarian political revolution to preserve and expand the working-class property forms established following the Chinese Revolution.

Reformist Nationalization Schemes

The pro-NDP "socialist" groups that populate the Canadian left apologize for, or openly propound, the nationalist protectionism typified by the CAW tops. The Communist Party of Canada's (CPC) *People's Voice* (1-31 July 2008) uncritically reported the CAW's chauvinist anti-Mexico banner in Oshawa last summer. Deeply nationalist, the CPC has long devoted itself not to the cause of the workers but to defending "Canadian independence, jobs and farms" from "foreign" threat.

The International Socialists (I.S.) sometimes raise a few criticisms of the labour tops' protectionism, only to end up pushing the very same perspective. Their March 16 *Socialist*



Moczulski/Canadian Press

CAW union banner at June 2008 protest against closing of Oshawa truck plant. Nationalism, protectionism fuel racism, destroy prospects for struggle against common class enemy.

Worker lead article affirms: "We must demand that the government keep steel production local." This is a blatant call for protectionism, not a whit different from the demands for "Made in Canada" quotas raised by the CAW and Steelworkers union bureaucrats.

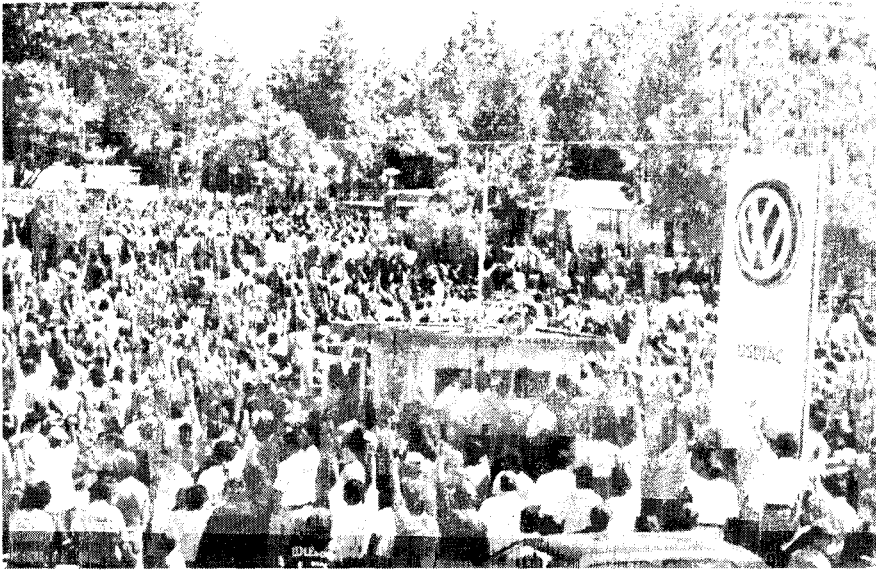
The same *Socialist Worker* article calls for the "nationalization and retooling of factories" as the way to "stop the layoffs and closures." The CPC raises a similar call for the capitalist government to nationalize failing industries, dressing this up as a "made-in-Canada industrial strategy." Nationalization of dying or bankrupt industries has long been used by capitalist governments to buy off working-class discontent and prop up failing enterprises. As is shown clearly in the *de facto* GM and Chrysler nationalizations that are now underway, this comes directly at the workers' expense.

When Chrysler threatened bankruptcy in 1979, then-UAW head Doug Fraser drafted a tepid nationalization plan while pledging to exempt the company from strike action. Whether then or now, full nationalization would simply result in pay cuts, tax subsidies and import controls to make the auto plants profitable. In the end, Fraser settled for a seat on Chrysler's board of directors—and proceeded to shove concessions down workers' throats, which did nothing to stop the hemorrhaging of jobs.

As we wrote in our article on the 1979 Chrysler bailout, "No Government Handout for Bosses! Whatever Chrysler's Worth—Give It to the Workers!" (*Workers Vanguard* No. 238, 17 August 1979): "The reformist practice of nationalizing only the *least* efficient capitalist operations is in a sense the exact opposite of socialist expropriation. Socialist economic planning is based precisely on appropriating from the capitalists the *most advanced* means of production."

Organize the Unorganized! For a Class-Struggle Labour Leadership!

Coming off the final shift at the now-closed GM Oshawa truck plant on May 14, one auto worker told CityNews: "It's the reality of global trade today I guess.... All the manufacturing industries will go where cheaper labour is." Yet "cheap labour" also exists in this country—indeed the union movement exists in large part because at one time low-paid



Espartaco

Mass meeting of striking workers at Puebla Volkswagen plant in Mexico in August 2001.

workers (notably including immigrants) poured into its ranks. And now the CAW union tops are scrambling to “protect” their dues base by agreeing to their own “cheap labour” deals with the auto bosses.

Each giveback has fueled the withering of the auto unions. The UAW had 1.6 million members in the 1960s; today it has well under 500,000, of whom fewer than 150,000 work for the Big Three. The CAW’s growth since 1985 has come through mergers with other unions in different economic sectors, while its membership in basic auto has dwindled and is now disintegrating as plant after plant is shuttered. Yet they have failed abysmally to organize the Japanese and other foreign-owned auto plants as well as most of the parts plants, where wages and benefits have always been much worse than in the unionized Big Three.

The current assault on the auto unions threatens *all* workers in the industry, from the non-union plants here to the plants in Mexico and overseas. Historically, auto workers in non-union plants have been paid more than the unorganized in other jobs as the bosses attempted to ward off the scourge of union organizing. Now, with the slashing of CAW wages and benefits to the level of those in the non-union plants, these companies are starting to cut wages and benefits as well. In similar fashion, GM’s move to rob retirees of their pension benefits is now being copied in other industries, as companies like Air Canada threaten to default on their pensions. The message from the bosses is clear: just shut up, work hard and die.

The union tops give much lip service and little action to the crucial need to replenish labour’s ranks by organizing the unorganized, and a union that repeatedly rolls over is hardly attractive to the non-union worker. Yet a serious union organizing drive could have wide appeal throughout the working class. Such a struggle requires a leadership which does not seek “partnership” with the bosses but understands that the interests of labour and capital are counterposed.

Let Capitalism Perish!

The present crisis is not the first faced by a weakened labour movement. Throughout the 1920s, the craft-based, pro-capitalist labour leaders did little to organize the armies of workers who

did the backbreaking work in the open hearths and on the assembly lines. In the four years after the October 1929 stock market crash, unemployment skyrocketed throughout North America and beyond. The jobless rate in Canada reached 30 percent by 1933, and never dropped below 12 percent until the factories were retooled for military production in World War II. The working class was torn asunder, confronted not just by joblessness but with homelessness and starvation.

It is normal that at the beginning of a massive economic recession or depression the working class will be gripped by paralysis. In the case of the Great Depression, in 1933 the economy in the U.S. experienced a slight upturn. The next year, citywide strikes broke out in several American cities—Minneapolis, San Francisco and Toledo—led by Trotskyists, the Communist Party and left-wing socialists, respectively. These strikes set the stage for a large-scale outpouring of class militancy. Workers in both the U.S.

and Canada began to turn en masse to the very unions that had disdained them to demand organization, prompting a wing of the labour officialdom to start organizing industrial workers. Once organized, the workers fought the bosses tooth and nail, sacrificing, if necessary, their jobs, their freedom and their very lives.

There is only one possible explanation for this turn to class warfare. The very conditions that grind down the working class, that demoralize workers and set them one against the other in a fight to survive—that is, the capitalist mode of production—these same conditions also propel the working class toward unity in battle against its exploiters. As long as capitalism exists, it will generate the conditions that spawn class struggle. It is in the course of such sharp class struggle that workers will begin to become conscious of themselves as a class fighting for itself and for all the oppressed against the capitalist order. The crucial instrumentality for this is a revolutionary party that patiently educates the working class in the understanding not only of its social power but of its historic interests.

The class battles of the 1930s set the stage for the further development of class consciousness in the working class, the most advanced elements of which were receptive to the idea of forming a workers party in opposition to the capitalist parties. But in both the U.S. and Canada, the leaders of the new industrial union movement, including the Stalinist Communist parties, crippled it through their support to liberal bourgeois politics. In the U.S., this was expressed in support to the Democratic Party and Roosevelt’s New Deal. To this day the American labour bureaucracy’s ties to the imperialist Democrats, including the Obama administration, have produced only defeat for the workers.

In Canada, the labour tops channeled the aspirations of struggling workers into the social-democratic Cooperative Commonwealth Federation, predecessor of the NDP. Integral to this were the vicious anti-red purges of the 1940s and 50s that saw many of the most militant workers driven out of the unions. While organizationally independent of the bourgeois parties, the NDP has a thoroughly pro-capitalist, nationalist program. When they have had the opportunity to govern, as

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Auto...

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under Bob Rae in Ontario in 1990-95, the New Democrats have frontally attacked the working class and poor.

It was the Rae NDP government which, to cite but one example, gave GM an exemption from fully funding its pension requirements, helping to set the stage for the company's estimated **\$6 billion** pension deficit to retirees in Ontario today. By 1995, when they lost the provincial elections to the right-wing Tories, the New Democrats were widely discredited among Ontario workers. The CAW tops, then posturing militant, took the lead in a series of one-day local general strikes, the "Days of Action," to protest attacks by the new Tory regime. The union tops utilized these protests to gradually rehabilitate the NDP under a new leader.

A few years later the CAW broke with the bulk of the pro-NDP labour bureaucracy and began supporting the big-business Liberals as a more viable "alternative" to the Tories. Today the Ontario Liberal government that the CAW helped elect is working hand-in-glove with the federal Tory regime—and Obama in the U.S.—to pursue the "bailout" attacks on auto workers. For his part, federal NDP leader Jack Layton echoes the bosses' calls for "sacrifice," lecturing the workers that they must have the "courage" to "take a pay cut so your friends at the plant can keep their job" (*Toronto Star*, 23 January).

The class struggle cannot go forward without a fight against the forces that divide workers one from the other. These include the "Canadian unity" chauvinism against the national rights of the Québécois that is especially promoted by the NDP, and the anti-foreign-worker nationalism that

fuels anti-immigrant bigotry. It is necessary to advocate independence for Quebec, an oppressed nation long kept artificially and by force within an Anglo-dominated "united" Canada. This is necessary to get the national question off the agenda, to lay a basis for workers in English Canada to see that it is the Canadian capitalists (not the Québécois) who are their enemies and exploiters, and for the Québécois workers to break with their "own" national capitalists.

The union movement must stand unequivocally on the side of immigrants, who often bring traditions of militant struggle into labour's increasingly multiracial ranks. A fight must be waged for full citizenship rights for all immigrants and against the deportations of undocumented workers. Such struggles can set the stage for the mobilization in common struggle of workers at home and abroad, including with auto workers in Mexico, Asia and elsewhere.

Against the tired and failed strategies pushed by liberals and fake socialists—from the Keynesian project of "benevolent" intervention by the capitalist state to the British Labour Party's bourgeois nationalizations in the post-World War II period—we Marxists understand that no amount of tinkering with the existing system can wrench it into serving the needs of the proletariat and the oppressed. There is no answer to the boom-and-bust cycles of capitalism short of proletarian socialist revolution that takes power out of the hands of the irrational capitalist ruling class and replaces it with a planned, socialized economy. Only the achievement of a world socialist order can eliminate the age-old problem of poverty, scarcity and want. It is to this end that the Trotskyist League/Ligue trotskyste, Canadian section of the International Communist League, devotes all its resources. ■

B.C. Elections...

(continued from page 5)

Public anger, which exploded after the killing, is still seething—inquiry audience members have greeted the RCMP's testimonies with heckles and cries of "Shame!" But the purpose of the Braidwood inquiry is precisely to defuse such discontent and refurbish the image of the police through a whitewash and damage control. This is the very purpose of such "inquiries," which social democrats are fond of calling for. NDP federal public safety critic Jack Harris made this explicit when commenting on the Dziekanski case: "We're very concerned because we're seeing a loss of respect for the RCMP in the minds of Canadians" (*Toronto Star*, 28 March). So for these pro-capitalist reformists, the killers of this innocent man need more "respect!"

And the cop rampage continues. Firoz Khan, a delivery man of Fijian descent, was brutally beaten and robbed by three off-duty cops outside Vancouver's Hyatt Hotel in January. The racist cops, who took the defenseless man's phone, preventing him from calling for help, raved as they beat him that they didn't like "brown people." More recently in downtown Vancouver police gunned down and killed Michael Hubbard, a homeless man and long-time social justice activist. Drawing a lesson from the Dziekanski killing, cops have been seizing cameras and intimidating photographers who record police activity.

Left-wing activists and minorities are also central targets of increasing state repression as the city prepares for the Olympics. The RCMP-led Vancouver 2010 Integrated Security Unit is currently carrying out intimidation "visits" to Olympics critics, while the Vancouver cops conduct street sweeps of the

homeless. An estimated 12,000 security personnel—including the highly secretive Joint Task Force 2 counter-terrorist unit of the Canadian army—are set to descend on Vancouver for the Olympics, and their targets explicitly include anti-globalization, anti-corporate and Native activists.

Far from raising its voice against police brutality and repression, the NDP calls for...more cops! The B.C. NDP has voted in favour of every funding increase given to police forces in the province since the Liberal government took over in 2001. B.C. NDP leader Carole James promises that "New Democrats will make fighting crime a top priority and we will ensure that the police, prosecutors and the courts have the resources they need to effectively combat gang violence." The NDP's gushing endorsement of the murderous, racist police is aimed at assuring the capitalist ruling class that an NDP government would be just as committed to enforcing bourgeois oppression.

The capitalist state—including the cops, courts and military—is the armed fist of the bosses and the sworn enemy of workers and the oppressed. More police on the streets means more violence against South Asian youth, Natives and other minorities (and whoever else falls into the cops' clutches). These same cops are used against workers when they go on strike. In its own interest and that of the oppressed, the working class must actively defend all those targeted by this jacked-up state repression.

Workers Need a Class-Struggle Leadership!

Across Canada unemployment is soaring as the global economic crisis deepens—295,000 jobs were lost between November and February and 23,000 jobs vanished in B.C. in



Dyck/Canadian Press

Above: Firoz Khan, with wife Zabida, victim of vicious January beating by three off-duty cops in Vancouver. Right: Ominous preparations for Olympics "security" crackdown by Canadian military, RCMP and Vancouver cops.



Clark/Reuters

March alone. The formerly booming resource-based economies of Western Canada are taking a substantial hit, and the already beleaguered forestry sector is hemorrhaging jobs weekly. This crisis is a product of the inherently irrational profit system, but it is the working class that is being made to pay. Big business gets tax cuts, subsidies and bailouts while workers are shafted with layoffs, gutted benefits and Employment Insurance so inadequate that only 40 percent of those unemployed are even eligible.

The labour misleaders have responded to the economic crisis with capitulations to the bosses' attacks and not with weapons of class struggle like strikes. The NDP says workers must pay for the capitalist recession: Jack Layton even urged them to have the "courage" to "take a pay cut so your friends at the plant can keep their job" (*Toronto Star*, 23 January). In Ontario, the Canadian Auto Workers (CAW) leadership reopened contracts with the auto companies who are demanding massive givebacks in wages and benefits. And last December the B.C. Federation of Labour and Canadian Labour Congress hailed the class-collaborationist federal Liberal-NDP coalition. We are for the complete political independence of the working class and opposed on principle the Liberal-NDP alliance as an enemy of working people dedicated to maintaining capitalist exploitation at home and imperialist depredation abroad. In forging its coalition with the Liberals, the NDP even dropped its paper call for Canadian troops to get out of Afghanistan. Trotskyists say: Down with this bloody imperialist occupation! Canada, U.S., NATO: Get out of Afghanistan now!

The union tops also whip up protectionism, blaming workers abroad for the capitalists' crisis. The CAW and the United Steelworkers (USW) issued a joint statement in February responding to the massive loss of jobs with a protectionist "Buy Canadian" policy. USW official Carol Landry railed at a Penticton plant that closed last year: "While good paying B.C. jobs are disappearing to China and other countries, the Campbell government sits idly by." Promoting "Canadian jobs for Canadian workers" chauvinism under-

mines labour's struggle. Protectionism is poison to necessary international working-class solidarity and builds illusions in the supposed benevolence of the Canadian capitalists, the class exploiters and enemies of the workers.

This protectionism is especially reactionary when aimed against China, a bureaucratically deformed workers state where capitalism was overthrown in 1949, in a huge step forward for the international working class. It is the duty of workers worldwide to defend China against imperialist attack and internal capitalist counterrevolution. At the same time, a Leninist-Trotskyist party has to be forged to lead China's working class to sweep away the ruling Stalinist bureaucracy through proletarian political revolution. Capitalist counterrevolution in China would bring misery and devastation, and further embolden the capitalists in their attacks on workers and the oppressed everywhere.

The B.C. NDP platform gives a sop to workers' concerns on the economy, with Carole James promising not to "use the recession as an excuse to do nothing while thousands of jobs are lost." But whenever the NDP has ruled provincially they have carried out the savage dictates of the capitalist system. In B.C. they have a long and dirty anti-working-class history. The Dave Barrett government of the early 1970s broke strikes and administered capitalist austerity on behalf of the bosses. In power again in the 1990s, the NDP instituted public-sector wage controls and broke a strike by CUPE school workers in Vancouver. They whipped up anti-immigrant hysteria and carried out massive state repression at Gustafsen Lake against Native protesters. The NDP promises to restore bargaining rights to teachers, but in 2005 Carole James denounced a widely popular teachers' strike and stood by the Liberal government-imposed salary freeze, insisting that teachers "should follow the law.... People accept consequences when they don't follow the law" (*Vancouver Sun*, 18 October 2005)!

The NDP is what Marxists call a bourgeois workers party. Tied to the unions through the labour bureaucracy, its social-democratic program upholds the capitalist system, albeit with

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B.C. Elections...

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occasional rhetoric of reforms and "social justice." As Marxists we reject the idea that workers can gain power through the vehicle of electoralism, but revolutionaries do seek to intervene into the parliamentary/electoral arena as a platform to further our program and goals. We may for example extend critical support to a reformist working-class party if it draws a clear class line against the capitalists and their parties. The aim of such a tactic would be to expose these labour traitors who, once in power, will defend the interests of capitalists and not those of the workers. But the NDP is not even drawing the crudest of class lines today.

The ostensibly socialist groups in Canada operate within the framework of social democracy, which means the capitalist system. Instead of the necessary struggle to win the most class-conscious workers away from these political agents of the capitalists, groups like the Communist Party (CP), Fightback, *Socialist Voice* and others *reinforce* the hold of social-democratic ideology. Last December the CP shamelessly promoted the Liberal-NDP coalition, calling to "drive the far-right Harper Tory gang out of office, and replace it with a coalition government." Today the CP is running three candidates for the B.C. elections and with a platform headlined "Kick Out the Campbell Liberals" their campaign amounts to virtual electioneering for the NDP and the Greens.

Both the fake-Trotskyist Fightback group and *Socialist Voice* are loyal tailists of the pro-imperialist NDP, despite their "criticisms." Fightback proclaims as the very first item in its program "NDP to power on a socialist program." Meanwhile, *Socialist Voice* called on workers and leftists to push an "anti-capitalist" program and vote for the NDP in the fall federal elections (1 October 2008 statement). Spelling out its parliamentary cretinism, the statement adds: "Only action by trade unions and social justice movements can place working class concerns at the center of the electoral spectacle." Administering the existing capitalist state—in Ottawa or Victoria, B.C.—cannot be a "socialist program" or an "anti-capitalist program." In the words of Karl Marx, "the

working class cannot simply lay hold of the ready-made State machinery, and wield it for its own purposes." Against illusions in parliamentary reformism, the Trotskyist League/Ligue trotskyste fights to win workers to Marx's understanding of the need to sweep away the rule of the capitalist exploiters through socialist revolution.

The fundamental division between reform and revolution is one's attitude to the bourgeois state. The reformist attitude is that one can administer it in the interests of workers; Marxists recognize that the capitalist state must be smashed through proletarian revolution and replaced with organs of working-class power. Flowing from this understanding is our position that we do not run for elections to executive offices, like mayor or president. In parliaments and other legislative bodies, communist deputies can, as *oppositionists*, serve as revolutionary tribunes of the working class, but to assume executive office or a parliamentary majority requires taking responsibility for the administration of the machinery of the capitalist state, including its corrupt, violent, racist police forces.

To mobilize as one fist against the class enemy, it is imperative that the working class combat all manifestations of capitalist oppression—in defense of minorities, women's rights, youth. In Canada, the national subjugation of Quebec remains a major barrier to working-class struggle. We advocate *independence for Quebec* in order to fight the dominant Anglo chauvinism and to make clear to the workers of both nations that their enemies are their own respective capitalists, not each other. This means combating the "national unity" chauvinism supported by the NDP.

We need a revolutionary workers party that will fight within the unions to cohere a class-struggle leadership, organize the unorganized and fight for a sliding scale of wages and hours to divide the available work among everyone at no loss in pay. We need a massive program of public works to rebuild the crumbling and deadly infrastructure of North America and to ensure the very best housing, health care and educational facilities for all. Putting forward similar demands in his Transitional Program on the eve of World War II, revolutionary leader Leon Trotsky added:

"Property owners and their lawyers will prove the 'unrealizability' of these demands. Smaller, especially ruined capitalists, in addition will refer to their account ledgers. The workers categorically denounce such conclusions and references. The question is not one of a 'normal' collision between opposing material interests. The question is one of guarding the proletariat from decay, demoralization, and ruin. The question is one of life or death of the only creative and progressive class, and by that token of the future of mankind. If capitalism is incapable of satisfying the demands inevitably arising from the calamities generated by itself, then let it perish."

Be it in Washington, D.C., Ottawa or British Columbia, democracy under capitalism is always democracy for the rich. As Russian revolutionary leader V.I. Lenin said, "To decide once every few years which member of the ruling class is to repress and crush the people through parliament—this is the real essence of bourgeois parliamentarism" (*The State and Revolution*, 1917). We of the Trotskyist League/Ligue trotskyste fight to break the working class of this country from the deadening grip of social democracy. This is integral to building the binational multiracial revolutionary workers party that will lead the struggle to do away with this entire system of wage slavery. ■

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China...

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defense of China against imperialism and counter-revolution. In answer to the aspirations of the Chinese workers and rural toilers for democratic rights and a government that represents their needs and interests, we stand for proletarian political revolution to oust the nationalist Stalinist bureaucracy and establish a government based on elected workers and peasants councils and committed to revolutionary proletarian internationalism. This perspective, premised on defense of the gains of the Revolution, is diametrically opposed to the counterrevolutionary machinations of outfits like Charter 08.

“Human Rights” and “Democracy” in the Service of Counterrevolution

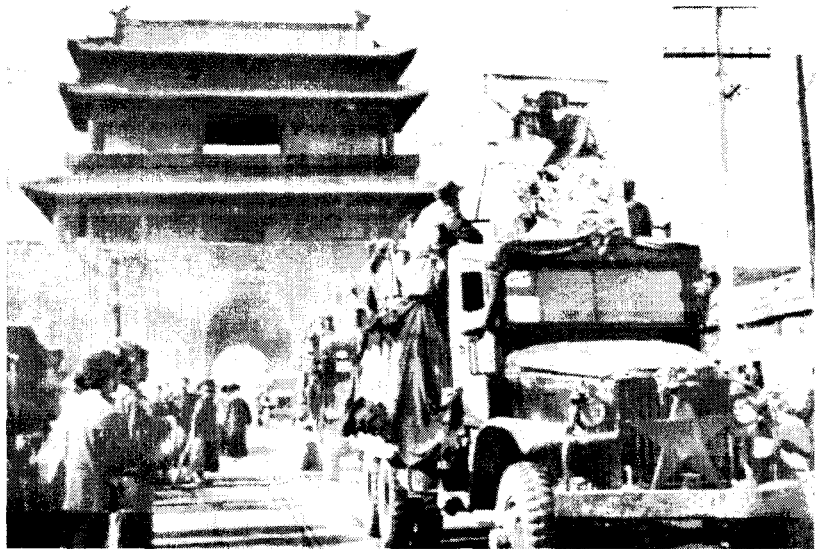
Charter 08 takes its name from Charter 77, a document put out by dissidents in Czechoslovakia in 1977. This and similar groups were encouraged and promoted by the “human rights” campaign launched by then U.S. Democratic president Jimmy Carter as a way of politically undermining the Soviet Union and its East European bloc partners. It is, as they say, no accident that Vaclav Havel, a leading figure in Charter 77, later played a central role in the imperialist-backed counterrevolution in Czechoslovakia in 1989-90.

Far more openly than Havel & Co. in 1977, the group around Charter 08 brandishes the watchwords of “human rights” and “democracy” to attack the revolutionary overthrow of capitalist rule. The Charter states: “Where is China headed in the twenty-first century? Will it continue with ‘modernization’ under authoritarian rule, or will it embrace universal human values, join the mainstream of civilized nations, and build a democratic system?” Concretely, it demands: “We must abolish the special privilege of one party to monopolize power and must guarantee principles of free and fair competition among political parties.”

There is no such thing as a classless “democracy.” Western-type parliamentary government elected through universal suffrage is a disguised political form of the *dictatorship of the capitalist class*. In such a system the working class is politically reduced to atomized individuals. The bourgeoisie can effectively manipulate the electorate through its control of the media, the education system and the other institutions shaping public opinion. In all capitalist “democracies,” government officials are bought and paid for by the banks and large corporations. As Lenin explained in his 1918 polemic *The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky*: “Even in the most democratic bourgeois state the oppressed people at every step encounter the crying contradiction between the *formal* equality proclaimed by the ‘democracy’ of the capitalists and the thousands of *real* limitations and subterfuges which turn the proletarians into *wage-slaves*.”

While the demand for pure “democracy” might play a certain role in mobilizing the forces of counterrevolution in China, their victory would not bring a stable bourgeois parliamentary-type regime. Rather China would be subjugated and perhaps torn apart by American, West European and Japanese imperialism, transformed into a giant sweatshop.

The People’s Republic of China is a bureaucratically



Burke/Life

Victorious People’s Liberation Army enters Beijing. 1949 Revolution smashed landlord/capitalist rule but was deformed from its inception by nationalist Stalinist bureaucracy.

deformed expression of the *dictatorship of the proletariat*. The class rule of the capitalists has been smashed and the economy collectivized, but the proletariat is deprived of direct political power. What is needed is a fight for proletarian democracy. The workers and rural toilers need their own class-based governing institutions, the soviets (the Russian term for councils), which would be open to all parties defending the workers state.

Charter 08 Pushes “Free Market” Capitalism

Charter 08’s call for capitalist restoration is unambiguous:

“We should establish and protect the right to private property and promote an economic system of free and fair markets.... We should establish a Committee on State-Owned Property, reporting to the national legislature, that will monitor the transfer of state-owned enterprises to private ownership in a fair, competitive, and orderly manner.”

It’s more than a little ironic that this demand for “free market” capitalism is being raised at the very moment when the destructive irrationality of the capitalist system—the anarchy of the market—is more evident than at any time in the past several decades. World capitalism is in the throes of a deepening financial/economic crisis centered in the imperialist countries of North America, West Europe and Japan. Desperate to stanch the bleeding, the governments of these countries are nationalizing banks, subsidizing key industries and engaging in other forms of state intervention in the economy. At the same time, many U.S. politicians, especially around the Democratic Obama administration, have been pushing an increasingly protectionist stance against China.

One might think the authors of Charter 08 had taken their neoliberal economic program of privatizing industry and commerce from editorials in the *Wall Street Journal* or London *Economist* of two or three years ago. Actually the roots of their ideas are probably closer to home. Despite Charter 08’s hostility to the CCP regime, in a sense it has taken the CCP leaders’ doctrine of “market socialism” to its logical conclusion. For decades, the Beijing Stalinists have extolled

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market mechanisms and competition as superior to centralized planning and management. They have wielded the whip of the market in an attempt to resolve the problem of stagnant productivity inherent to the bureaucratic commandism that prevailed under Mao. Their claim has been that China can become a great power by integrating into the world capitalist market via foreign investment and the export of cheap manufactured goods to the U.S. and West Europe. But now that economic strategy has been derailed—spectacularly—by the global capitalist economic crisis.

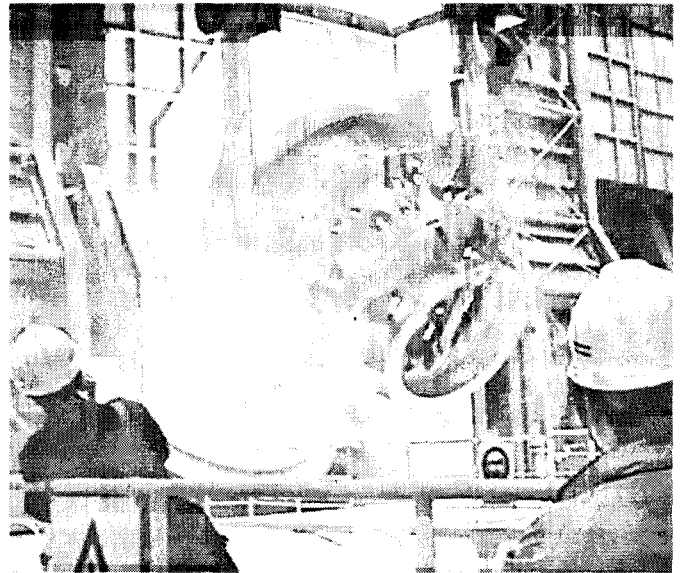
The dominant weight of the state-owned enterprises and banks has prevented China from being dragged into the kind of deep economic crisis that is ravaging most capitalist countries. Nonetheless, major sectors of its economy have been hard hit. In Guangdong province, the center of China's export industry, shipments plummeted *over 50 percent* in the first two months of this year. Already over 20 million migrant workers have been laid off, mainly from factories owned by foreign and offshore Chinese capitalists that produce consumer goods for export.

This has precipitated an upsurge of defensive labor struggle that has seen angry workers, demanding back pay or severance pay, fighting pitched battles with the police. The CCP regime has responded with a mixture of repression, cash handouts to some of the newly unemployed and the reversal of some of its privatization measures. "So much for capitalism," headlined the *Economist* (5 March) in an article on China's latest economic moves, which noted ruefully that the "opening up" of China's economy appears to be going "into reverse."

Anti-Communist Social Democrats Laud Charter 08

It is to be expected that leading organs of Western bourgeois opinion would praise Charter 08. But so do a number of groups claiming to be socialist, indeed Trotskyist. In reality, these groups reject Trotskyism in favor of a program of "democratic" capitalist counterrevolution.

A recent article by the Hong Kong-based *October Review* group, linked to the fake-Trotskyist United Secretariat (USec), supports Charter 08 without the slightest criticism



Siemens Metals & Mining

Workers at Baosteel plant in Shanghai, part of China's collectivized industry.

("The State of Human Rights in China," 31 December 2008). Saluting "the efforts of the people for democracy and human rights," the article has not a single reference to capitalism, socialism or the working class!

For its part, the British-based Committee for a Workers' International (CWI) led by Peter Taaffe writes:

"This manifesto, now with over 7,000 signatures, calls for an end to one-party rule and for basic civil liberties—things that socialists also fight for (many 'charter 08' signatories, however, are liberals who favour a faster pace of capitalist 'economic reform')."

—chinaworker.info, 16 January

While chiding Charter 08 for its economic proposals, the CWI *positively identifies* with its calls for "democracy." This is nothing new for the Taaffeites, who have backed all manner of anti-Communist forces in the degenerated/deformed workers states. In the final tumultuous years of the USSR, they supported the capitalist-restorationist "democratic" camp of Boris Yeltsin. In August 1991, Yeltsin, openly backed by then U.S. president George Bush Sr., staged a successful counter-coup against the remnants of the disintegrating Kremlin oligarchy. The Taaffeites joined Yeltsin's reactionary rabble on the Moscow barricades. In sharp contrast, our comrades in Moscow distributed a leaflet in the tens of thousands with the urgent call: "Soviet Workers: Defeat Yeltsin-Bush Counterrevolution!" Capitalist counterrevolution brought mass unemployment, falling life expectancy and social degradation to the peoples of the former USSR and East Europe, while emboldening the imperialist exploiters in attacking working people and minorities.

Today, the CWI publicizes the work of the Hong Kong-based *China Labour Bulletin* (CLB). While masquerading as a workers organization championing "independent trade unions," the CLB is a counterrevolutionary group with direct connections to U.S. imperialism. Its leader Han Dongfang has long had a program on the CIA's Radio Free Asia and is vice-chair of the World Movement for Democracy, an outfit founded and run by the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), a notorious CIA front. Han has been called the "Chinese Lech Walesa," after the leader of Poland's

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Global capitalist economic crisis has slowed Chinese growth, hit export industry hard. Laid-off workers in Harbin stage workplace sit-in on March 18 demanding reinstatement of insurance and retirement benefits.

Solidarność. In the 1980s, Solidarność, the only “union” supported by Reagan, Thatcher and the Vatican, led the drive to bring capitalist exploitation in “democratic” guise back to the Soviet bloc, with full support from the Taaffeites and the USec.

Like Charter 08’s demand for “free elections,” calls for “free trade unions” on the Solidarność model are a reactionary trap for the working class. The struggle for unions free of bureaucratic control, important for China’s embattled working people, must be based on defense of the workers state that issued from the 1949 Revolution. This struggle, as well as the fight for the right of assembly and freedom of the press, will unfold as part of the fight for soviet democracy, for the formation of workers councils opposing the bureaucratic parasites and suppressing counterrevolutionary elements.

Witting Tools of U.S. Imperialism

Charter 08’s leaders are not naive ingénues; many among them also have open associations with U.S. imperialism. Liu Xiaobo, one of the Charter’s main organizers, is president of the U.S.-based “Independent Chinese PEN Center,” which receives regular NED funding. Two other prominent Charter spokesmen, Li Baiguang and Teng Biao, were given the NED’s “Democracy Award” at a ceremony in Washington last year. To date, the CCP regime appears to have treated these pro-imperialist dissidents with untypically mild repression. While taking steps to block the Charter from the Internet, it has arrested only one Charter spokesman, Liu Xiaobo, while briefly detaining others or putting them under surveillance. This is in contrast to the severe repression that has been inflicted on leaders of workers strikes and other protests.

While sharply opposing Charter 08’s politics, we do not at this time support the repression of its initiators and signers. These right-wing ideologues are clearly not leading a movement that threatens the existence of the Chinese workers state, as was the case with Polish Solidarność by the fall of 1981. At that time, we wrote: “The threat of a counter-revolutionary thrust for power is now posed in Poland. That threat must be crushed at all costs and by any means necessary”

(“Stop Solidarity’s Counterrevolution!” SC No. 51, October/November 1981). When the Stalinists moved to suppress Solidarność in December 1981, we supported this. At the same time, we indicted the bureaucracy for its nationalism, economic mismanagement and decades of capitulation to the Catholic church and other pro-capitalist forces, which drove workers from the historically socialist-minded proletariat of Poland into the arms of reaction.

With their hosannas to the “free markets” that are wreaking havoc around the globe, the right-wing intellectuals of Charter 08 are highly unlikely to gain any traction among China’s working people, for whom the “magic of the market” has meant savage exploitation and growing unemployment. Three decades ago, even as it promoted bourgeois “democracy,” Charter 77 did not call for the restoration of a capitalist economy because at the time such a demand would have repelled most Czechoslovak intellectuals, not to speak of the workers.

The program of “democratic” counterrevolution pushed by the likes of Charter 08 must be defeated *politically*—and that is something that the nationalist CCP bureaucracy is manifestly incapable of doing. In meting out repression, the Stalinist rulers do not differentiate between counterrevolutionaries and those who politically oppose bureaucratic rule from the standpoint of the historic interests of the proletariat. After the smashing of capitalist class rule in 1949, hundreds of Chinese Trotskyists who fought in defense of the Revolution were rounded up and thrown in prison or shot. Following the worker and student upheavals centered on Beijing’s Tiananmen Square in 1989, the regime executed workers. We oppose the institution of capital punishment on principle, in China—where thousands are executed each year—no less than in capitalist countries.

The U.S. group known as the Party of Socialism and Liberation (PSL) makes correct criticisms of Charter 08 in its February 10 Internet posting, “The Truth Behind China’s Charter 08 Manifesto—Liberal Language Cloaks Counter-revolutionary Aims.” But the PSL looks to the Stalinist bureaucracy as the key barrier to counterrevolution: “The CCP government, in spite all of its contradictions, remains the most important obstacle to the return of China to its previous state of semi-colonial slavery.” While criticizing the CCP leaders’ “market reforms,” the PSL hopes that Hu Jintao & Co. will see the light and return to the “socialist road”:

“Faced with an intensified imperialist offensive, the CCP leadership could change course, turning to the working class for support and reinstating socialist measures.

“However unlikely, the path to a renewal or strengthening of socialist methods is possible as long as the CCP retains its hold on state power.”

The PSL contrasts the CCP’s “market reforms” to “the path followed by the Communist Party during the Mao era.” However, Mao-style national “self-sufficiency” (economic autarky) and the market-oriented policies of later CCP leaders were both ways by which the Chinese Stalinist bureaucracy sought to “peacefully coexist” with world imperialism in different periods and different international contexts. Under Mao, this was expressed in China’s grotesque alliance with U.S. imperialism against the Soviet Union.

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China...

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In reality, the continued rule of the CCP *undermines* defense of proletarian state power in China. Thanks to the regime's policies, a sizable class of capitalist entrepreneurs with links to the offshore bourgeoisie in Hong Kong and Taiwan has emerged on the mainland, though they are still prevented from organizing politically and vying for power. Many CCP officials have financial and familial ties to such entrepreneurs. Contrary to the PSL's claims, the bureaucracy continues to preserve state property not out of a subjective identification with socialism but, as Trotsky wrote in *The Revolution Betrayed* (1936), "only to the extent that it fears the proletariat"—i.e., to protect its privileged position as a parasitic caste atop the workers state. Sooner or later, by one political path or another, the Stalinist regime will bring China to the brink of capitalist counterrevolution, posing pointblank the fate of the most populous country on earth.

It is instructive to look back at the social and political dynamics of counterrevolution in the Russian core of the former USSR. This was *not* led by anti-Communist dissident intellectuals analogous to China's Charter 08 but by major elements derived from the decomposing *nomenklatura*, the Soviet bureaucratic elite. A few years before Boris Yeltsin took power and announced the dissolution of the USSR, he was a senior leader in the Kremlin. There are today more than a few potential Yeltsins in the leading bodies of the CCP. At the same time, the Chinese Stalinists have learned something from the counterrevolution in the ex-USSR. Seeking to forestall such developments in China, the CCP leaders have pursued policies of *pérestroika* (market-oriented "reforms") without a hint of *glasnost* (political democratization).

For Proletarian Political Revolution!

In *The Revolution Betrayed*, his classic analysis of the Soviet Stalinist bureaucracy, Trotsky emphasized: "Under a nationalized economy, *quality* demands a democracy of producers and consumers, freedom of criticism and initiative—



Corbis

Chinese workers join Tiananmen Square protests in Beijing, May 1989. Banner reads: "The Workers' and Students' Hearts Are Joined."

conditions incompatible with a totalitarian regime of fear, lies and flattery." The CCP regime's policies and practices create a climate in which some of the proponents of "democratic" counterrevolution could gain a hearing, at least among a layer of intellectuals, peasants and even some workers. At the same time, the increasing antagonism between the bureaucracy and China's toiling masses is also preparing the ground for a proletarian political revolution to oust the parasitic ruling Stalinists.

The potential for a pro-socialist workers uprising was shown in the May-June 1989 Tiananmen upheaval. In its article on Charter 08, the PSL endorses the line of the Chinese Stalinists on these events, calling them "a counterrevolutionary effort painted in the West as a 'struggle for democracy'." In reality, protests that began among students opposing corruption and seeking political liberalization were joined by masses of Chinese workers, driven into action by their own grievances against the impact of the regime's market measures, especially high inflation.

Workers assemblies and motorized flying squads were thrown up, pointing to the potential for the emergence of authentic worker, soldier and peasant councils. The entry into struggle of the working class terrified the CCP rulers, who eventually unleashed fierce repression. But the bureaucracy, including the officer corps of the military, began to fracture under the impact of the proletarian upsurge. The first army units that were mobilized refused to act in the face of enormous popular support for the protests among Beijing's working people. Other more regime-loyal army units had to be brought in to carry out the massacre of June 1989, which was overwhelmingly targeted at workers rather than students. This was an incipient proletarian political revolution, drowned in blood by the Stalinist bureaucracy (see "The Spectre of Tiananmen and Working-Class Struggle in China Today," *SC* No. 143, Winter 2004/2005).

The crucial missing element, during the Tiananmen events as well as today, is an authentic Bolshevik—i.e., Leninist-Trotskyist—party to rally the working masses around the banner of workers democracy and communist internationalism. Such a party would be forged in political combat not only with currents emerging out of the decomposing Stalinist bureaucracy but also with the anti-Communist purveyors of Western-type "democracy," including some who will doubtless posture far to the left of the Charter 08 group.

The survival and advancement of China's revolutionary gains hinges on the fight for socialist revolution in the advanced capitalist countries of Japan, North America and West Europe, the only road toward the all-round modernization of China as part of an international planned economy. A proletarian political revolution producing a China of worker and peasant councils would be a beacon for the oppressed working masses of Asia and the entire world, dealing a deathblow to the bourgeoisie's "death of communism" propaganda, lifting up the downtrodden masses of the former Soviet Union and East Europe and inspiring the workers in the imperialist heartlands. This, ultimately, is the only perspective that can defeat the siren call of "democracy" pushed by imperialist-backed outfits as well as fake "socialists" who are enemies of the gains of the Chinese Revolution. ■



Toronto, May 13: Tens of thousands of Tamils take to the streets protesting murderous army offensive in Sri Lanka.

Calabrese/AP/Canadian Press

Defend the Tamil People!...

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against state repression.'

The Trotskyist League/Ligue trotskyste and other sections of the International Communist League have joined in the Tamil protests, distributing literature in solidarity with the besieged Tamils and putting forward our proletarian-revolutionary perspective for national and social liberation. As we wrote in *SC* No. 160 (Spring 2009):

"We have long upheld the right of self-determination for the Tamil people—i.e., their right to form an independent state in the largely Tamil North and East. We stand for the military defense of the LTTE against the army assault and demand the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of the Lankan army from the area.

"At the same time, we give no political support to the LTTE—bourgeois nationalists who, carrying out the logic of nationalism, have staged their own interethnic attacks on Sinhalese villagers and expelled Muslims from the historic Tamil city of Jaffna, the capital of the northern region, while employing murderous violence against other Tamil nationalist groups."

In the wake of the devastating bloodbath, the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) regime of Mahinda Rajapaksa staged grotesque chauvinist rallies in Colombo and declared a national holiday. Meant to further degrade an already defeated Tamil population, this sickening triumphalism underscores that the communal divisions fostered by the regime and its predecessors are deeper than ever. What we wrote at the time of the government-orchestrated anti-Tamil pogroms in 1983 retains all its force and more today:

"The government-orchestrated Sinhala-chauvinist bloodbath against the Tamil people in the small Indian Ocean island nation of Sri Lanka (formerly Ceylon) has catastrophically altered for the foreseeable future the prospects for common class struggle between the Sinhalese working class and the oppressed Tamil minority."

—"Massacre in Sri Lanka," *Spartacist* No. 35, Autumn 1983

Our organization had always upheld the right to Tamil self-determination while counseling against its exercise,

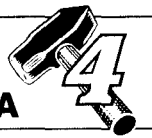
arguing in favour of united working-class struggle for Tamil freedom and socialist revolution in Lanka and its extension through the Indian subcontinent. But, as we wrote, "in the wake of the mass killing of Tamils, the bitterness and hostility between the peoples of Ceylon has evidently become insurmountable at least in the short run." Thus we raised the call *for the right of Tamil Eelam*:

"The bloody communal struggle argues that even with proletarian revolution in Ceylon and South Asia generally, a *federated* socialist republic in Ceylon will be necessary to achieve the unity of Tamils and Sinhalese on a basis of justice and equality (and to take into account Sinhalese fears of vengeance at the hands of the millions of Tamils in south India)."

At the same time, we noted that the prospects for an independent Tamil capitalist state in the arid and underdeveloped North were not good. Nor would the formation of such a state ensure the national survival of the Tamils, who were (and remain) interpenetrated with the Sinhalese majority throughout much of the island. On the other hand, the establishment of a federated socialist republic of Eelam and Lanka would be a beacon to the oppressed and subjugated masses throughout the subcontinent, including among the 65 million Tamils across the Palk Strait in the Indian state of Tamil Nadu.

The struggle of the Tamils is today at its most desperate pass. Drawing the lessons from a bitter history is difficult but necessary for pro-working-class elements, Tamil and Sinhalese alike. The once-Trotskyist Lanka Sama Samaja Party abandoned the interests of the proletariat and the defense of the Tamil people when it entered the Sinhala-chauvinist government of the SLFP in 1964.

Today the struggle to forge a Trotskyist party in Lanka must begin with the understanding that the eradication of national oppression and true social progress for the peoples of Lanka and the region will come when the barbaric rule of capital and the divisions inherited from imperialist domination are overturned through socialist revolution. Lasting national and class justice for the Tamil working people will be secured through permanent revolution—rule by the workers and peasants in a socialist federation of South Asia, and the extension of proletarian revolutions into the imperialist centers. ■



Ugarte/AFP

Chettikulam camp, one of vast network of concentration camps and interrogation centers where Sinhala-chauvinist regime in Sri Lanka holds some 300,000 Tamils.

The savage 26-year war waged by the Sri Lankan government in the North and East of the Indian Ocean island ended on May 18 with the destruction of the remnants of the Tamil mini-state and the execution of Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) leader Velupillai Prabhakaran. But if the goals of the blood-drenched Sinhala-chauvinist regime have been achieved, its merciless repression of the Tamil people and their national rights continues.

Since January, at least 8,000 Tamils and perhaps as many as 20,000 have been killed in a war that had already taken at least 70,000 lives. Cutting through the wall of press censorship, reports are emerging that an estimated 300,000 Tamils—40 percent of them children—are now imprisoned in a network of prison camps and interrogation centers. Particularly chilling was a May 23 account by the *Toronto Globe and Mail's* Doug Saunders, who reported that the detainees "are not just those who have fled the violence, but the entire civilian population of the northeastern conflict area, which is being swept clean of inhabitants by the military." Those in the camps will be "screened" as a precondition to release, a process which a government spokesman says could take up to two years.

Against the bloody vengeance of the Lankan government, the international working class must rally to the defense of the Tamil people. Tamil émigrés in Canada, Britain and else-

where now watch in helpless agony, knowing their families could be dead or held in the army's camps. We stand with them demanding asylum now for Tamil refugees!

In the months leading up to this catastrophe, in cities around the world Tamils have carried out protest after massive protest. In Toronto where the 200,000-strong Tamil community is one of the largest outside South Asia, the demonstrations were among the biggest in the city's history. The sight of tens of thousands of angry Tamils choking major Toronto streets in a sea of Tamil Eelam flags (which resemble the flag of the LTTE) sparked howls of outrage from bourgeois politicians and journalists.

The U.S., Britain, the European Union and Canada had all banned the Tigers earlier, declaring them a "terrorist" organization. In doing so, the imperialist powers effectively gave the green light to the Lankan regime in its murderous army offensive. This underscores that the repeated calls on the Canadian, U.S. and other imperialists to intervene on behalf of the Tamils could only be in vain, for they have overwhelmingly supported the Lankan government's war against the Tamil people. From the start we denounced the bans on the LTTE, which signaled the repressive attacks on exile Tamil organizations that continue to this day. It is in the clear interest of all working people to defend Tamil organizations

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