

The

July 2007

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Internationalist



Full Citizenship Rights for All Immigrants

For Militant Workers Action to Stop ICE Raids



Peter Pereira/New Bedford Standard-Times



For Workers Strikes Against the War. 3, 30
France Turns Hard to the Right. 10-22

Struggle for Immigrants Rights 36-54
Workers Power to Free Mumia. 55, 60

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In this issue...

For Workers Strikes Against the War! 3

Defend Iran Against U.S. War Threats! 5

Police-State Attack on Squatters in Copenhagen 8

France Turns Hard to the Right 10

Not One Person, Not One Cent for the Imperialist War Machine! 23

Don't Beg Congress!
Defeat U.S. War on Iraq! 30

“State Capitalism”: Anti-Trotskyist “Theory” to Cover Refusal to Defend USSR Against Imperialist War 36

For Militant Workers Action to Stop ICE Raids and Deportations! 39

War on Iraq, Immigrants Under Attack 40

LAPD Assaults Immigrants Rights March 42

San Diego Migra Raids Terrorize Latino, Immigrant Communities 43

Mobilize NYC Labor to Defend Brooklyn Immigrant Workers! 47

Defend Amber Abreu – Drop All the Charges! 49

Protest Against “Minuteman” at NYU 50

Drive Out Racist “Minuteman” Anti-Immigrant Vigilantes! 51

CUNY Faculty Union Demands Freedom Now for Mumia Abu-Jamal 57

Hundreds March for Mumia at Philadelphia Court Hearing 58

It Will Take Workers' Power to Free Mumia Abu-Jamal! 61

Mexico's Tortilla Crisis, Product of Capitalism 69

Mexico: For Free Abortion On Demand! 71

Venezuela: Battle Over the Media 80

Front-page photo: Worker outside New Bedford, Mass. plant were 361 immigrants were arrested in March 6 raid.

Subscription blank graphic based on a poster by V.A. Rodchenko, *Books* (1925).

¡Ma salió!

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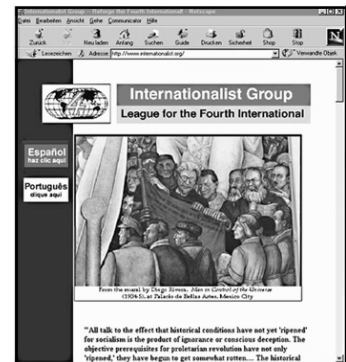


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The Internationalist



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July 2007

For Workers Strikes Against the War!

Oakland Dock Workers Honor Picket, Shut Down War Cargo Shipper

On May 19 in Oakland, California dock workers of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) Local 10 refused to cross picket lines outside one of the most notorious war cargo shipping firms, Stevedoring Services of America, leaving three ships idle for consecutive shifts. The picket was also called against American President Lines, however no APL ships docked that day.

When scores of picketers blocked the gates at the SSA terminal beginning at 7 a.m., the company eventually gave up and called off the shift. In the evening, an arbitrator ruled that this was not a bona fide “health and safety issue” and ordered the workers to go to work. However, the dock workers collectively refused. A black longshoreman insisted that there was indeed a safety issue because of the heavy police presence, and everyone there remembered how on 7 April 2003, shortly after the U.S. invasion of Iraq began, police shot pointblank at protesters and longshoremen at the same docks, injuring six ILWU members.

The May 19 picket line was called by a “popular front” coalition of antiwar groups, the Port Action Committee, rather than a labor group. PAC includes the Oakland Green Party and the pro-Democratic Party United for Peace and Justice (UFPJ). In addition, Oakland’s Democratic mayor Ron Dellums sent a sympathetic letter to the PAC. But the Oakland Education Association, which is part of the Action Committee, declared it was holding an official union picket (not a bogus “informational picket line”). Union picket signs declared “OEA Says Honor the Picket Lines.” And ILWU longshoremen did.

The ILWU has officially opposed the war and occupation of Iraq from the outset, as have most Bay Area labor bodies. But paper resolutions have not translated into union action. In May 2006, Local 10 passed a resolution, “Strike Against the War, No Peace, No Work,” calling on unions and working people nationally to “mobilize for a strike action” of 24 hours “to demand an immediate end to the war and occupation in Iraq and Afghanistan and the withdrawal of U.S. troops from the Middle East.” But the resolution was buried in committee at the union’s annual convention.

The dock workers’ action shows the depth of anger against the war in the U.S. working class and the *real possibility of labor action against the war*. Longshoremen emphasized the union’s opposition to the war. Local 10 executive board member Jack Heyman was quoted on



Jeff Paterson/Courage to Resist

Oakland’s KTVU (Channel 2) news saying, “I think the message is loud and clear... If longshoremen at the Port of Oakland can honor picket lines against the war in Iraq, then they can do that in other ports. And this will be the beginning of the end of the war.” At the onset of the U.S.-led imperialist invasion of Iraq, British railway engineers refused to move weapons trains, and Italian rail unions joined with antiwar protesters in seeking to stop shipments of military equipment to Iraq. Labor action *in the U.S.* would send shock waves around the world.

Since before the war began, the Internationalist Group has uniquely called for *workers strikes against the war* and for transportation unions to “*hot cargo*” (refuse to handle *war cargo*). A host of opportunist socialist groups dismissed this call as hopelessly utopian “pie in the sky.” The Spartacist League, which regularly called for such workers action during prior wars, suddenly dropped these slogans on the eve of the U.S. invasion of Iraq. At the time of Democrat Clinton’s bombing of Iraq in 1998, the SL dismissed the IG’s call for hot cargoing, claiming the demand had no “resonance” with workers today. Yet on May 19, West Coast some 200 union dock workers were respecting antiwar picket lines and shutting down war shippers.

This can be an important first step toward the mobilization of workers power to shut down the war machine,

Jeff Paterson/Courage to Resist



Barucha Calamity/Peller



Pickers meet outside gates of Stevedoring Services of America (left), a notorious war cargo shipper, on May 19. ILWU longshore workers refused to cross picket line, and three ships sat idle throughout the day. Internationalist Group has called since beginning of the war to “hot cargo” war materiel and for workers strikes against the war. This could be first step toward mobilizing labor’s power to defeat imperialist war.

but that requires a sharp struggle against the *bourgeois* politics of the antiwar groups and union officialdom. The OEA calls for money for schools not for war, as if it were a matter of budget priorities, and the PAC poster made a social-patriotic pitch to “Bring the Troops Home *Now*, and give them the care they need.” Such “peace is patriotic” rhetoric is a staple of the UPFJ, but all the antiwar coalitions make similar appeals to garner support from Democratic Party liberals. Revolutionaries and class-conscious workers, in contrast, emphasize that this *imperialist war* must be opposed by *class war*.

The Internationalist Group, section of the League for the Fourth International, struggles to *defeat* the imperialist war abroad and the war on working people and minorities “at home.” Strike action by the unions against the war will mean a direct confrontation with the government and its strikebreaking Taft-Hartley Act. This slave labor law was pushed through Congress by the Democrats at the height of the Cold War. In 2002, it was used against the ILWU on the basis that any strike would harm the “war effort.” The ILWU tops buckled before the government’s threats. Yet in the 1978-79 coal strike, militant miners ripped up Taft-Hartley injunctions. Thus the call for workers strikes and labor boycotts must be part of a fight to oust the pro-capitalist union bureaucrats, break with the Democrats and build a revolutionary workers party. ■

Following the May 19 picket of war cargo shippers in the Port of Oakland, ILWU Local 10 passed a motion at its June meeting to call a conference on workers action against the war. Numerous national, state and local union bodies have issued resolutions against the war in Iraq. But what is urgently needed is to turn opposition to the war into internationalist, class-struggle action.

SL on Oakland Port Picket Musings of Some Thoroughly Modern Labor Corporals... of the Rear Echelon

The 8 June issue of *Workers Vanguard*, newspaper of the Spartacist League, has a schizophrenic back-page article on the May 19 antiwar picket at the Port of Oakland in the San Francisco Bay Area. After noting that longshore workers honored the picket line, the rest of the article dumps cold water on the action: “it’s not clear that any war materiel was stopped that day,” ILWU members handle cargo at the Concord Naval Weapons Station, and it didn’t measure up to the Port Chicago mutiny or the Seattle general strike of 1919.

WV finally admits that longshoremen could “inflict a direct setback to the imperialist war machine through political strikes and the hot-cargoeing of military goods.” Yet nowhere does it say that this action could be a step in that direction, and nowhere does the SL *advocate* such class-struggle action.

For decades, when it stood on the program of revolutionary Trotskyism, the SL and *WV* regularly called for labor strikes against the war and “hot-cargoeing” war materiel. But in late 2002, on the eve of the Iraq invasion, the now-centrist SL dropped this call, under the direct pressure of the bourgeoisie in the form of a Taft-Hartley injunction. Nor do they call any longer for the defeat of “their own” imperialist bourgeoisie.

The port workers are indeed held back from using their power by the labor lieutenants of the capitalist class, who chain them to the bourgeois parties. But the sellout bureaucrats are also aided by opportunist labor corporals who talk the talk of class struggle but don’t walk the walk.

Iran Has Right to Nukes Against Nuclear-Armed U.S. Imperialists

Defend Iran Against U.S. War Threats!

The following article was published in a special issue of The Internationalist dated 17 March 2007.

In recent months, the United States has been ratcheting up the threats and provocations against Iran. In a speech justifying his “surge” of throwing 20,000 more American troops into the Iraqi cauldron, George Bush tried to blame Iran for the calamitous U.S. failure in the region. Going after Tehran is nothing new for Bush: five years ago, he included the Islamic Republic of Iran along with Saddam Hussein’s Iraq and Kim Jong Il’s North Korea in his “axis of evil” to be terminated militarily. But in the face of military disaster in Iraq and repudiation of the war on the home front, the badly wounded administration is lashing out. As their armada builds up in the Persian Gulf, the White House and Pentagon tops act as if they are preparing to go from hysterical rhetoric to catastrophic action. According to an article in the British *Guardian* (15 January), “Next Target: Iran,” plans call for “using bombers to destroy up to 10,000 targets in the first day of any war, and special forces flying in to destroy anything that’s left.”

The Internationalist Group and League for the Fourth International denounce Washington’s latest war ploy and call on class-conscious workers around the world to redouble efforts to deal a stunning *defeat* to the U.S. invaders. While

U.S./British Provocation Against Iran

On March 23 a British naval patrol in the Persian Gulf brazenly intruded into coastal waters claimed by Iran, whereupon they were seized by Iran’s navy. London said its sailors and marines were merely engaged in “routine boarding operations” (!) and claimed they were in Iraqi waters. This was echoed by the imperialist media the world over. Simultaneously, the U.S. Navy held war games just off the Iranian coast involving two naval “strike groups” (the nuclear aircraft carriers USS *Stennis* and USS *Eisenhower*), with 10,000 sailors and 100 warplanes.

The whole scenario was a blatant provocation by the imperialist powers occupying Iraq. The Pentagon has elaborated contingency plans for the use of tactical nuclear weapons against Iran. The demarcation of territorial waters at the head of the Gulf has never been agreed upon, and the British patrol was far closer to Iran than to Iraq. Their mission was clearly to measure Iran’s reaction. Washington and London threatened “retaliation” if Tehran didn’t hand over the British intruders. After the sailors admitted they were in Iranian waters, they were duly released. But the next time, the imperialists’ brinkmanship could lead to a nuclear conflagration.

giving no political support to the reactionary Islamic rulers in Tehran, we stand squarely on the side of Iran, a semi-colonial country, against the marauding imperialists on its doorstep. As the leaders of the antiwar movement tiptoe around the issue, we insist that any serious opponent of imperialism must emphatically defend Iran’s right to obtain nuclear weapons to defend itself against the United States, the only power ever to have used nuclear bombs in wartime. The U.S.’ vast nuclear arsenal could turn Iran into a radioactive wasteland, and its nuclear-armed Zionist allies would love to incinerate Tehran. Already, U.S. generals and admirals have been ordered to ready strike plans including the possible use of “tactical” nuclear “bunker-buster” bombs to “decapitate” the Iranian leadership.

We also warn: the Republicans are not the only warmongers in Washington. After getting elected last fall on a wave of discontent over the U.S.’ debacle in Iraq, the Democratic majority in Congress wanted to exploit antiwar sentiment without committing themselves to any policy. But since the war on Iraq and Afghanistan is, and has been since the beginning, a *bipartisan imperialist war*, the Democrats will once again vote for the Pentagon budget, now upwards of \$600 billion a year, to authorize more wanton slaughter. They are even *adding* more money than the Bush administration requested to fund the U.S. occupation of Afghanistan. And after a few noises about requiring a new war powers resolution, last weekend the Democratic leader in the House of Representatives, Nancy Pelosi, decided to strip a provision from the military spending bill requiring President Bush to seek Congressional approval to attack Iran.

So much for that charade. In fact, war hawks like Democratic front-runner Hillary Clinton have always tried to “out-Bush Bush” when it comes to saber-rattling against Iran or North Korea. Senator Clinton says that she would keep U.S. troops in Iraq in a “remaining military as well as political mission.” But the supposed “antiwar” Democrat Barack Obama says the same: his proposed “Iraq War De-escalation Act of 2007” calls only for a “redeployment” of U.S. occupation troops, and “would allow for a limited number of US forces to remain in Iraq.” Moreover, in his campaign autobiography *The Audacity of Hope: Thoughts on Reclaiming the American Dream*, Senator Obama supported the U.S.’ anti-Soviet Cold War II over Afghanistan, and called to *increase* the military budget “to manage threats posed by rogue nations like North Korea and Iran, and to meet the challenges presented by potential rivals like China.”

So with a green light from the Democrats, Bush & Co. are escalating their threats against Iran. They have already

gone far beyond the usual war of words. In December they arrested a number of Iranian diplomats in Baghdad, despite the protests of the Iraqi puppet “government.” And in January, the day after Bush threatened on national TV that he would “interrupt the flow of support from Iran and Syria” and “seek out and destroy the networks providing advanced weaponry” to Iraqi insurgents, U.S. troops hit an Iranian consular office in the Kurdish region. The *Washington Post* reported that Bush signed a secret directive to “kill or capture” Iranians in Iraq. And investigative reporter Seymour Hersh quoted a former U.S. intelligence official saying that the military got orders “to snatch as many Iranians in Iraq as they can.... They had five hundred locked up at one time” (*New Yorker*, 5 March).

Hersh, who has often served in the past as a mouthpiece for discontented officers in the military, provided a detailed account of how the U.S. is funding anti-Iranian Sunni Islamic fundamentalists in Lebanon and elsewhere in the region in a repeat of its use of Islamists like Osama bin Laden against the Soviets in Afghanistan in the 1980s. He reports that “there is worry within the military” that the two carrier strike groups – the *Eisenhower* and the *Stennis* – now in the Arabian Sea “may be ordered to stay in the area after the new carriers arrive” in the spring. His “former senior intelligence official” informant says “current contingency plans allow for an attack order this spring,” but some ranking officers in the Joint Chiefs of Staff are counting on the White House “not being foolish enough” to launch this folly. Even so, the London *Sunday Times* (25 February) quotes a British spy source saying, “There are four or five generals and admirals we know of who would resign if Bush ordered an attack on Iran.”

Desperately trying to build support for its failed Iraqi “mission,” the U.S. is busy stoking fears among “moderate Arabs” (like the Saudi Islamic fundamentalist monarchy!) over the threat of a “Shiite crescent” in the Near East extending from Lebanon to southern Iraq, Iran and both sides of the Persian Gulf. The Saudis are acutely concerned about the possibility of an uprising among the predominantly Shiite population of its oil-producing region along the Gulf. But U.S. attempts to control Iran are not some brainstorm of Bush, his now-departed neo-conservative Cold Warrior ideologues Donald Rumsfeld and Paul Wolfowitz and an Israeli cabal in Washington. In the post-WWII Cold War, the CIA ousted Iranian premier Mohammed Mossadegh in 1953 in order to counter Soviet influence (and replace the British). And in the late 1970s Democratic president Jimmy Carter prepared plans for a U.S. military occupation of eastern Saudi Arabia in order to keep Washington’s hand on the strategic Near Eastern oil spigot.

The ouster of the U.S.-backed shah of Iran in 1979 by supporters of Ayatollah Khomeini and the subsequent takeover of the U.S. embassy by Muslim student “followers of the imam’s line” set official Washington reeling. The Pentagon brass may be more than a little gun shy about attacking Iran because of the fiasco of Carter’s 1980 attempted hostage rescue. Many on the left gave political support to the “Iranian Revolution,” turning a blind eye to the fact that the victorious mullahs ex-

ecuted thousands of communists, Kurds and homosexuals and stoned women for not wearing the head-to-toe *chador* (veil). The fake-leftists’ pro-Khomeini line reflected longstanding Stalinist and social-democratic political backing for bourgeois-nationalist movements in colonial and semi-colonial countries. Trotskyists, in contrast, who fight for *workers* revolution against imperialism and its “Third World” puppets, said: down with the Shah, no to Khomeini.

Today, some pseudo-socialists like the Workers World Party (WWP) continue to prettify the mullahs’ regime as “independent” and the product of an “anti-imperialist revolution.” Others who once hailed the “Iranian Revolution,” like the International Socialist Organization (ISO), now praise the Lebanese Shiite Hezbollah for “its willingness to challenge Israeli aggression and U.S. imperialism” and having “set an example of resistance” (*Socialist Worker*, 22 September 2006). But the Iranian regime and its Shiite allies elsewhere in the Near East are hardly anti-imperialist. They would be perfectly willing to strike a deal with the “Great Satan,” as Tehran showed in cooperating with the U.S. invaders against the Taliban regime in Afghanistan. Iranian president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad has also stoked anti-Semitism with his vociferous denial of the Nazi Holocaust that annihilated millions of Jews in World War II. He even invited notorious American fascists such as David Duke for a conference of Holocaust deniers.

The Zionist rulers of Israel are very much involved in stoking Washington’s hysteria against Iran. Saner spokesmen for U.S. imperialism always sought to ally with either Iraq or Iran – or set them at each others’ throats as Reagan did in the decade-long Iran-Iraq war of the 1980s – rather than imagining that they could overthrow the governments of both countries simultaneously, as the Israeli madmen believe. But it is important to understand who is in command. The Zionists have always looked for an imperialist sponsor, first Britain from 1917 on, and since the 1960s the United States. Israel offers its services as a sheriff for imperialism in the Near East. Democrats and Republicans, including Clinton and Obama, always vow to defend Israel. Right-wing anti-Semites such as Pat Robertson and Jerry Falwell are strongly pro-Israel. But when the Israeli rulers’ actions clash with the interests of U.S. imperialism, Washington dismisses the Zionists with a wave of the hand.

It is the U.S. imperialist superpower that holds the whip hand in the Near East. Trotskyists oppose imperialism down the line. We fight to bring down the Zionist citadel from within, calling for an Arab/Hebrew workers republic in a socialist federation of the Near East. When the bulk of the Western left sided with the Saudi-financed and CIA-armed Islamic *mujahedin* against Soviet forces propping up a weak reform government in Afghanistan in the ’80s, Trotskyists were on the other side. We *hailed* the Soviet Red Army for carrying out one of the few progressive actions by the Kremlin. In Iran it is precisely because genuine Trotskyists gave no political support to Khomeini, while standing firmly on the side of Iran against imperialist aggression, that we can put forward a revolutionary program for the growing working-class and

secular opposition to the mullahs' regime of Iranian capitalism. While defending Iran's right to nuclear arms to deter imperialist attack, we stand with Iranian workers who have repeatedly struck nationalized companies and we call on students protesting against the Islamic morals police to refuse the poisoned chalice of U.S. support for "democracy."

With its colonial occupation of Iraq turned into a debacle, the government of George Bush has taken a page from Richard Nixon's playbook in the Vietnam War: when facing defeat, escalate. Following the U.S.' humiliation in the 1968 Têt offensive, Nixon invaded Cambodia in May 1970, while vociferously denying he had done so. Now Pentagon chief Robert Gates vows that "We are not looking for an excuse to go to war with Iran.... We are not planning a war with Iran" (*International Herald Tribune*, 16 February). But who today believes this classic Nixonian "non-denial denial"? (Tomorrow the U.S. will say it didn't "intend" to go to war, but when Iran responds to U.S. provocations, it "had no choice.") The threat of American attack on Iran also spells more repression at home: remember the massacre of four students at Kent State University in Ohio, gunned down by National Guard troops in May 1970, who were protesting the "secret" invasion of Cambodia. *Imperialist war abroad brings police-state repression "at home."*

Today, in spite of overwhelming domestic opposition to the war, the U.S. is staying in Iraq. The partner parties of blood-soaked American imperialism are united over threatening to vaporize Iran and "manage" other "rogue nations," such as the bureaucratically deformed workers states of China and North Korea. The Republicans and Democrats are as one over the occupation of Afghanistan just as they were over Bill Clinton's two wars on Yugoslavia. The Democrats' only quibble is that the U.S. is sinking in the quick sands of Iraq and they want to pull back from that quagmire (but not get out entirely). "Antiwar" liberals want above all to *avoid defeat* for the U.S. in the Near East, so they and their reformist camp followers call to "bring the troops home." The IG/LFI is *for* a defeat for Yankee imperialism and calls to *drive the U.S. out of the Near East*. And instead of tailing after Democratic "doves" like Barack O'Bomb 'em, we call for working-class action against the war.

The Internationalist Group calls to mobilize unions in the streets against the war, for stop-work meetings against the war, for transport workers to "hot cargo" (refuse to handle) war materiel, and for workers strikes against the war. This is not "pie in the sky," but a concrete program for struggle. At the time of the 1970 Kent State killings, Trotskyists called on Ohio Teamsters, whose strike was being repressed by the same National Guard troops, to join forces with the antiwar students against the common enemy, the U.S. government. This perspective is counterposed to that of the various coalitions of the "antiwar" movement. Despite tactical and mainly organizational differences, they all have sought and seek today to push the Democrats to come out against the war. Now that the Democrats have a majority in Congress, some such as the ISO say "Iraq is their war too" (Lance Selfa in *International*

Socialist Review, March-April 2007). But for years these same reformists kept repeating, "Say No to Bush's War."

Currently, groups like the Maoist Revolutionary Communist Party try to sidle up to the Democrats by calling on the Democratic Congress to "impeach Bush." Others, slightly more cautious, call to "impeach Cheney first." Such appeals to down-in-the-dumps Democrats masked the fact that the invasion and occupation of Iraq and Afghanistan are a bipartisan *imperialist* war. In 1974, facing the threat of impeachment, Nixon was forced out of office, but the Vietnam war went on for another year. Today the Democrats are the main war party in Washington blocking U.S. withdrawal from Iraq and Afghanistan. The Democrats are not going to stop the war, no matter how much the antiwar movement beseeches them. They didn't stop the Vietnam War: the U.S. lost it on the battlefield. Antiwar marches contributed, but they were kept politically under the thumb of bourgeois politicians. There's always a Democrat on the speakers' platform and heading up the peace crawls. Then it was Wayne Morse, Bella Abzug and Vance Hartke. Today it's Dennis Kucinich, Jesse Jackson, Al Sharpton.

On January 27, one coalition, United for Peace and Justice (UFPJ) held a march in Washington that ringed Congress. A special issue of *The Internationalist* proclaimed: "Don't Beg Congress!" calling instead for workers strikes against the war. Just about everyone there knew Congress wasn't going to do anything against the war. Big surprise, it hasn't. On February 14, another group, the Troops Out Now Coalition (TONC) led by the WWP, was even more explicit, marching from Times Square in New York to the offices of Democratic senators Shumer and Clinton. On March 17, the TONC and International ANSWER, led by the Party of Socialism and Liberation (PSL, a WWP offshoot) are calling to march on the Pentagon. With their appeal "From Iraq to New Orleans: Fund People's Needs, Not the War Machine" they are looking to the Democratic Congress to reorder "priorities." At Columbia University last month students called for a campus strike against the war. During a march they chanted, "Stop the funding, stop the war – What the hell is Congress for?!" IG supporters yelled out, "Imperialism!"

Congress doesn't represent "the people" – this club of millionaires (and a few billionaires) represents the capitalist rulers. Our call for workers strikes against the war is a call to wage *class war against the imperialist war*. Pacifism is no answer. The only "antiwar movement" that was ever successful in stopping imperialist war was the Bolshevik October Revolution in 1917, because it kicked out the ruling class. How many antiwar movements does one have to go through before realizing that the war is not because Bush lied, or because Nixon was a thief, or because LBJ was a baby killer? They all lie, steal and kill because these wars are the product of a system, imperialism, that will keep generating war after war until it is overthrown. That is why the Trotskyists today, like the Bolsheviks in 1917, fight for the *defeat* of "their own" imperialist rulers, and to smash imperialism through *international socialist revolution*. ■

More Danish Blowback:

Police-State Attack on Squatters in Copenhagen

Mobilize Workers' Power in Sharp Class Struggle!

On March 1, a police “anti-terror” squad landed by helicopter on the roof of the “Ungdomshuset” (Youth House) to storm the building in the Nørrebro area of Copenhagen which has been occupied by squatters for almost a quarter of a century. This final eviction move – the debut of the police unit – provoked six days of street-fighting, which made headlines around the world. The bourgeois press played up the burning cars and barricades, but rarely mentioned the fact that protesters were beaten, tear-gassed and in some cases run over as the cops moved to break up or seal off what began as peaceful demonstrations. Extra police vehicles were brought in from Sweden and the Netherlands for the military-style assault.

In all, nearly 700 persons were arrested and arraigned in court. The police round-up – *the largest in Danish history since the German occupation in World War II* – included nighttime raids on individual apartments and the offices of left-wing groups, with or without court order. Among those swept up in the dragnet were members of legal aid groups, paramedics trying to attend to the injured on the street, members of American rock bands touring Denmark, and a host of innocent bystanders. In the aftermath, about 250 of those arrested have been remanded by judges, who rubber-stamped police requests for holding them without bail in isolation custody for two to four weeks awaiting trial.

What set off this wanton display of police power in “peaceful” Denmark? The municipality of Copenhagen had officially handed over the abandoned building to the squatters back in 1982, and it became a cultural center at which such well-known musicians as Nick Cave and Björk had performed. But seven years ago the city administration went back on its word, and sold the building for a pittance to a fundamentalist sect, Faderhuset (“Father’s House”). Led by one Ruth Eversen, the homophobic Faderhuset was politely described by the *New York Times* (4 March) as a “Christian congregation.” In a Sunday sermon delivered as the fighting raged, Eversen exulted that the eviction was a victory over “Satan” – i.e. abortionists, homosexuals and others who are objects of hatred of these reactionaries (also including Muslims, punk rockers and anarchists).

This is why Faderhuset refused offers by concerned parties to buy back the building for considerably more than it had originally paid, and had the building torn down. This is also an act



Politiken

Danish police move against squatters at Ungdomshuset (Youth House), March 1.

of vicious historical/cultural vandalism. The building at Jagtvej 69 was once a “People’s House” belonging to the Danish trade unions, and had been the scene of various international workers gatherings. It hosted the socialist women’s conference in 1910 which launched International Women’s Day, and had been visited by Vladimir Lenin and Rosa Luxemburg – no doubt an added incentive for Eversen & Co. to destroy it.

Copenhagen’s social-democratic mayor, Ritt Bjerregaard, disappeared on a ski trip during the police assault, but she returned to denounce the protesters and explain that private property rights were sacrosanct. (For social democrats, anyway!) While the bourgeois media tried to whip up hysteria about “foreign agitators,” the cops struck swaggering poses for “trophy photos” on the site. They have since been deployed to conduct arbitrary body searches at checkpoints around the city.

In our article, “Racist Anti-Muslim Provocations Trigger Storm of Islamic Reaction” (*The Internationalist* No. 23, April-May 2006), we noted that behind the uproar last year over the Danish anti-Muslim cartoon affair was a drive against immigrants by the Danish bourgeoisie and its state. While this drive is currently being carried out by the national government in the hands of a right-wing coalition including the ultra-rightist Danish People’s Party, the Danish Social Democracy paved the way. Now we have the cops being unleashed at the behest of a right-wing Christian sect (which

some of them openly sympathize with) while the Social Democrats play Pontius Pilate.

As we noted in that article, the uproar over the Danish cartoon affair in the West European bourgeois media about “intolerant Islam” was utterly phony. While the bourgeois media waxed indignant over calls by Muslim clerics (and fake leftists) for censorship of offensive images, a climate of hostility to Near Eastern and North African immigrants was being whipped up to justify the use of untrammelled police power. And while the foreign-born may be the first targets of this “anti-terrorist” repression, ultimately the working class and the left are targeted. The recent gunpoint eviction of squatters in Copenhagen proves the point.

Some in the punk/anarchist youth milieu around Ungdoms-huset may be hostile to the workers movement, but the opportunist antics of the social-democratic pseudo-left only reinforce such tendencies.

Socialistisk Standpunkt (SS – Socialist Standpoint), the Danish affiliate of the International Marxist Tendency (IMT) founded by the late Ted Grant and now led by Alan Woods, lectures autonomist activists that “their strategy is completely counter-productive.” SS complains that a December 16 demonstration “was converted into violence with individual fighting with the police and the smashing of shops” (*Socialistisk Standpunkt*, 22 January 2007). While allowing that “the police carry their part of the responsibility for these acts of violence,” these cheerleaders for Venezuelan bourgeois populist Hugo Chávez call to “take the demand for more youth houses up in the three workers’ parties, in the Social Democratic Party, in the Socialist Peoples’ Party, in the Unity-list.” So far to these “Marxists,” the correct strategy is to beg from crumbs from the Social Democrats who are co-responsible for *capitalist state violence* against autonomist youth!

The same slavish loyalty to Social Democracy and denunciation of “violence” is displayed by Socialistisk Modstand (SM – Socialist Resistance), affiliated to the Committee for a Workers’ International (CWI) led by Peter Taaffe. In a March 6 Internet statement, SM complained: “In addition, unfortunately, there is a group of ‘autonomists’ with no interest in cooperating with any politicians, the police or even other movements on the left, if they disagree on the smallest thing. This group has a lot of power, which is very bad as they have a negative influence on the rest of the peaceful movement of young people.” The CWI, like the Grantites, with whom they were formerly aligned in the British Militant tendency, holds that the cops are “workers in uniform” rather than guard dogs of capital, no matter how rabid they get.

Socialistisk Arbejderparti (SA – Socialist Workers Party), Danish affiliate of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International (USec), similarly avers that “the police hold part of the responsibility” for escalating the conflict. SA adds: “That the police have let themselves be used as a tool in a political conflict cannot (alas) come as a surprise” (*International Viewpoint*, March 2007). So the cops, the armed fist of the bourgeois state, “let themselves be used”?! It certainly comes as

no surprise that these pseudo-Trotskyists pretend that the police could somehow be neutral. After all, their Brazilian comrades are part of the bourgeois government and have sent police against landless peasants. Like SS and SM, SA tells autonomist youth to orient to social-democratic parliamentarism, through the “Red-Green Alliance,” which for its part “condemned the use of political violence” (SA statement, December 2006). It’s also no surprise when radical-minded youth say “no thanks” to this dead-end.

All these groups, with their even-handed condemnation of “violence”, are pining for the “good old days” of the capitalist “welfare state”, but the bourgeoisie, in Denmark, as elsewhere, has repeatedly demonstrated in past few decades that this form of capitalist rule is history. The events in Denmark are a serious warning to the workers and oppressed. This is nothing less than a rehearsal for a police state. In Europe, as in North America, “anti-terrorism” masks a desire to regiment the entire population, starting with immigrants, rebellious youth and others considered by the capitalist rulers to be a “threat to the state.”

The problem with the anarchist-autonomist tactics and “strategy” is not that they are too “radical” or “violent,” that they alienate “ordinary people” and the “broad masses” who would otherwise sympathize with them, but rather that street skirmishes and acts of frustration are wholly *inadequate* to take on the organized violence of the capitalist state power. They seek “autonomy” from capital so they can do their own thing, but they can’t escape the class struggle. And some of today’s petty-bourgeois street fighters may well become tomorrow’s bourgeois ministers and imperialist warmongers: look at the example of Joschka Fischer in Germany

The junior league imperialists of the Danish bourgeoisie yearn to police København like they police Kabul and Kosovo on behalf of NATO. To go up against and *defeat the class violence* of these helpmates of U.S. imperialism, who acted as deputy sheriffs to the world gendarmes laying waste to Iraq, requires a superior power: that of the working class. What was necessary was to mobilize the workers movement on a massive scale, for the same ruling class that tore down Ungdomshuset has been slashing social programs left and right. But bringing to bear workers’ power does not mean parades like the 100,000 who demonstrated against welfare cuts last October. It requires militant class action.

In this context, the refusal by the Danish building trades unions to have anything to do with tearing down the Ungdoms-huset was, if laudable, woefully inadequate (the reactionaries simply resorted to a non-union firm from a Baltic country). Leaders of the 3F (Fælles Fagligt Forbund) labor center even spoke of strikes, but didn’t do anything. What’s needed is a thorough-going mobilization of the power of the working class to stop this reactionary drive in its tracks and ultimately sweep away the capitalist system which spawned it. And that requires revolutionary leadership of genuine Trotskyists, as opposed to the social-democrats of the second mobilization who abuse the name of the Bolshevik leader while begging for crumbs from the bourgeoisie. ■

After the Presidential Elections, A Reactionary Offensive Against Youth and Workers

France Turns Hard to the Right

To Defeat Sarkozy, End Class-Collaborationist Alliances

The following article is translated from a May 2007 supplement to L'Internationaliste, French-language publication of the League for the Fourth International.

Out of the most appalling presidential campaign that France has known in a long time, the candidate emerged victorious who most embodied chauvinist electioneering and the employers' determination to put an end to the threadbare union gains still remaining after almost a quarter century of dismantling the "welfare state." Nicolas Sarkozy has been installed in the Elysée (France's presidential palace) in order to proclaim the death of the "French model." Set up following the second imperialist world war in order to exorcise the specter of workers revolution, this model sought to maintain "social peace" in particular by providing a series of public services and measures improving working conditions. With the demise of the Soviet Union and the weakening of workers organizations in the West, the capitalists believe they have forever eliminated the communist "menace" that shook Europe. Henceforth, French bosses want to compete on the world capitalist market with their American, British and Japanese rivals without having to shoulder social "burdens" now deemed useless. The hour has struck for class war against the working people and the entire population considered to be "unproductive" (for profits!).

The candidate of the shareholders of the CAC40 (the stock market index of the largest French firms) and French multinational companies is using his election results to claim an unassailable legitimacy in carrying out the "break" that he intends to decree at top speed. The victory of the hard right at the polls is undeniable, the product of a climate of all-round reaction. But the vote spread between Sarkozy (53 percent) and his adversary Ségolène Royal (47 percent) is less than on other occasions under France's Fifth Republic (inaugurated in 1959). In reality, the new president holds all the political cards in his hand because neither Royal nor any of the other leading candidates (François Bayrou, Jean-Marie Le Pen) presented a contrary



The Economist

Sarkozy's bonapartist ambitions.....must run up against a strong working-class opposition. Below: strikers from the PSA Peugeot Citroën factory at Aulnay-sous-Bois.



Lutte Ouvrière

program. "Sarko" vs. "Sego" was a contest between two competitors running on the same basic program, and a majority of the voters preferred the original to the copy. This policy represents a consensus among the French bourgeoisie, and

The Bankruptcy of the Parliamentary Left ... and the Electoralist "Far Left": Forge a Genuine Trotskyist Party!

the “socialist” Royal was in fact the candidate of a bourgeois coalition, backed by small capitalist parties such as the Left Radicals (PRG) and the Citizens Movement (MDC) of Jean-Pierre Chevènement. Had she been elected, Royal would have installed a thoroughly capitalist government.

As always, this *popular front* of class collaboration had the purpose of chaining the working people to a sector of the bourgeoisie. The responsibility for this policy does not rest solely on the candidate of the Socialist Party (PS), who comes from a colonial military family, went to the ENA (National School of Administration, where France’s political elite is educated) and is a “champagne socialist” rich enough that she and her companion have to pay the ISF wealth tax (on fortunes over €760,000, or roughly US\$1 million). Also responsible are the trade-union bureaucrats, the French Communist Party (PCF), the leaders of the NGOs (“non-governmental organizations”) who campaigned for “anyone but Sarko” ... as well as the five candidates to the left of the Socialist Party on the first round of the election who helped recoup votes from workers and residents of housing projects for the elegant popular-front *enarque* (graduate of the ENA).

If the presidential campaign demonstrated the bankruptcy of the “social-liberal” parliamentary left, it also laid bare the dead-end of a “far left” sunk in popular-frontism. To be sure, Olivier Besancenot for the Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire



Michel Euler/AP

Ségolène Royal, candidate of the PS, PRG and MDC, visits strike picket lines at PSA Peugeot Citroën at Aulnay-sous-Bois, April 2. To defeat Sarkozy it is necessary to break with the popular front of class collaboration.

(LCR) was able to somewhat improve his score, but overall the vote for the “left of the left” dipped sharply compared to 2002 due to the phenomenon of the *vote util* (“useful vote”) cast for the PS (see “The Far Left Adrift,” page 14).

Sarkozy’s program of all-sided repression won above all due to the absence of an alternative. When he sounded the refrain that the youth of immigrant origin in the suburbs¹ must “love France,” Royal responded that every family should have a tri-color flag in its cupboard. She also had her supporters sing *La Marseillaise*, with its stanza about the “impure blood” of foreigners “irrigating our fields”! There hasn’t been this much xenophobia spewing out in an election since 1981, when the PCF campaigned to “produce French” and sent a bulldozer to demolish a dormitory of Malian immigrant workers in the municipality of Vitry. In their big televised debate of May 2, the candidate who sought to incarnate “La France presidente” (Royal) was reduced to a series of “yes, but” responses. Massive deportation of immigrants, refusal of across-the-board regularization of undocumented immigrants, prison sentences and regimes of military discipline for the youth? She agreed to all this, sometimes trying to bypass Sarkozy on the right. She only promised to carry out these draconian measures “more humanely.”

Recognizing the fundamental identity of the programs of Sarkozy and Royal by no means requires underestimating the danger represented by the newly elected president. His Napole-



¹ In contrast to residential patterns in the United States, in France the poor and working-class population (including most immigrants) is largely consigned to live in housing projects in the suburbs surrounding the big cities while the bourgeoisie and well-off petty bourgeoisie inhabit the posh districts inside the city walls.



Man on a white horse in the Camargue. Bush, or General Boulanger?

onic predilections are obvious to all, as illustrated by the front page of the *Economist* (14 April), which proclaimed him “France’s Chance.” His bonapartist appetites were also on display in the strange spectacle he offered during the campaign when he staged a photo op riding a white horse in the cattle fields of the Camargue. If he was trying to look like George Bush it didn’t work: rather than a French cowboy, he gave the impression of imitating General Boulanger, the man on horseback who posed as savior of the republic while seeking to eradicate it. But if Boulangism was doomed to defeat and its figurehead leader appeared rather ridiculous with his bellicose speeches, Sarkozyism promises to be more dangerous. When he called the youth of the suburbs “scum” (*racaille*) and “thugs” (*voyous*) and promised to “clean [them] out like a Kärcher” (a high-pressure water blaster used to clean graffiti), we know very well that the police are ready to carry out his threats.

At the time of the first clashes in November 2005 after the electrocution of two youths, Bouna Traore and Zyed Benna, who were being chased by the cops, the police response ordered by Sarkozy, at the time minister of the interior, was to encircle the housing projects in the suburbs and impose a state of siege. Chirac then generalized this by proclaiming a “state of emergency” with decrees (Nos. 1386 and 1387) that gave prefects (the administrators of France’s *départements*) almost unlimited powers. These are preparations for civil war, and if the parliamentary left and the electoralist “far left” did practically nothing to combat these measures, it is a proof of their impotence in the face of the Sarkozy danger. During the recent elec-

tion campaign, a jack-booted police intervention at the Gare du Nord train station in Paris against a rider (falsely) accused of lacking proper documents provoked protests which were portrayed in the media as “violence” in order to feed Sarkozy’s “security” campaign. Ditto for his hunting down of undocumented immigrants, labeled dangerous criminals and hounded with huge squads of police, under the complaisant eyes of TV cameras whose job it is to record his “exploits.” Like Berlusconi in Italy, another politician with similar bonapartist ambitions, Sarkozy is fully capable of fabricating a *casus belli* in order to make a grab for absolute power.

But between being capable of doing something and being able to successfully bring it off there is a quite a distance to be traveled. A politician like Sarkozy, who seeks to identify “genes of delinquency” at the age of three and who cooks up a law for the drugging of children so “identified,” certainly has appetites to install an authoritarian regime. There is also a near-universal tendency among the imperialist and semi-colonial bourgeoisies to introduce police-state measures in the name of fighting terrorism. But even with their whole repressive apparatus, their control of the media and their supposed legitimization at the ballot box, they can be beaten by far more powerful working-class mobilization. When in May 1968 the German government – a “grand coalition” of Christian Democrats and Social Democrats – sought to introduce laws for a state of emergency (*Notstandsgesetze*), it had to beat a retreat in the face of huge protest demonstrations of hundreds of thousands of students and workers called by the previously quite docile trade unions. But above all, for Sarkozy’s anti-worker reform bills and his repressive measures to run into an effective resistance, everything depends on a truly revolutionary leadership, which doesn’t exist at present and which must be forged.

Sarkozy presents himself as a convinced supporter of free-market economics and finds the current labor code too rigid because it doesn’t make firing employees as easy for the employers as he would like it to be. He wants to reform – i.e., to destroy – the present model of social security, which is falsely blamed for being behind the government’s budget deficit, what with tax exemptions and public subsidies for the profits of the big private corporations totaling more than €100 billion over the last several years. Even though he held back at the time of the introduction of the CPE (first job contract) in 2006², above all in order to weaken his potential rival, Prime Minister Dominique de Villepin, it is certain that he has even worse proposals ready to be taken out of the drawer. There’s no doubt that the capitalist groups supporting him want to push Sarkozy to become a French Margaret Thatcher or Ronald Reagan. It’s certain as well that the Socialist Party, currently in utter disarray, whose candidate proposed a “first

² Massive worker-student demonstrations in March-April 2006 against the CPE (which provided for sub-minimum wage jobs from which youths could be fired without cause) forced the government to withdraw the law after it had been approved by the National Assembly. See *The Internationalist* No. 22, May-June 2006.



Bob Edme/AP

Students in Bordeaux demonstrate in April 2006 against “Contract for Slaves.” Large-scale struggles of youth and workers in 2005/2006 were not reflected in presidential election.

chance job contract” almost identical to De Villepin’s, will offer no resistance. So what is to be done?

It’s necessary to intervene in the struggles of the working people, the youth and immigrants in order to prepare and orient them for an inevitable clash with the regime. During the campaign, the possibilities for this were not lacking. The six-week strike at PSA Peugeot Aulnay (led in large part by workers of immigrant origin) was a perfect opportunity. Their demand for a €300 wage increase for all could have been taken up by broad sectors of the working people. The strike took place in the département of Seine St-Denis with a heavy working-class and immigrant population. Several towns in the département, including Aulnay-sous-Bois itself, have been the targets of police provocation. The strikers could have been mobilized to extend the strike to other factories and companies not only of the PSA group but also elsewhere in the region. Support committees and solidarity rallies should have been organized in all the towns of the département, including workers and youths, men and women from the immigrant districts, in order to march on Paris. But instead of this, the union leaderships led this like a routine strike. And when on May 6, following the announcement of Sarkozy’s victory, the police launched a provocation against a peaceful crowd in Aulnay, neither the unions nor the parliamentary left parties (PS and PCF) nor the organizations of the “far left” called on working people to go to the aid of the youths and the residents of the housing projects.

At the same time, discontent was spreading among Airbus workers, hit by layoffs which had already been announced (under the Power 8 plan) and indignant over the “golden parachute” for the head of the parent company, EADS, who will receive €8.5 million for bailing out while the workers will get a bonus totaling a paltry €2.82 each! There were walkouts one

after another, first at Toulouse, and then, when that ran out of steam, in the Airbus factories at Nantes and Saint-Nazaire. This took place on the eve of the second round of the elections. A movement of sit-down strikes should have been launched to occupy the plants, taking off from the demands of the EADS workers to extend them to nearby sectors. That’s how a genuine Bolshevik party would wage an election campaign.

Given the widespread awareness of the danger represented by Sarkozy, it is necessary to act with the perspective of a working-class mobilization, drawing in the youth in particular, which in order to win would have to assume the proportions of a new May ’68 ... one that would go all the way, to the installation of a workers government. In fact, one of the factories in question was the former Sud-Aviation in Nantes, the first plant to go out in the 1968 general strike. But even far left groups that have made the general strike into their con-

stant refrain, giving it a mythical character, did nothing to seize these opportunities. Why? Because no one wanted to ruin the electoral chances of Royal. Every one of them was subordinated to the discipline of the popular front.

What must be done is to undertake a struggle to forge the nucleus of a genuine working-class revolutionary vanguard party. Such a party would draw the lessons of past struggles, and how they were sabotaged, as well as of this and prior election campaigns, notably that of 2002 when the whole of the left, directly or indirectly, backed Chirac against Le Pen. The party which must be built must break totally with the popular front in order to fight for the class independence of the proletariat, rather than engaging in electoral maneuvers in the shadow of class-collaborationist coalitions.

This party must be an internationalist party, which not only criticizes the neo-colonial military interventions in Africa (where Mitterrand’s “African cell”³ was implicated in the Rwanda genocide), but which fights every step of the way for the withdrawal of French troops from Lebanon and to drive out the French expeditionary corps in Afghanistan. Beyond opposing U.S. occupation of Iraq, such a party must fight *for the defeat of its own imperialist bourgeoisie*. This mustn’t be a party of “all the revolutionaries” or similar formulas indicating an amorphous party without a clear policy. Only an authentically Trotskyist, Bolshevik-Leninist party built in the struggle to reforge the Fourth International will be capable of leading to a successful conclusion the looming struggle against a regime as determined as Sarkozy’s.

³ The secretive “cellule africaine” in the president’s office has run France’s policy toward its ex-colonies since the time of DeGaulle in the 1960s. Under Mitterrand, it was headed by his son, Jean-Christophe.

French “Far Left” Adrift

I: The LCR Votes for Royal “While Holding Its Nose”

Neither have the candidates catalogued as far left or Trotskyists adopted a more consistent policy of opposition to the latest popular-front candidacy of the Socialist Party (PS). Olivier Besancenot, the candidate of the Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire (LCR), who with 4.08 percent of the vote finished at the head of the candidates to the left of the PS, certainly ran a more dynamic campaign than the others, which were more or less moribund. Boasting of being “100 percent to the left” (of the PS), the LCR, which claims 3,000 members to its credit, sought to gain a hearing among those dissatisfied with Ségolène Royal’s offerings on the electoral market. At the same time, Besancenot seized every opportunity to underline that on the second round of the presidential election, his party would call for voting for the socialist candidate: “The LCR has not practiced the policy of ‘the worse the better,’” he told *Libération* (14 April): “In the past, the LCR either called directly to vote for the left while holding its nose, or it didn’t, while not calling for abstention and saying to the PS: ‘Go ahead and win our votes on the second round, no one is stopping you from doing it.’” This time, at exactly 8:30 p.m. on the night of the first round of voting, he announced in a way that no one was in doubt about the instructions to be followed:

“On May 6 we will be on the side of those who want to keep Nicolas Sarkozy from reaching the presidency of the Republic. It’s not a matter of supporting Ségolène Royal but of voting against Nicolas Sarkozy.”

As was obvious from the outset that it was going to do at the decisive movement, the LCR voted for the candidate of the popular front (a class-collaborationist coalition), even if it was only “holding its nose.” For that reason alone, one should not have voted for Besancenot. Moreover, the LCR never pointed out that Royal was also the candidate of small bourgeois parties like the PRG (Left Radicals) and Chevènement’s MDC. For the confirmed opportunists of the French branch of the “United Secretariat of the Fourth International” (USec), who follow the political line of the late Ernest Mandel, refusing to vote for a bourgeois candidate or political formation is not a matter of principle, as it should be for any Trotskyist. Quite the contrary. In his declaration, Besancenot claimed that “for the last five years, the LCR fought against the policy of Chirac and his prime ministers, in the streets as well as at the ballot box.” Yet in April 2002, the Political Bureau of the LCR declared that “we understand the voters who cast a ballot for Chirac in order to oppose Le Pen.” And in the street, under the watchword “All together against Le Pen,” the LCR organized “extra-parliamentary support for the ‘Republican front’ for Chirac, with only the most transparent fig leaf of ‘independence’ from the candidate of big capital” (*The Internationalist* No. 13, May-June 2002).

It is true that with the Besancenot candidacy, the LCR succeeded in reaching an audience among certain layers of the youth. It reportedly got up to 10 percent of the electorate



LCR candidate Olivier Besancenot speaking in Marseille, April 13.

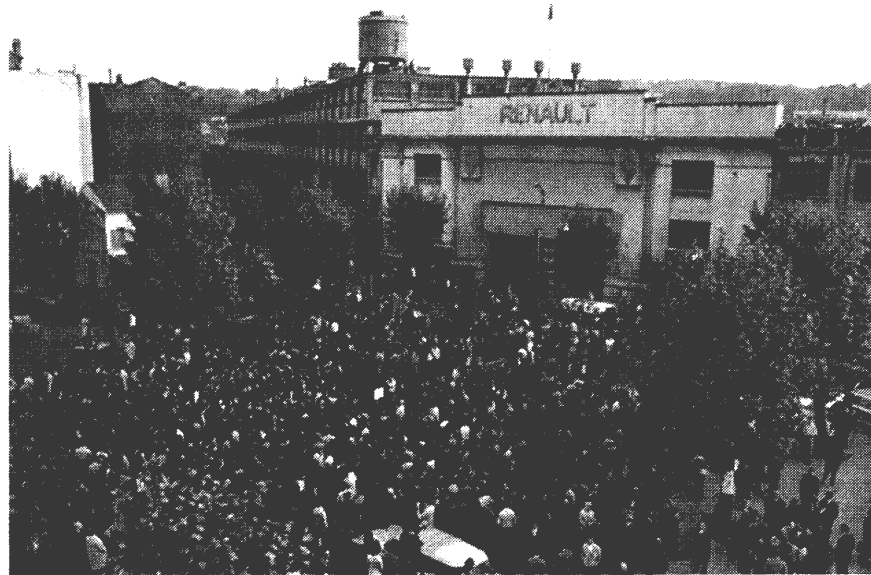
between the ages of 18 and 24, and 1.5 million votes are not nothing. The meeting halls in the universities and several cities were full: 1,800 people at Caen, 2,100 at Grenoble, 2,700 at Toulouse... The candidate went to the suburban housing projects, as well as to strike pickets at PSA Citroën at Aulnay, Phillips at Dreux, etc. Yet so did Ségolène Royal, and Besancenot’s election results in the départements surrounding Lyon and Paris, with their heavily working-class population of immigrant origin, hardly surpassed his national average of 4%. But what did he say to the young students, to the striking workers, to the residents of the projects, and above all, what did the LCR do during its campaign? In reality, it was just as electoralist as the PS. In a visit to youth in the projects, as shown in an official campaign video, he speaks of racist discrimination against youth referred to as being of “immigrant origin” even though they were born in France, but in terms of what should be done, only the campaign and candidacies are mentioned. As for street mobilizations against police violence, the struggle against temporary work and for steady jobs, not a word!

The same is the case for any of the extra-parliamentary struggles that should be at the heart of a genuinely Bolshevik campaign. Suddenly, just after the first round of voting, *Rouge* (27 April) runs headlines for a “General Mobilization” and raises the slogan “Troops Out of Afghanistan!” Yet for the preceding ten months, such slogans and calls to action had disappeared from the pages of the LCR’s weekly. (At the most there were denunciations of *American* massacres in Afghanistan, practically nothing about the French forces there under the auspices of NATO.) In fact, since the dispatch of French troops to Lebanon at the end of August 2006, where they are acting as border guards for Israel and propping up the Siniora

government in Beirut, one can look in vain in *Rouge* for calls for the withdrawal of French forces from this artificial state created by French imperialism as a Christian rampart (at the time) to control Syria. Why? First of all, because the Mandeliste pseudo-Trotskyists observed an electoral truce on such questions. And secondly because they would have wanted to see French forces there to “keep the peace” and defend “human rights,” if they would only show some (fictitious) “independence” from U.S. imperialism, as the LCR called for in Kosovo at the time of the NATO bombardment in 1999.

While denouncing the “social-liberal” policy of Royal, the measures put forward by Besancenot in his “emergency program,” which were the heart of his campaign, were not qualitatively different from those of Royal. He proposed a minimum wage of €1,500 a month net, right away; she suggested a minimum income of €1,500 gross, in five years. For the rest, the LCR took up the “emergency program” which Lutte Ouvrière has been touting since 1995: its principal demands consist of an across-the-board wage hike of €300, a 32-hour workweek, a ban on layoffs (in all companies, according to the LCR, or only in profitable enterprises, in the LO version), opening the accounting books of the capitalist groups and requisitioning empty apartments. Leaving aside the proposal to ban layoffs by law (a reformist illusion under capitalism), this is far from being a revolutionary program. The candidate himself underlined that for the “redistribution of wealth” that he foresees, it would take “a mobilization equivalent of 1936 or May ’68). But these mobilizations were *missed* revolutionary opportunities, or more precisely ones that had been *sabotaged*, and the gains that were won then were the price the capitalists were disposed to pay in order to *avoid* a social revolution.

In reality, the LCR has nothing to do with authentic Trotskyism: its politics are those of a left-reformist social-democratic party. Olivier Besancenot defines himself as a “revolutionary militant... more than as a Trotskyist.” And, as *Libération* summed it up: “His revolution? More May ’68 than October 1917. ‘300 euros more a month, that’s a 30 percent wage hike; the last time we got that was in 1968.” To want to simply repeat May ’68 is to look forward to another defeat for the working class, the youth and all the oppressed. A *May ’68 that goes all the way*, that’s something entirely different: not a general wage increase but the overthrow of capitalism by socialist revolution. The program that the LCR candidate presented in the course of his election campaign could be summed up as defense of the social gains of the “welfare state” against the “neo-liberal model” of Sarkozy and the social-democratic “light” version of Royal. The fake Trotskyists refuse to see that these social institutions and programs were “accepted” by the capitalists while gnashing their teeth as the price they had to pay to combat the “com-



Students from the Sorbonne gather outside main Renault auto plant at Billancourt in solidarity with workers’ strike, 17 May 1968. For a new May ’68 that goes all the way,” to workers’ revolution!

unist threat” during the anti-Soviet Cold War. With the fall of the Soviet Union and of the bureaucratically deformed workers states of East Europe and the concomitant weakening of the workers movement in the imperialist countries, they are no longer disposed to tolerate these “social expenses” henceforth judged to be “useless.”

It is no longer possible today to restore the “French model,” social-democratic version, of *dirigiste* capitalism (with heavy state intervention), with its extensive programs of public housing and superhighway construction, whose purpose was to preserve “social peace” (while enriching the big construction and building bosses). With the growth of retirement expenses of an aging population, the ruling class is determined to make the working people pay for it all. Any pretense that “another world is possible” without overthrowing capitalism is a dangerous lie, as it runs the risk of diverting struggles for revolutionary objectives and channeling them into the treacherous bourgeois electoral game.

By campaigning to the left of Lutte Ouvrière, Besancenot and the LCR were better able to resist the pressure to cast a “useful vote” for the PS candidate. But make no mistake, the “left turn” will last no longer than a campaign. This is hardly surprising for anyone who knows the history of this opportunist outfit. Following the victory of the “no” in the referendum on the European constitution in May 2005, the LCR participated for several months alongside the PCF, supporters of José Bové and other petty-bourgeois forces in “anti-liberal committees” whose purpose was to designate a common candidate to represent the “left-wing no” vote in the presidential election (as distinct from that of Le Pen). But the “left nay-sayers” also included bourgeois formations such as the Greens or Chevènement’s MDC as well as anti-working-class Socialist politicians such as Laurent Fabius (father of the “dirty job” of austerity under Mitterrand and prime minister at the time of the scandal over tainted blood). In other

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words, the LCR was ready not only to take the back seat, but also to campaign for a popular-front candidate, on the sole condition that the candidate named by the committees follow a policy independent of the PS. Participating in these famously phony committees was a farce, while appealing to the PCF to renounce its alliance with the social-democrats amounts to calling on it to commit political suicide.

Moreover, a rightist faction of the LCR led by Christian Piquet, representing more than a third of the LCR's forces has dismissed the belated decision by the leadership to withdraw from the "anti-liberal committees" and kept on seeking unity at any price. Some of them brazenly campaigned for José Bové, the leader of the Peasant Federation, who went over to Ségolène Royal on the eve of the first round of voting. (This Tendency 3 complained that the LCR's appeal to vote for Royal on the second round was insufficiently explicit.) On the majority side, things are no better. Seeking to profit from his relative success at the polls, Besancenot called for the formation of a broad anti-capitalist political force to the left of the PS. This is the old Mandelite policy of forming parties of the "broad vanguard" in which all manner of centrists, "progressive" union bureaucrats, bourgeois anti-free marketeers, reformist social democrats and Stalinists can cohabit. This policy, which was the centerpiece of the strategy of Mandel and his epigones in the 1980s, has already borne fruit, in the Brazilian Workers Party (PT) ... which threw out the USec supporters for not voting for the privatization of pensions (while other Mandelites stayed in Lula's cabinet). Also in Italy, where USecers were just chucked out of Rifondazione Comunista for refusing to support the Prodi government on the issue of Italian troops in Afghanistan.

II: LO – Arlette Laguiller's Candidacy Runs Out of Steam

The other large organization claiming to be Trotskyist, Lutte Ouvrière, with about 1,000 members and several thousand sympathizers, well implanted in industry, ran Arlette Laguiller as its candidate for the sixth and last time on an utterly economist and reformist basis. The "emergency program," which she has run on for more than a decade, and which has now been borrowed by the LCR, does not link immediate economic demands (a wage increase of €300 for all, a minimum monthly wage of €1,500 after taxes and deductions) to transitional demands showing the need to overthrow the capitalist system. Laguiller admits that "this program ... has nothing revolutionary about it, in the sense that it neither calls for the expropriation of capital nor the transformation of the private property of all the big companies into collective property, the property of the state." She insists that these simple measures are "perfectly realizable" and she furnishes a detailed accounting showing how 750,000 additional public sector jobs and the construction of one million apartments a year will only cost €131.5 billion – which could be easily financed by eliminating subsidies to companies, reestablishing the 50 percent tax rate on profits, etc., apparently without even touching the military budget. This really is a reformist "minimum program" that could have been put forward by



David Vincent/AP

Lutte Ouvrière candidate Arlette Laguiller speaking in Nantes, April 19.

any social democrat in the 1940s or '60s!

In claiming that its program in the presidential election is nothing but "the first measures of a truly socialist presidency and government" within the framework of the capitalist regime, LO defines itself as a left pressure group on the PS. In doing so, it abandons any possibility of winning over the layer of workers who are looking for a radical path to put an end to the system. LO, whose activity revolves around intervention in the big industrial plants, has been quite remote from the real struggles in recent years, notably the uprising of the youth in the suburbs in November 2005 against police violence and state racism, and the millions of demonstrators who forced the De Villepin government to withdraw the hated CPE in March 2006. Worse yet, instead of defending the justified revolt of the youth in the suburbs, LO echoed Sarkozy's racist insults against the "thugs," denouncing the "[drug] traffickers" and "two-bit neighborhood *caïds* [capos]" who "today [have] the support of a large part of the youth" (*Lutte Ouvrière*, 4 November 2005)! This is only logical for a party which expresses its solicitude for the police and which not only supported the racist law of 15 March 2004 outlawing wearing the Islamic scarf (*hidjab*) in schools, but whose teachers set off the whole affair with a campaign to expel two secondary school girls of immigrant origin in the town of Aubervilliers.

Arlette Laguiller visited the PSA workers in struggle at Aulnay-sous-Bois, as did most of the left candidates, but in fact her campaign gave a cold shoulder to large layers of the proletariat. In the end, the most radicalized workers and youth didn't recognize themselves in her economist policies, and often preferred the more combative remarks of Besancenot, while on the other hand most of the more moderate workers fell back on the "useful vote" for the PS. LO ended up losing both layers, and its campaign imploded, winning a little over 400,000 votes (1.33 percent) compared to 1,600,000 in 2002. Then came the moment of truth. In 2002, LO "didn't put out a call at the time for a vote on the second round and – its leaders admit today – this didn't go over well with its sympathizers. 'We can't let the popular electorate reproach our cam-



Riot cops besiege housing project at Corbeil-Essonnes, 7 November 2005. It was necessary to call on workers and youth to march to the housing projects to defend the residents from police terror. Lutte Ouvrière instead wanted more “community policing” (*police de proximité*) and referred to youth in revolt as “thugs.”

paigned with being responsible for the left’s loss. In 2002, a lot of people accused us of that – its internal bulletin recognized” (*Le Monde*, 13 April). This time, Laguiller repeatedly stressed that the meaning of her candidacy was to “put Ségolène Royal on notice” that “she doesn’t have a blank check.” And on April 22 at precisely 9 p.m., the LO candidate announced: “Therefore I will vote for Ségolène Royal. And I call on all voters to do the same,” adding that “this is only out of solidarity with those in the popular classes who say they prefer ‘anything but Sarkozy’.” So LO’s position was sheer tailism.

Laguiller’s appeal to support Royal, even without “illusions,” barely a few minutes after the first results were announced naturally provoked some grumbling among the most conscious militants and sympathizers of LO. When “Arlette” met “Ségolène” a few days later, some participants in the Internet Forum of Friends of Lutte Ouvrière said at first it was “intoxication” on the part of *Libération*, until Reuters confirmed the news. The justification (pretext) for such a turn – seeking not to cut oneself off from the workers who want to defeat Sarkozy – is so ridiculous that Laguiller had a hard time convincing a part of the membership that wants to base its politics on a Marxist analysis, not on the leadership’s beatific tailism. Yet this turn by LO was neither unpredictable nor new: in fact, Lutte Ouvrière supported the candidate of the popular-front, François Mitterrand in 1974 and 1981, using the same false arguments of solidarity with the illusions of the masses. It is a damning and logical expression of the economist politics, LO’s trademark in France, which Lenin long ago denounced and which via the least class-conscious sectors of the proletariat reflects the pressure of the ruling class, ending up voting for the candidate of the bourgeois left coalition (whether it is called “Union of the Left,” “the plural left” or, in Royal’s case, the gathering of the “modern left of

the 21st century”).

As for the “Faction,” the minority tendency inside LO (which thanks to LO’s anti-Leninist, social-democratic practices acts as a “public faction”), it criticized the way LO went over to Royal, but ultimately it was to underline that they would have wanted the decision not to be taken hastily but after a more thoughtful discussion. At most, the Faction would have preferred an appeal to Ségolène Royal calling on her to win over far left voters on their own terrain, and to adjust her politics accordingly. But the “Faction” does not, in any case, unconditionally reject electoral support to a candidate of a popular-front coalition. In fact, the axis of the Faction’s politics (which on this point converged with that of public tendencies inside the LCR) has been to seek a more “unitary” posture on the part of LO toward the rest of the “far left.” If anything, this would mean a more popular-frontist political line than that of the LO leaders, who prefer a more solitary version of economist reformism. On other matters, the Faction supports LO’s reactionary, chauvinist and

exclusionist policy on the wearing of the headscarf.

The third pillar of what is routinely considered the “far Left” in France, the Parti des Travailleurs (PT – Labor Party), put forward the candidacy of one Gérard Schivardi, a former member of the PS and mayor of a small rural commune, who ran as “the mayors’ candidate.” Following a complaint from the National Commission for Control of the Election Campaign, he had to change his label, to become “the candidate of mayors.” While the main leaders of the PT, Pierre Lambert and Daniel Gluckstein, belong to the Internationalist Communist Current which claims to be Trotskyist, Schivardi doesn’t consider himself Trotskyist or a revolutionary, but rather “a socialist in the noble sense of the term.” He says he wouldn’t even have run for president if Fabius had been the PS candidate. In any case, with his pathetic score (0.34 percent), Schivardi’s campaign only had interest as a measure of the twilight of the Lambertist tendency...

Schivardi based his intervention on calling for France to leave the European Union, on which he pinned sole responsibility for the current state of the economy and unemployment. A partisan of France “one and indivisible,” he came out for the autonomy of all territories outside metropolitan France *except Corsica*. Add to this his “defense of the 36,000 municipalities” in France in order to save public services threatened by the Maastricht treaty (which set up the European Union in its present form) and you will see that Lambert & Co. are closer to the tradition of (bourgeois) secular Republican Freemasonry than to the Trotskyist program of proletarian revolution. In the course of the campaign, Schivardi and Gluckstein (on behalf of the PT) issued an appeal for “an authentic workers party.” But don’t be fooled, the appeal was directed, among others, to the mayors, the “supporters of secularism,” etc. – which would give the imaginary new party a *bourgeois workers* character.

III. Trotskyism vs. the Popular Front

To have five presidential candidates situated to the left of the Socialist Party, of which three were put forward by ostensibly Trotskyist parties, is a very French peculiarity and, more to the point, a reflection of the continued influence of the struggles of May 1968. In reality, the “far left” candidates were only a bridge to the candidate of the popular front around the Socialist Party. To vote for LO or the LCR on the first round, and the same goes for José Bové or the PCF, amounted to pressuring the PS and voting for Royal on the second, decisive round of the election. For genuine Trotskyists, to vote for any candidate whatsoever of a popular front is excluded, due to the bourgeois character of such a class-collaborationist coalition.

The basis of all Marxist politics is the class independence of the proletariat from the bourgeoisie. As Engels remarked during the September 1871 London conference of the International Workingmen’s Association (the First International), following the defeat of the Paris Commune:

“We want the abolition of classes. What is the means of achieving it? The only means is political domination of the proletariat.... However, our politics must be working-class politics. The workers’ party must never be the tagtail of any bourgeois party; it must be independent and have its own goal and its own policy.”

—“Apropos of Working-Class Political Action”

This principle was then codified in the statutes of the IWA, under Article 7a: “In its struggle against the collective power of the possessing classes the proletariat can act as a class only by constituting itself a distinct political party, opposed to all the old parties formed by the possessing classes.” This is contradicted by any coalition with the bourgeoisie.

In the rest of the far left, almost all the organizations gave their support, directly or indirectly, to the popular front. Among the several groups that have come out of the tendency led by the late Stéphane Just (who for his part had split from Lambertism), the Groupe Bolchevik (GB) called: “In the presidential and legislative elections, vote against the candidates of the bourgeois parties” (*Révolution Socialiste*, April 2007). This appeal translated into the advice to “choose, on the first rounds, a candidate of an organization of working-class origin (PS, PCF, LCR, LO) against all the bourgeois candidates,” and on the second round to cast one’s ballot for the “candidate of a workers organization ... or to abstain.”

In the concrete, then, this meant voting for Ségolène Royal on May 6. The most curious part of the story is that the GB readily admits that the PS candidate is “directly supported by two bourgeois formations, Taubira’s PRG [Left Radicals] and Chevènement’s MDC [Citizens Movement],” and that if elected, the result would be a “bourgeois coalition government of the PS, PCF, PRG, MDC and other debris, presided over by Royal.” The GB also sums up the LCR and LO candidacies, with their virtually identical “emergency programs,” as “100 percent left reformism.” Nevertheless, it calls to vote for these lieutenants of Royal’s bourgeois coalition! The GB’s policy therefore amounts to “critical” support to the popular front.

For its part, the Groupe CRI (communiste révolutionnaire

internationaliste), which has its origins in the Lambertist current, adopted a more left line in the presidential election. In an article published under the headline, “An Election Campaign With Nothing to Offer the Working People” (*CRI des Travailleurs*, April 2007) it rejected out of hand Royal’s candidacy and also registered that while “Besancenot [LCR] and Laguiller [LO] identify themselves with the working people and denounce capitalism,” they are “running a reformist campaign and preparing to vote for Ségolène Royal on the second round.” What’s more, the Groupe CRI announced in advance that it “will not call to vote for Ségolène Royal on the second round, but for a boycott.” That’s all very good. But at the same time, it called to vote for Besancenot or Laguiller. On what basis, one might ask? It argues:

“If we strongly criticize the reformist orientation of these two organizations, we consider it important that the largest number of workers and youth take up these two candidacies in order to express their rejection of capitalism, their rejection of the alternation between the governmental right and left and their will to combat this.”

But how can one express a “rejection of capitalism” in voting for candidates and parties who say to the workers that on the decisive round of the election, they should elect the candidate of a bourgeois coalition? (Even more so as that the Groupe CRI wrongly considers the PS to have become a straight-out bourgeois party, and not a bourgeois workers party, as Lenin characterized the reformist social democrats at the time of the Third International.) The consequences of this policy may appear somewhat opaque today in the absence of big workers struggles in France. But such struggles will reappear, and the slogans of the revolutionaries must prepare the most advanced layers of the workers and oppressed for what’s at stake in the coming battles.

Let’s take a historical case, where the outcome is already known: Chile at the time of the Unidad Popular (UP) of Salvador Allende. The equivalent of the policy of the Groupe Bolchevik today would have been to vote in 1970 for the MIR, the Communist Party or Allende, as the candidate of the Socialist Party (PS). Yet Allende was in fact the candidate of the UP, a popular front which also included small bourgeois formations such as the MAPU and the Radical Party. The policy of the Groupe CRI would have been to vote for the MIR, which in turn gave critical electoral support to Allende and the PS. But the urgent need at the time was to loudly say to the working class that it should refuse to vote for any candidate or party of the UP. It was necessary to split the popular front along class lines, to break with the bourgeoisie. Otherwise, by throwing up a roadblock to revolutionary workers struggle, the UP necessarily led to disaster, to a bloodbath such as took place and against which we warned at the time.

The policy of the pseudo-Trotskyists of the Pablo-Mandel current in Chile during 1970-73, which was expressed by the MIR (several of whose founders were members of Ernest Mandel’s United Secretariat), was to carry out their little maneuvers “in the shadow of the popular front” of Allende, just Trotsky had warned against in his July 1936 letter to the Dutch section of the Movement for the Fourth International:



Salvador Allende celebrating 1970 election victory in Chile. What was needed was Trotskyist party warning to give no political support to Unidad Popular, which chained workers to bourgeoisie, preparing road to bloody Pinochet coup of September 1973.

“The question of questions at present is the People’s Front. The left centrists seek to present this question as a tactical or even as a technical maneuver, so as to be able to peddle their wares in the shadow of the People’s Front. In reality, the People’s Front is the main question of proletarian class strategy for this epoch. It also offers the best criterion for the difference between Bolshevism and Menshevism.”

This was also the policy of the Pablo-Mandelites in France during 1973-74, when they called to vote on the second round for Mitterrand, the candidate of the Union of the Left, a popular-front coalition, while the organization of Lambert and Juste (at the time, the OCI) called for voting on the first round as well for Mitterrand, “first secretary of the PS.” When he was finally elected president in 1981, Mitterrand formed a bourgeois government that carried out a social-democratic anti-Soviet Cold War policy on Poland and Afghanistan, and inaugurated the attacks against the workers gains in France, attacks which have not let up since. Today, the orphans of Lambertism and its Justian variant use the “workers united front” (FUO) to prettify their capitulation to the bourgeoisie. This is popular-frontism once removed.

IV. Parliamentary Cretinism of a New Type

Finally, in the constellation of the ostensibly Trotskyist “far left,” we must mention the Ligue Trotskyste de France (LTF), affiliated to the International Communist League (ICL). The LTF refuses to vote either for the candidate of the popular front, Ségolène Royal, or for the candidates of the LCR and LO, which “serve in this way to round up votes for Royal.” At the same time, in arguing for its refusal to administer the bourgeois state, the LTF has made an innovation, adding that in any case it would not run for executive posts, such as the president of the Republic. It presents this novelty as an advance over the policy of the Trotskyists at the time of Trotsky

and Cannon (the main leader of American Trotskyism until the 1960s). In reality, the LTF policy, which it argues with a scholasticism that is increasingly distant from the class struggle, reveals a parliamentary cretinism similar to that of the Mandelite pseudo-Trotskyists.

Certainly the French bourgeoisie will breathe a sigh of relief upon learning that the LTF won’t be running a candidate for the president of the Republic. But for revolutionaries, putting forward candidates for executive posts such as presidents or mayors in no way implies that they intend to occupy these positions within the framework of the bourgeois state. As we always stressed at the time when the ICL, and the international Spartacist tendency which preceded it, stood for the continuity of genuine Trotskyism, we use elections as a platform for revolutionary propaganda. In the unusual case in which a revolutionary candidate had enough influence to be elected, the party

would already have begun building workers councils and other organs of a soviet character. And the party would insist that, if elected, its candidates would base themselves on such organs of workers power and not on the institutions of the bourgeois state.

In reality, ever since Marx, Marxists have been opposed to the election of presidents by universal suffrage, for this produces a semi-bonapartist executive escaping the control of legislative bodies. We are also opposed to the existence of a second, supposedly higher, legislative chamber as inherently anti-democratic. Should we therefore also refuse to run candidates for the Senate? The LTF explains its new line with the argument that running for an executive post “lends legitimacy to prevailing and reformist conceptions of the state.” But such illusions can also be fueled in the case of candidates for legislative posts, particularly when there are parliamentary regimes where the cabinet supposedly bases itself on a majority in parliament. In that case, one would have to insist that even if elected as a deputy, the revolution will not be made by gaining a majority in the chamber. On the other hand, using the argument put forward by the LTF to refuse to use such campaigns to make revolutionary propaganda implies that if they were elected they would follow the rules of the bourgeois parliamentary game. These are the fears of parliamentary cretinists afraid of their own appetites, and for good reason.

It is more probable, in fact, that a genuinely revolutionary candidate, for whatever post, would end up in jail, as was the case of Liebknecht in Germany or the Bolshevik deputies to the Duma in tsarist Russia. And there they won’t have the little problem which so concerns the LTF. Thus the real question is the nature of the politics of the campaign: either revolutionary, or reformist, or the crystallized confusion of centrism with its constant zigzags that characterize the politics of the ICL in recent years.

From Bourgeois Elections to the Struggle for Workers Power

We are now in the post presidential election period, which is also that of the legislative elections. The elephants of the Socialist Party have decided to put off for a few weeks the little party where they settle scores (which promises be a truly cannibalistic feast) in order to total up their losses in the third electoral round. Already the principal actors in this drama are racing to the right, to decide who will be best-placed to convert French social democracy into a carbon copy of Tony Blair's New Labour in Britain ... at a time when Blair is leaving Downing Street [the British prime minister's office] in utter disgrace; or, alternatively, to form a new, overtly bourgeois party, perhaps in a rotten bloc with Bayrou, the rightist camouflaged as a centrist, as the leftovers from the Italian Communist Party are doing with their projected Democratic Party together with the debris of the Christian Democracy. For the PCF, on the brink of disappearing from the parliamentary chessboard, what's at stake is saving what it can from the shipwreck by acting as an appendage of the PS. For the Greens, the war is over. In any case, the whole of the parliamentary left is preparing for a new extended period of political futility.

On the government side, Sarkozy is preparing the "break" (*rupture*). The era of Mitterrand- or Chirac-style "cohabitation" is history. Even if one or another "socialist" minister takes a seat alongside Prime Minister François Fillon – such as veteran anti-Soviet Cold Warrior Bernard Kouchner – what is envisaged is hardly a government on the model of the post-WWII popular front under De Gaulle, but rather a strong regime in the Pétain tradition, which also included ex-"socialist" officials (and some future ones, like Mitterrand). If Sarkozy proposes to introduce some "reforms" gradually, not abolishing the 35-hour workweek in one blow but "making it more flexible," it is clear that he is preparing for a showdown with the unions, particularly transport unions. He wants to crack the hard core and give them a lesson, like Margaret Thatcher did in England in crushing the 1984-85 coal miners strike and destroying their union. And the union bureaucrats have made it clear that they have no intention to lead a deep-going resistance: they only want to be consulted. Thus the stage is set for bitter class struggles under conditions in which the working class is greatly weakened.

As for the electoralist "far left," its response varies according to its results in the presidential vote. For the LCR, which came out ahead among "the left of the left," it is the hour of the legislative elections. If the last campaign was done mainly with state financing (a token of loyalty to this bourgeois state), this time it plans to spend more than €1.6 million [U.S. \$2 million] on 450 candidates. The party of Krivine and Besancenot also talks of "resistance," and all of a sudden calls for mobilization which had disappeared during the electoral "truce" have reappeared. The *sans-papiers* (undocumented immigrants) are back, and even strikes! It's "The

Struggle Afterwards" (*Rouge*, 18 May): everything that it carefully avoided "before," in order not to disturb Royal's campaign. But pay attention! This "resistance" will only serve as window dressing during the election campaign. For LO, the word is: "After the Election of Sarkozy, Take Up the Road of Struggle Again!" (*Lutte Ouvrière*, 18 May). Suddenly the vote means nothing, ballots are only pieces of paper, and it's back to the union struggles of yesterday.

The smaller groups are singing the same tune, each according to its particular musical score. "Prepare Resistance to Sarkozy's Attacks: Build a Coherent and Consistent Anti-Capitalist Political Regroupment," proclaims the Groupe CRI (leaflet of May 10). For them it is the workers united front, and it accepts all the LCR's propositions for an "anti-capitalist force," meaning joining with the likes of Bové or the bourgeois *altermondialistes* ("another worlders") of Attac; they have also relaunched their appeals to form united-front oppositions in the unions. The LCR, as well, is calling for the formation of union oppositions. For the Groupe Bolchevik, the axis should be to fight for the union leaderships to refuse to participate in negotiations with the Sarkozy-Fillon government. All these initiatives are intended to pressure the pro-capitalist union bureaucracy, and their platforms all follow the "emergency" minimum program of LO and the LCR. A genuine class-struggle opposition against the capitalist offensive would have to go beyond economic struggles to raise transitional demands and struggles which surpass the strictly union framework to lead toward a struggle for workers power.

Take first of all the situation of the so-called youth "of the suburbs" or of immigrant (and colonial) origin. The sentiment of despair is such that in many housing projects around the large cities up to 80 percent voted for Royal. And that in spite of her ultra-repressive policies – calling for "boot camps (*encadrement militaire*) for minors," for "reinforced educational centers" (reformatories), for building "closed penal centers" for serving "sentences adapted for first convictions," etc. Why didn't the candidates of the far left get a better hearing in the working-class and immigrant suburbs? Because they *did absolutely nothing* to defend the residents who were subjected to ferocious police repression in November 2005. At most a few small protest demos in Paris ... in the Latin Quarter (student area) and even the Champ de Mars (the elegant gardens next to the Eiffel Tower)! Where was the march on the Cité des 3.000 (a vast public housing project in Aulnay-sous-Bois), or Les Minguettes (a housing estate on the outskirts of Lyon), to break the encirclement by the CRS riot police? There wasn't any. But what is to be done now, when it is clear that with Sarkozy as president, the repression will intensify?

We Trotskyists of the League for the Fourth International have called for *worker-immigrant defense of the suburbs against police repression and racist attacks*. The fact that many of the



Paris teachers struck in solidarity with undocumented immigrants (*sans-papiers*), March 27. Left abandoned *sans-papiers* and even called cops on them and threw them out of union, university halls.

housing projects are located near industrial areas, big companies and factories facilitates this perspective. The town of Aulnay-sous-Bois in the department of Seine Saint-Denis can serve as an example. This is an area that is regularly invaded by the paramilitary police, who have consciously provoked incidents, as we have seen. And it is located right next to the PSA factory, which just experienced a six-week-long strike in the middle of the presidential election campaign. Visting the picket lines, as Royal, Laguiller, Besancenot, Buffet and Bové did is merely a gesture of sympathy – which costs nothing and also contributes nothing. It was necessary to generalize the strike to the whole auto sector and to march on the capital. There should have been a call on the workers and union militants to mobilize in defense of the population besieged by the police. Thousands of workers on the spot would have prevented the police “running amok” on the night of May 6 in Aulnay – and it would have also served as a warning to Sarkozy that the next time he tries to “clean [them] out like a Kärcher” he risks setting off a civil war.

There is also the terrible situation of the undocumented immigrants (*sans-papiers*). From June 2006 on, there have been thousands of deportations among the 23,000 people whose request for regularization was refused under the so-called Sarkozy Circular. Thousands of school children are at risk. The police have arrested parents as they came to pick up their children at school, even a grandfather outside the school in Rampal Street in Paris. The school principal was locked up for objecting (along with others) to this shameful arbitrary arrest. Teachers went on strike to protest, but what did the left do? In the debate with Sarkozy before the second round of the election, Royal *opposed any large-scale regularization*, explicitly saying she was in agreement with her “adversary.”

Worse yet, ten days before the first round, the goon squads of the CGT, CFDT and FO labor federations drove out a collective of undocumented immigrants who had been occupy-

ing the Bourse de Travail (Labor Exchange) in Paris where various unions have their offices. In December, when a hundred or so undocumented immigrants occupied an abandoned swimming hall in Saint-Denis, the PCF mayor of the city called the cops to throw them out. The same operation was carried out, right before Christmas (!), at the University of Saint-Denis where the left-wing university administration – with the active participation by PCF officials in the regional council – called on the CRS riot police to militarily expel undocumented immigrants who were occupying an amphitheater! And the candidates of the “far left” did nothing to support the struggle of the immigrants, save for some rare and timid expressions of sympathy. Massive demonstrations of tens of thousands of people to prevent the deportation of the *sans-papiers* and to demand full citizenship rights for all immigrants would have

shaken up the election campaign. But they did not take place... in order to avoid disturbing the candidate of the popular front.

Today the struggle of the undocumented immigrants continues. What can be done? The unions should be mobilized in their defense. There are plenty of opportunities. In Lyon, a PCF local official, François Auguste, is being put on trial for having urged passengers on an Air France flight to oppose the deportation of some undocumented immigrants on board the plane. The day after the second round of the election, hundreds of demonstrators came out to support him. If the entire labor movement came to his defense, the next time there could be thousands. And it is necessary to do on a massive scale what this courageous militant tried to do by himself in physically blocking the deportations. A second example: LO’s organization in the Ile-de-France region called attention to the case of immigrant workers in the Metal Couleur factory in Val-de-Marne: 19 of them were fired in January for supposedly having “false papers.” When the whole of the workforce, with the backing of the CGT, made clear their intention of occupying the workplace, they were able to get provisional visitors papers for their comrades. This example should be publicized and generalized.

Or take the case of the SNCF railway workers and Paris transit workers of the RATP, who are some of Sarkozy’s priority targets in declaring war on their “special pension systems,” presenting them as “privileged” workers. The new president has announced that he will impose a “minimum service” in transit during strikes. “The calendar of political democracy cannot be brushed aside by the union calendar,” he pounded away. The union bureaucrats of the three main federations (CGT, CFDT, FO) only asked to be consulted, basing themselves on a law for the modernization of social dialogue passed by Sarkozy’s UMP (Union for a Popular Majority) that calls for “prior consultation.” They did not, in contrast, insist on defense of the right to strike and of the pensions. One can foresee, then, that the nec-

essary struggle to defend these union gains will be carried out *against* the labor federation tops. One must begin to establish the militant ties to prepare determined workers struggles, laying the basis for elected strike committees which can be recalled at any time. This is also a means to overcome trade-union divisions and establish unity in struggle that would draw in the non-unionized workers.

But to do this requires breaking the discipline of the union apparatus and to forging a revolutionary trade-union tendency. And there's the hitch. When the "far left" organizations call to build union oppositions, they intend to do so with their own members who today are in large part low- or medium-level union bureaucrats. To definitively break with the labor fakers would cost them their jobs. Thus all their slogans, their references to class struggle, their invocations of a general strike are intended to pressure the union tops. This is the road to defeat. Take the experience of the 1995 struggle against the Juppé Plan. People endlessly chanted "*Tous ensemble, tous ensemble*" (All together now), and they were fully "motivated" (title of the strike movement's theme song). The question of a general strike was posed not as a ritual formula or a mobilizing myth but as an immediate task. But how to get there? It was necessary to bring together the most combative sectors in the struggle (PTT postal workers, RATP transit workers, etc.) to break the iron grip of (FO chief) Marc Blondel & Co. But despite repeated mobilizations of hundreds of thousands of workers, the strikes failed rather than being generalized, the workers remaining under the heel of these reformist union bureaucrats.

This poses the key question: that of revolutionary leadership. Luckily there are today numerous militants, workers and youth who are quite critical of the most representative organizations of the far left and who refuse to follow the latter to a certain political suicide. These are the ones who with their will to fight for the political independence of the working class represent the future of Marxism in France. The lesson that can be drawn from the recent jolt of the presidential elections (a "thermometer" of the political and social situation), but above all from the social struggles over the last decade, is the urgent and necessary regrouping of orthodox Marxists in a revolutionary workers party. Yet it must be emphasized that this must be an authentically Trotskyist party. If not, it will be doomed to defeat. It is noteworthy that in the writings of the "far left" organizations considered to be Trotskyists, almost all of them call not for building a Trotskyist party but a "broader" party that will unite "all revolutionaries," etc.

In a period of all-sided ideological confusion, of the collapse of Stalinism and the bankruptcy of social democracy, we need above all programmatic clarity. At the electoral level, it is necessary to fight for an unconditional break with the popular fronts of today and tomorrow, to put an end to the secret backstage negotiations and tactical games. The revolutionary party must be forged on the basis of an implacable struggle against all sorts of social-democratic opportunism, and not on circumstantial convergences. We must draw the lessons of the struggles of 1995, of 1968 and of 1936 – of revolutionary opportunities sabotaged by the treacherous

charm of centrism when what was needed was revolutionary firmness. Today's "emergency" minimum programs are obviously not up to the necessary struggle to defeat a bourgeoisie so determined to crush all opposition that it chooses as the manager of its affairs a "pyromaniac fireman" like Sarkozy. Even more dangerous than the reformist program of Besancenot and Laguiller would be the reappearance of a centrist variant, as in May 1968, when Ernest Mandel replaced the demands of the Transitional Program for workers control with the ersatz of "anti-capitalist structural reforms."

To build the proletarian vanguard party we need today, Trotskyism is not just a historical reference, as the leaders of the LCR, LO and also the small groupings pretend who have abandoned the revolutionary programmatic essence of Trotsky's Fourth International. In the face of the need to defend China and Cuba, bureaucratically deformed workers state, against counterrevolution, there can be no question of blocking with tendencies who hailed counterrevolutionaries like Yeltsin [in the USSR] in 1991 and Walesa [in Poland] in 1981, who "howled with the (imperialist) wolves" against Soviet intervention in Afghanistan. In the face of a new rise in popular-frontism, we must insist on the lessons learned, at a great cost in workers' lives, from the experiences of Spain, Indonesia and Chile. In order to lead to the victory of new proletarian revolutions, we must firmly maintain the theoretical and programmatic fundamentals of Red October and of the struggle waged by the Trotskyists over more than three-quarters of a century for authentic Bolshevik-Leninism. This is the task that the League for the Fourth International takes upon itself. ■

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**Democrat Rangel Wants to Bring Back the Draft,
The LRP, Which Calls Itself Socialist, “Prefers” It**

Not One Person, Not One Cent for the Imperialist War Machine!

The following article was published in a special issue of The Internationalist dated 27 January 2007.

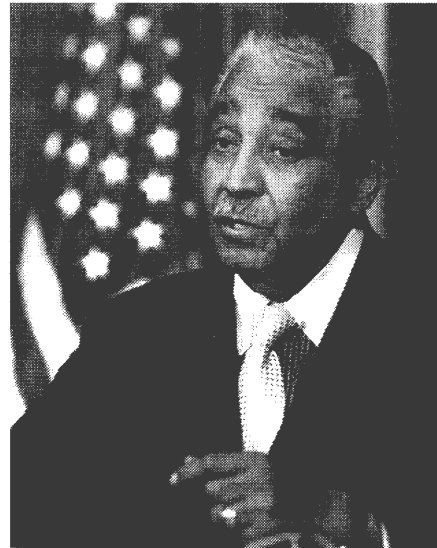
Over the last couple of months, the civilian and military leadership of U.S. imperialism has been consumed by a debate over what to do about the debacle of its occupation of Iraq. Already the war on Iraq has lasted longer than U.S. participation in World War II, and there is no end in sight, no “light at the end of the tunnel” as they used to promise year after year in Vietnam. Long gone is the initial “Mission Accomplished” triumphalism. The Pentagon brass worries aloud that “the spiral downward will continue,” the Iraqi “government” will lose any semblance of authority, “and then all bets will be off” (*Washington Post*, 20 November). Iraqi casualties in the on-going war and colonial occupation are horrendous – well over 100,000, with one study estimating up to six times that number of Iraqi dead. At the same time, the U.S. expeditionary force has also been taking losses, now over 3,000 dead and 22,000 seriously wounded (enough so they can’t return to active duty). This hemorrhaging of their war-fighting capability is giving Pentagon planners a big headache.

The Iraq invasion was sold to the public as a “cake walk,” but it turned out to be anything but. After almost four years of unrelenting slaughter, the U.S. population is tired of the war. In the November midterm Congressional elections, war-monger in chief George W. Bush admitted that the Republican administration took a “thumping” particularly over Iraq. Right-wing Republicans voted for liberal Democrats in an effort to stop their president. In the bourgeois policymaking elite, defeatist sentiment is so prevalent that even Henry Kissinger (Richard Nixon’s “Dr. Strangelove”) says that, whatever way you cut it, the U.S. can’t win militarily in Iraq. He should know, after the U.S. rout in Vietnam. The “bipartisan” Iraq Study Group called for a plan to reduce U.S. forces in Iraq, starting next fall. Bush responded by ordering an *increase* of 20,000 troops to “restore order” in Baghdad. Even the Joint Chiefs of Staff told the White House the plan couldn’t work. The head of the U.S. Central command, General Abizaid, testified in Congress that adding more U.S. troops was counterproductive.

Feeding off the massive opposition to Washington’s bloody military adventure in the Near East, the Democratic Party took control of both houses of Congress. But that won’t end the war – far from it. The Democrats are a war party no less than the Republicans: they overwhelmingly voted for the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq, they have repeatedly approved Pentagon budget and supplemental requests, top Democrats like Hillary Clinton and 2004 presidential candidate John Kerry called for

sending *more* troops to Iraq. The Democrats’ current battle plan is to pass a “bipartisan” resolution opposing Bush’s new/old strategy of sending in additional U.S. forces – a “non-binding” measure that will have absolutely zero effect. It’s all phony. The bourgeois politicians and media use sports terminology to describe their moves, as if this was a football match between the Texas Cowboys and the Iraqi Jihadis. Administration supporters describe their escalation of the war as a “surge,” while opponents call it a “Hail Mary pass” (heaving the ball downfield in desperation). The “peace is patriotic” crowd plays Bush’s game, claiming they “support the troops.” But this is no game, it’s imperialist war on semi-colonial countries.

In such a battle, there are no neutrals: you are on one side or the other. Bush threatened other imperialist and Near Eastern governments by saying, with his patented smirk and fake cowboy drawl, that “if you’re not with us, you’re agin us” in the U.S. “terror war.” In reality, the opposite is the case: unless you are four-square against the imperialist war, you end up supporting it. The Internationalist Group and League for the Fourth International say that *every serious opponent of imperialism must be for the defeat of the U.S. invaders*. While politically opposing the Islamic fundamentalists and Iraqi Baathist nationalists – all of them murderous anti-communists – and denouncing the sectarian bloodbath between Sunni and Shiite Muslims – instigated by the U.S. according to the classic imperial motto, “divide and rule” – the Trotskyists of the IG/LFI salute every real blow against the colonial occupying forces. Contrary to the bourgeois pacifists, we stand for *class war against*



Manuel Balce Ceneta/AP

Harlem Democratic Congressman Charles Rangel at Capitol press conference January 11 calls to bring back military conscription in the name of equity, and to fill Pentagon need for “cannon fodder” for U.S. occupation forces.

the imperialist war. We call for transport workers to “hot cargo” (refuse to handle) war materiel and for workers strikes against the war. And tell the hard truth, that it will take *international socialist revolution* to put an end to endless imperialist wars.

Black Democrats for “Equal Opportunity” Cannon Fodder

Now that her private polls tell her that she has to back off from the Iraq war or risk losing the three-fifths of the public that opposes it altogether, Democratic presidential hopeful Hillary Clinton has declared that Bush is following “a losing strategy.” Republican contender John McCain of Arizona said on ABC TV’s *This Week* (19 November 2006) that it was “immoral” to keep U.S. troops in Iraq “fighting and dying for a failed policy.” McCain’s answer is to push for even more troops than the 20,000 Bush authorized: “We have to have additional forces, or we will be playing whack-a-mole.” The Pentagon top echelon admits they can’t even “hold the line” much less “stay the course” (Bush’s now discarded slogan) with their present forces, but they only reluctantly went along with Bush’s “surge.” Why? They want to hand off to an Iraqi army. (What Iraqi army?) Many top generals say that “Iraqization” will be no more successful than “Vietnamization” was in the ’70s. But their main concern, as the new Army Secretary General Peter Schoomaker told Congress, is that the present U.S. force “will break” under the strain of fighting two wars, as present deployments are “placing a strain on the Army’s all-volunteer force” (*Daily News*, 15 December 2006). Republican senator Lindsay Graham was even blunter, blurting out that “the [U.S.] Army is broken” (*New York Times*, 12 January)

Worried that its losing war in Iraq is emboldening potential adversaries elsewhere, the Pentagon is pushing for a substantial increase in the overall size of U.S. forces. Bush has already authorized additions of several tens of thousands of troops to the Army and Marine Corps, bringing their totals up to 750,000. Some top generals want another 200,000, plus increases in the Navy and Air Force. Where are they going to get such numbers at a time when military recruiters are so desperate that they have had to resort to bringing in large numbers of high school dropouts, men over 40 and recruits with criminal records? Enter Democrat Charles Rangel of New York, who announced on CBS’ “*Face the Nation*” (19 November 2006) that he would be introducing a bill for the draft “as soon as we start the new session.” Asked if he intended to reintroduce his 2003 proposal for military conscription, House Resolution 163, which was voted down by 402 to 2, Congressman Rangel, who will now be the powerful chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee, replied, “You bet your life.” Actually, in the guise of fighting discrimination, he will be betting the lives of poor black and other minority youths.

Rangel voted against the Iraq war and plays to the current antiwar mood, saying: “There’s no question in my mind that this president and this administration would never have invaded Iraq, especially on the flimsy evidence that was presented to the Congress, if indeed we had a draft and members of Congress

and the administration thought that their kids from their communities would be placed in harm’s way.” He has noted that “disproportionate numbers of the poor and members of minority groups compose the enlisted ranks of the military.” Although Rangel, like many liberal Democrats, thought the invasion of Iraq was a “mistake,” he makes his support for U.S. imperialism clear. “If we’re going to challenge Iran and challenge North Korea and ... send more troops to Iraq, we can’t do that without a draft,” he remarked on CBS (*Washington Post*, 20 November 2006). Earlier, when Venezuelan president Hugo Chávez speaking at the United Nations compared George Bush to the devil, Rangel declared: “we resent the fact that he would come to the United States and criticize President Bush.”

Rangel’s fellow black Democrats are wary of embracing his call for military conscription since hostility to the war is highest in black communities. “It’s ridiculous to call for a draft,” said Brooklyn city councilman Charles Barron, who lost a Democratic primary bid for Congress this fall. “But what Charlie is trying to say is that if the draft is brought back, white generals and others will have their kids go into a mandatory army” (*Amsterdam News*, 23 November). Like that’s going to happen! White middle-class kids will continue to elude combat, just as they did in the Vietnam War with student deferments (like Clinton), cushy stateside assignments (like George Bush who spent the Vietnam War years as a very occasional “weekend warrior” in the Texas Air National Guard), or they will become officers who send the “grunts” out to kill and be killed. For all his talk of opposing “unjust wars....about maximizing profits,” Democrat Barron (a darling of various antiwar coalitions) is covering Rangel’s left flank. Draft or no draft, the ruling class makes sure that its offspring are giving privileged treatment as future rulers, while the sons and daughters of the poor and racial minorities are “cannon fodder” to be devoured by the Pentagon war machine.

Rangel to the contrary, bringing back the draft will mean proportionately more black youth dead. While black soldiers presently make up 23 percent of the U.S. “volunteer” military, front-line combat units have more poor white kids from rural communities. Black soldiers killed in Iraq are 14 percent of the total, only slightly more than the proportion of young black adults in the overall population (13.5 percent). In contrast, in Vietnam, with a conscript army, blacks were a significantly higher percentage of those killed than their share of draft-age men. A White House spokesman swears that “the administration is not considering reinstating the draft,” but just the same there was an uproar last month when a wire service reported “the Selective Service was making plans for a ‘mock’ draft exercise that would use computerized models to determine how, if necessary, the government would get some 100,000 young adults to report to their local draft boards” (*New York Times*, 23 December 2006). It was “strictly routine,” Selective Service officials said, although the last such exercise was held in 1998. While they may have qualms about bringing back the draft, in the final analysis the “deciders” of U.S. imperialism will decide to reinstate conscription when it’s necessary in order to fight the wars they decide to fight.



Protesters outside NYC Department of Education, 31 March 2005, demanding military recruiters out of the schools.

Pseudo-Socialist "Draft Resisters" and Draft Mongers

Various left-led antiwar groups have opposed plans for introducing the draft. However, most try to channel opposition to military conscription into individual "draft resistance." The International Action Center (IAC), led by the Workers World Party (WWP), has a campaign "No Draft No Way" listing a variety of ways (from conscientious objector to ministers of religion) to get out of a draft. A petition says, "We will refuse to be inducted into the military." The Campus Antiwar Network sponsored by the International Socialist Organization (ISO) has the same line. Calling for individuals to opt out of the draft is very different from the program of revolutionary Marxism of opposing imperialist wars lock, stock and barrel. In the face of an existing draft, rather than encouraging a privileged few to declare, "We Won't Go," we stand with V.I. Lenin and Leon Trotsky who insisted that class-conscious workers and opponents of imperialist war should make use of obligatory military service to gain valuable military training and knowledge, and to bring the revolutionary program to the workers in uniform. Bolsheviks seek to split conscript armies along class lines, winning over the working-class ranks to oppose the imperialist slaughter and the bourgeois officer corps.

Individual "draft resistance" is a petty-bourgeois program of no use to working-class youth who do not have the resources to get deferments and exemptions or take off for Sweden. Nor does it strike a blow against the Pentagon militarists, but if anything aids them, by insulating draftees from antiwar militants. But communists' attitude towards an *already existing* conscript army is a different question from our program in the face of an attempt to institute a draft, to drag working-class and minority youth into the military. Proletarian revolutionaries are opposed to and fight against *every* means used by the imperialists to obtain manpower for their war machines, whether they are draft or "volunteer"

armies. The classic program of revolutionary Marxism on the fight against bourgeois military was summed up in the famous phrase of German socialist Wilhelm Liebknecht from an 1887 leaflet, "Not a Man, Not a Penny for Militarism." Yet one ostensibly socialist group, the League for the Revolutionary Party (LRP) loudly proclaims that it "prefers" a conscript army to the present supposedly volunteer military. And this is no abstract "preference": *the LRP not only favors the draft, it opposes struggle against the introduction of conscription in the middle of an imperialist war of conquest when the Pentagon is desperate to solve its manpower shortage.*

In contrast, the Internationalist Group, in addition to calling for working-class action against the imperialist war, has together with the Internationalist Clubs at the City University of New York (CUNY) organized to run military recruiters out of the university (see "Drive Military Recruiters Off Campus," *The Internationalist* No. 21, Summer 2005). In the same issue, we published an article polemicizing with two groups active in anti-recruiter protests which have positions on the U.S. imperialist army that were in some ways mirror opposites, and equally anti-Marxist: the Progressive Labor Party, which encourages members to sign up for the present "volunteer" army, and even ship out to Iraq, and the LRP, which yearns for the draft. The LRP has now responded in a lengthy, 15-page article, "Once Again on Conscription" (*Proletarian Revolution*, Fall 2006) in which they claim to be upholding "Bolshevik military policy." Whether they're having trouble peddling their line externally, or getting their own members to swallow it, they have tried to bolster their case by burying us under a pile of Lenin and Trotsky quotations, none of which prove their case.

The centerpiece of the LRP's argument which they have flogged for the last quarter-century is that anyone who opposes a conscript army therefore must support, whether they say so or not, a "mercenary" army. In an earlier article ("'No Draft' is No Answer," *Proletarian Revolution*, Winter 2003), the LRP declared: "Since our ruling class must have an army, we prefer that it be drafted" because "a 'professional army' is more easily disciplined and more loyal to its bourgeois paymasters." In our *Internationalist* No. 21 article, we countered: "Trotskyists say instead that since the ruling class must have an army, *in fighting for socialist revolution we fight against every means by which the imperialist war machine gets its manpower*, whether by recruiters trying to hoodwink poor and minority students, or by a draft." In response to our polemic, the LRP selectively quotes our statement, leaving out the explicit opposition to military recruiters, and concludes, "The IG's argument that 'since the ruling class must have an army...we fight against every



American antiwar protesters outside U.S. embassy in London, 18 August 1967. LRP pretends all opposition to conscription is advocating individual “draft resistance.” Not so: Trotskyists oppose introduction of draft, but if draft army is instituted, revolutionaries join with workers in uniform rather than saying “we won’t go.”

means by which the imperialist war machine gets its manpower, means that they prefer a smaller army until the revolution overthrows the bourgeoisie. That means a mercenary army, not a mass army of conscripts.” Nonsense.

The LRP’s reasoning is a perfect example of reformist “logic.” Since the bourgeoisie is going to have an army, or police, or prisons, or any other essential element of their class rule, “therefore,” anyone who opposes a particular form of their instruments of class domination “must” support some other incarnation of it. Their underlying assumption is that we’re stuck with capitalism and the choice is which brand is a “lesser evil” – “pick your poison.” They say so explicitly: “The IG’s bombast evades the real question. There will be a bourgeois army taking the field: which kind do revolutionaries prefer, so that when jingoism inevitably ebbs the struggle can best be advanced,” they argue. This is the “real question” only for those who dismiss the possibility of class struggle that goes beyond the bounds of capitalism. The Trotskyists’ struggle for workers revolution will be advanced not by “preferring” one kind of capitalist army over another, but only by opposing every element of imperialist militarism.

Revolutionaries raise negative demands opposing the imperialists mechanisms of class rule all the time without implying that we “prefer” some other mechanism. If we oppose Clinton’s racist 1996 immigration “reform,” does that mean we “prefer” the previous law, Reagan’s racist 1986 immigration law? If we oppose a tuition hike for college students, does that mean we “prefer” the present level of college tuition? Not at all – we call for open admission and no tuition and oppose all racist immigration laws, demanding full citizenship for all immigrants. Does the LRP want to argue that

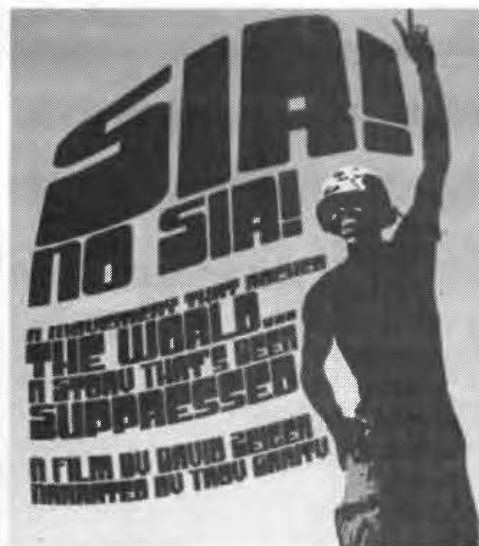
Wilhelm Liebknecht, Karl Liebknecht, Lenin, Rosa Luxemburg, and Trotsky “preferred” a German imperial or tsarist professional army because they stood for “not a man, not a penny for militarism”?

To get around this sticky wicket, the LRP now claims that Liebknecht’s classic phrase was merely a parliamentary slogan about “opposing voting for a capitalist military budget.” They would have us believe that “not a man, not a penny” just means “not a penny,” and forget about “not a man.” Like it’s just about budget cuts. So maybe the reference to “Arise ye prisoners of starvation” in *The Internationale* was just about soup kitchens? The LRP takes umbrage when we say that it “favors” a military draft, saying we are “taking advantage of the fact that ‘favor’ has a range of meanings from ‘prefer’ to ‘desire’ and ‘support’.” Actually, the word “favor” comes from the LRP, in its pamphlet “‘No Draft’ Is No Answer!” How dare we say that the LRP is “for” a draft, they fulminate in high dudgeon, when they only have a “preference” for a conscript army. The LRP’s pettifoggery is just a desperate attempt to convince readers that what they have read really means something entirely different than what it says.

LRP Double-Talk on Conscription

Claiming the LRP has a “preference” for a conscript army but doesn’t “support” a draft is double-talk. They have devoted dozens upon dozens of pages to their “preference,” and react as to a bee sting whenever they are criticized for it. They treat the question as if it’s a menu choice, like they prefer turkey over chicken. It’s all abstract and academic: I’m for this, you’re for that, what an interesting Marxist discussion. There’s no sense here that U.S. imperialism is in a bind, that the Pentagon is worried that its army could “break” or is already “broken” for lack of manpower, and that revolutionaries seek to mobilize the working class to make it harder for them to supply their military machine with the resources it needs to trample on the people of Afghanistan and Iraq, as well as threatening Iran and North Korea. Genuine communists *defend the workers, blacks and other oppressed minorities* as the imperialist warmongers seek to press-gang them and send them off to kill and be killed in their rapacious wars. The LRP doesn’t.

It’s not necessarily true, as the LRP claims as its “central point,” that “a conscripted army is more dangerous for the bourgeoisie” and that “the ruling class obviously recognizes this.” The kind of army the bourgeoisie organizes centrally depends on the kind of war that they are preparing for or waging. During World War I and II all the major powers had conscript armies, and necessarily so – otherwise they wouldn’t have the manpower to fuel the slaughter. And while U.S. rulers had some problems with this after the end of the war, when there was mass agitation among soldiers in Europe and the Far East to return to the U.S., the conscript nature of the armed forces in those two imperialist world conflagrations was not so much a problem as a necessary condition for U.S. victory. It wasn’t a problem so long as these were popular wars. When Washington embarked on an unpopular and *losing* imperialist war, in Vietnam, the draft army became a very big problem indeed. Then



Scene of active-duty U.S. soldiers protesting war in Vietnam from film *Sir! No Sir!* (by Displaced Films) about resistance to the war inside the military. There were hundreds of incidents of soldiers attacking officers in the field. Mounting collapse of imperialist army was key factor in U.S. defeat in Vietnam.

you got hundreds of incidents of soldiers attacking officers, including with fragmentation grenades (“fragging”), as documented in the recent movie *Sir! No Sir!* about resistance to the war within the armed forces.

But while a “professional” army of “volunteers” may be less prone to outbreaks of opposition in the ranks, it is by no means immune. Particularly when minority and working-class youth are pushed into the military by an “economic draft,” seeking to escape ghetto poverty and dead-end rural isolation, their loyalty to the war aims of their rulers may be limited. As battlefield conditions get worse, even troops in what the LRP considers a “mercenary” or “hybrid” army may balk. This was the case of a platoon of the 343rd Quartermaster Company in Iraq, which in October 2004 refused a “suicide mission” to drive fuel trucks unescorted through an insurgent stronghold north of Baghdad. Nineteen soldiers from this Army Reserve unit were held at gunpoint for two days as military authorities decided whether to charge them with mutiny for refusing orders (punishable by death in wartime). Ultimately, they were not court-martialed because the Pentagon brass was worried that it could set off an explosion of discontent in the occupation forces, where more than half the troops say morale is “low” and almost three-quarters said that battalion-level command leadership was “poor” with a “lack of concern” for soldiers.

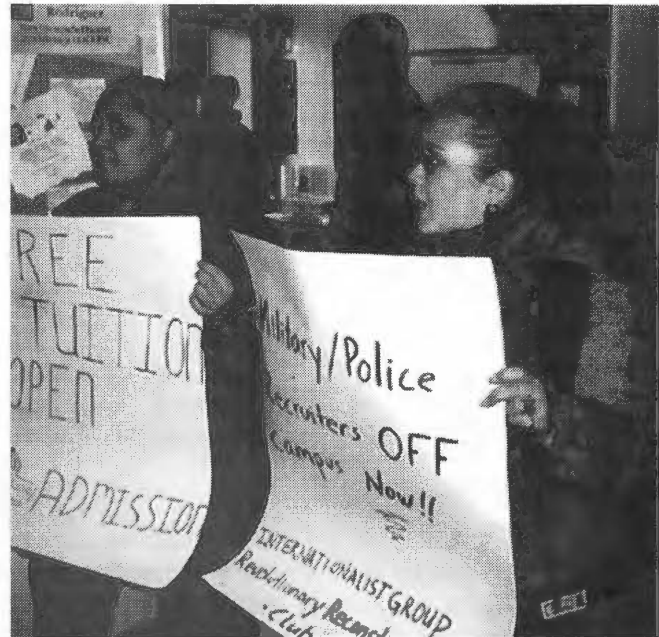
When the CUNY Internationalist Clubs showed the film *Sir! No Sir!* at City College in December, one of the authors of the LRP’s polemic against the IG attended and argued during the discussion that a key reason to “prefer” military conscription is that in order to make a revolution it is necessary to split the army. Leninists and Trotskyists indeed seek to split the army along class lines, carrying out “systematic propaganda in the army,” one of the conditions for admission to the Communist International. Lenin wrote, in his pamphlet *The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky* (1919):

“As Marx and Engels have frequently insisted, the first com-

mandment for those who would carry out a successful revolution is to bring about the destruction and disintegration of the old army and its replacement by a new one. A new class of society, taking over the reins of government for the first time, can never obtain power and consolidate it without the disintegration (or as reactionaries and cowardly philistines call it, the ‘disorganization’) of the old army, without enduring of necessity a difficult and painful transition stage without any army at all, and without gradually constructing in the course of a bitter civil war, a new military organization as the defense force of the new class.”

This may be easier in a conscript army, but even a “volunteer” army may become demoralized and disintegrate in the midst of a losing war. Otherwise, revolution would be off the agenda in countries where there is no draft. Does the LRP write off the possibility of revolution in Argentina (where there has been no compulsory military service since 1994), Australia (no conscription since 1972), France (no conscription since 2002), India (no conscription since independence in 1948), Great Britain (conscription abolished in 1960), Japan (no conscription since World War II), etc.? We could keep scrolling through the alphabet down to the United States. Does the fact of having a “professional” rather than draft military force eliminate or make abstract the perspective of workers revolution in the U.S., according to these pseudo-socialists?

The LRP’s method of argument is a battle of quotations, preferably by the bushel basket. We think that appeals to the authority of Marx, Lenin and Trotsky can be very appropriate, to bolster and elaborate a class analysis on the basis of historical materialism. But the LRP doesn’t like our quotes. We cited Lenin writing, “we are not in favor of a bourgeois militia; we are in favor only of a proletarian militia; therefore, ‘not a penny, not a man’ not only for a standing army but even for a bourgeois militia, even in countries like the United States or Switzerland,



IG and Revolutionary Reconstruction Club sparked protests that ran military recruiters out of Bronx Community College every week for more than a month. Above, March 2005 demonstration.

or Norway, etc.” The LRP dismisses this with a wave of the hand, claiming it only shows Lenin’s opposition to the capitalist military, not to conscription. And it adds: “we note that Tsarist Russia introduced conscription during Lenin’s time.... We challenge the IG: put up or shut up. Show us one time when Lenin called for a struggle against conscription or its introduction.”

Okay, here’s Lenin in his May 1917 speech on “War and Revolution”:

“The American people do enjoy considerable freedom and it is difficult to conceive of them standing for compulsory military service, for the setting up of an army pursuing any aims of conquest – a struggle with Japan, for instance.... The American capitalists have stepped into this war in order to have an excuse, behind a smoke-screen of lofty ideals championing the rights of small nations, for building up a strong standing army.”

Does this show a “preference” by Lenin for conscription to an imperialist standing army? No sir. But when this quotation was cited by a Stalinist group, Communist Voice (a rump left over from the former Marxist-Leninist Party, long-time followers of Albania’s Enver Hoxha), the LRP again claimed that this only showed “Lenin’s general opposition to the imperialist military machine” (*Proletarian Revolution*, Winter 2004). Oh, well, as the saying goes, you can lead a horse to water, but you can’t make him drink. As for the LRP’s claim that conscription was introduced in tsarist Russia “during Lenin’s time,” this would make Lenin a very old fellow indeed, as military conscription was imposed by Tsar Peter the Great in 1705. It was generalized to all male citizens by Alexander II in 1874, at a time when Lenin was only four years old.

For Workers Action Against Imperialist War!

But the question of the introduction of military conscription in the midst of an imperialist war is not a matter of dueling quotations. Today most of the U.S. bourgeoisie is little

inclined to bring back the draft. But that can change, and at key moments this can become a vital question in the class war. In 1916, the Easter Uprising in Ireland led by James Connolly in the midst of World War I was sparked by opposition to London’s threat to impose conscription on Ireland as they already had in Britain. In the spring of 1918, as conditions deteriorated on the Western Front and the British Army was desperately short of troops, Westminster (the British parliament) voted the Military Draft Bill to introduce conscription in Ireland. This was set off a storm of protest, with an unprecedented general strike on April 23 that shut down railways, docks, factories, mills, trams, government services, shipyards, newspapers, shops and munitions factories. Large anti-conscription rallies were held throughout the country. By the time the armistice was signed in November 1918, the British rulers still hadn’t been able to implement conscription. Alas, the Irish workers didn’t have the LRP there to tell them they should have “preferred” conscription.

The LRP’s logic-chopping, hair-splitting and quotation-butcher is a convoluted attempt to justify a pro-imperialist policy, and to cover up their failure to fight for concrete proletarian action against the imperialist war. In our article in *The Internationalist* No. 21, we noted:

“Pacifists may push the illusion of ‘disarming’ the bourgeoisie, but revolutionaries seek through mass protest and working-class action to hinder the bourgeoisie’s ability to raise an army for imperialist invasion and colonial occupation. The LRP’s policy, on the other hand, would make them *facilitators of imperialist militarism*....

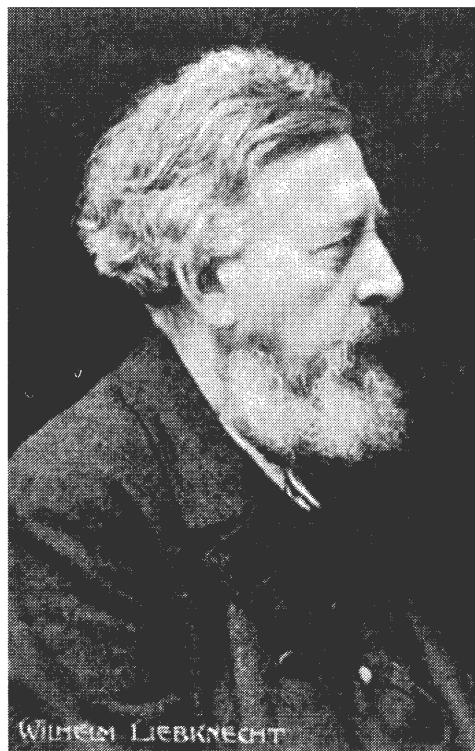
“The LRP’s claim to be for the ‘defeat’ of U.S. imperialism in Iraq is essentially empty. It is not combined with fighting for concrete proletarian action in the imperialist countries, such as workers strikes against the war, ‘hot cargoing’ military goods, etc. But the LRP’s denunciation of any and all

opposition to the draft, if it had any effect, would amount to concrete aid to the imperialist war effort.”

The LRP’s response is to say that it “is, of course, also for mass protests and working-class action that hinders imperialist militarism.” But it goes on to pooh-pooh such actions, saying that they may “hamper the capitalists’ war efforts, but only temporarily,” since any “lasting success” can only come “when such action reaches into the military, splitting its ranks.” But in Germany, the workers’ strike actions against the war in 1917 and 1918 did “reach into the military,” ultimately leading to the uprising by Kiel sailors.

“The LRP is also in favor of strikes against the war, hot-cargoing and other working-class actions,” they come back. But “at a time when the trade union bureaucracy hamstring workers from striking even for basic economic demands, calling *agitationally* for political strikes is just hot air intended to sound super-radical rather than lead to any concrete action.” So how and where does the LRP “propagandize for such strikes”? Sure, the LRP talks of “the need for a general strike in the interests of the working class at home and abroad” (*Proletarian Revolution*, Winter 2004) and the like, but what about the need for dock workers to hot cargo war materiel, or for militant unions to undertake strike action against the war? While calls for such working-class action may not be immediately taken up, they can set the agenda for future struggles. And those can come quickly. In 1966, construction workers in New York City threw bolts at antiwar demonstrators, but by 1969 antiwar students were on picket lines chanting together with striking General Electric workers, “War maker, strikebreaker, Smash G.E.” General Electric vice president Boulware denounced union leaders as “outside agitators,” “radicals” and “creeping socialists.” The strike shut down key plants such as Lynn, Massachusetts where turbine engines for military jets were manufactured. And after 102 days on strike, the company buckled. Postal workers’ and Ford strikes in 1970 were also marked by antiwar sentiment.

The LRP politically supports the *Revolutionary Transit Worker* opposition newsletter in the New York City Transport Workers Union Local 100. *RTW* has referred to the Iraq war, but has it ever put up a motion for, called for or “propagandized” for the union to undertake even limited labor action against the war? Or for strike action to free Mumia Abu-Jamal? Of course, the LRP is not alone in this: several socialist groups have political supporters in the union (including Socialist Action and the Spartacist League), and none have pushed for industrial action on such “non-economic” demands. For our part, in addition to calling in our propaganda for concrete workers action against the war, the Internationalist Group did *agitate* for hot-cargoing war shipments in the fall of 2002. In the midst of the Pacific Maritime Association lockout, International Longshore and Warehouse Union pickets could have insisted that nothing move through the gates. Quite a few picketers wanted to do so, but the ILWU tops pulled away the pickets to let war cargo bound for the Persian Gulf to pass through. Even so, the government then imposed a Taft-Hartley injunction, claiming that the lockout was hurting the war effort.



Erfurt Enzyklopädie

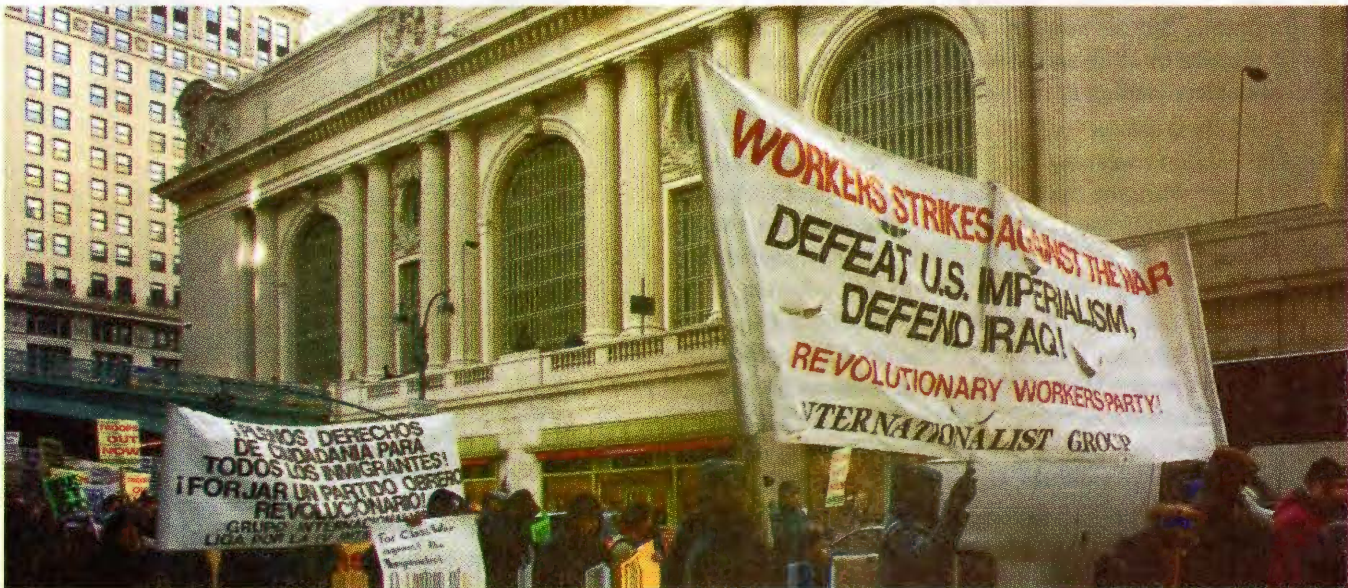
German revolutionary socialist Wilhelm Liebknecht issued an 1887 leaflet titled “Not a Man, Not a Penny for Militarism.” LRP pretends this was just about not voting for war credits.

The LRP not only accuses us of spouting “hot air” over workers strikes against the war, it objects to our call to shut down CCNY (City College of New York) over the arrest of protesters against military recruitment who were assaulted and arrested in March 2005, saying we failed to “provide a clue on how to carry out the task.” The LRP needs clues on how to carry out a campus shutdown?! “Empty rhetoric” by the IG? First of all, IG supporters in the Revolutionary Reconstruction Club successfully drove military recruiters out of Bronx Community College on five different occasions during the spring of 2005, not by grandstanding but by repeatedly agitating in the campus cafeteria, where we got a lot of support. And secondly, in Mexico supporters of the Grupo Internacionalista shut down a college preparatory school (CCH-Sur) three times this last fall in defense of the strikers in Oaxaca.

Moreover, in the 1999-2000 National University strike in Mexico City, the GI agitated for and brought about the formation of worker-student defense guards including hundreds of electrical workers who kept the army from invading the campus for weeks. And in Brazil, our comrades of the Liga Quarta-Internacionalista do Brasil sparked the first labor work stoppage demanding freedom for Mumia, in April 1999, when the Rio de Janeiro state teachers union called two-hour work stoppages and assemblies on this demand (while dock workers in the U.S. shut West Coast ports for eight hours demanding Mumia’s freedom). So don’t tell us it can’t be done, that our

continued on page 35

For Workers Strikes Against the War Don't Beg Congress!



Defeat U.S. War on Iraq! Get Out of Afghanistan! Hands Off Iran!

The following article was published in a special issue of The Internationalist dated 27 January 2007.

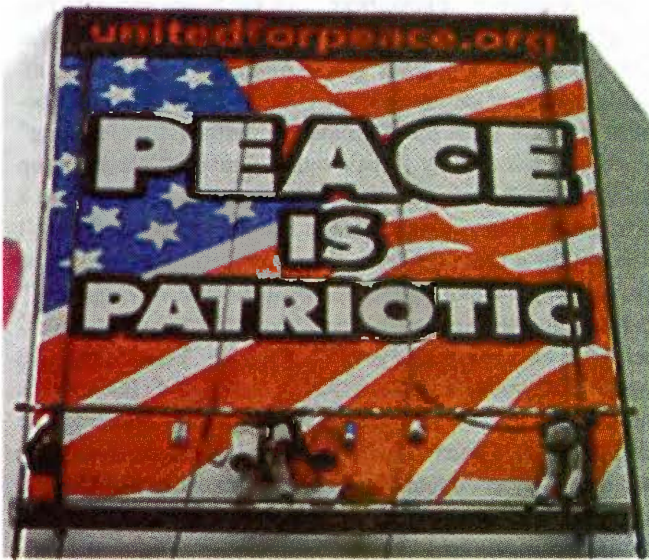
JANUARY 23 – The U.S. invasion has turned Iraq into a killing field. The slaughter has reached horrific proportions. Yesterday, just as the first wave of American reinforcements arrived, supposedly to boost security, more than 130 people were killed and over 200 injured just in the Baghdad area. Eighty-eight died in a bombing of a busy market for second-hand clothing frequented by Shiites. While the imperialist military commanders and their puppet Iraqi “government” are holed up in the Green Zone, the occupation troops are not only gunning down Iraqis with abandon, they are also taking hits. Over the weekend, more than two dozen U.S. soldiers were killed, 12 of them in a helicopter shot down over a Sunni neighborhood of the capital. U.S. president George W. Bush’s vaunted “surge” just went down the tubes.

This Saturday, January 27, the “peace movement” is coming to Washington, D.C. The organizers’ aim is to pressure the Democratic Party. “The voters want peace. Tell the new

Congress: Act Now to End the War,” says the flyer of United for Peace and Justice (UPJ). End the war? How? They aren’t even calling for immediate withdrawal. The transparent purpose is to get the Democratic majorities in the Senate and House of Representatives to make some antiwar gesture. Right now the Congressmen and women are planning a “non-binding” resolution against the troops increase. Big deal. They certainly aren’t about to cut off funds for the war that they have supported from the outset. Voters last November may have thought they were voting for peace by electing Democrats, but what they will get is more war. The Democratic Party is now the main war party in the United States as they maneuver for the 2008 presidential election.

Ever since 2002, the leaders of the peace movement have referred to the invasion of Iraq as “Bush’s war.” The issue was presented as a matter of budget priorities: “money for jobs, not for war,” butter instead of guns. But the fact is that from the outset, Iraq, like Afghanistan before it, has been a *bipartisan* war, supported by both the partner parties of U.S.

**Democrats, Republicans – War Makers , Strikebreakers!
Build a Revolutionary Workers Party!**



UPJ “antiwar” coalition appeals on basis of imperialist patriotism to Democratic Party now in control of Congress and now the main war party blocking withdrawal of U.S. troops from Iraq.

imperialism. No quantity of pacifist speeches, invocations of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. or singing “Give Peace a Chance” will succeed in pressuring the ruling class to get out of the Near East. U.S. troops will stay in Iraq until they are forced out. There will be a lot of talk this weekend about “speaking truth to power.” This is absurd. The capitalist powers that be already know the truth. The only language they understand is power, and the working class has the power to bring the capitalist economy and the imperialist war machine to a grinding halt. What it needs is leadership, revolutionary leadership that is prepared to take power from rulers who threaten the future of humanity.

Imperialism is not a policy, it is a system. It is dying capitalism, on a course of mass destruction, producing nationalist bloodbaths and war after imperialist war throughout the 20th and into the 21st century. And imperialist war abroad leads to racist police-state repression “at home.” The U.S.A. PATRIOT Act with its “sneak and peak” break-ins, warrantless wiretaps and opening of mail, the mass arrests at protest demonstrations, police executions of black and Latino minorities, round-ups and deportations of thousands of immigrants, particularly from the Near East and South Asia, “Minuteman” vigilantes and construction of a wall along the Mexican border – all this is part and parcel of imperialist war. Going hand in hand with this is a war on labor, as Democrats and Republicans militarize the docks in the name of “security,” railroad workers in Chicago are fired by CSX due to Homeland Security checks while Goodyear and Raytheon managements hardline it against strikers accused of undermining the war effort.

Yet instead of mobilizing labor’s strength, union bureaucrats look to the Democrats to bail them out. By this point, many major unions and numerous labor federations across the country have come out against the Iraq war. Workers just about

everywhere in the country are opposed to the war. The AFL-CIO, which steadfastly supported every imperialist war from Korea to Vietnam to Afghanistan, responded to pressure from below with a tepid statement in 2005 that spoke vaguely of “rapidly” withdrawing U.S. troops. But while various leftists and antiwar groups hailed this statement, it in fact accepted the government’s rationale for occupation, blamed *the Iraqi insurgents* for terrorizing the Iraqi people and Saddam Hussein for destroying the country that the U.S. has laid waste to. A fight against the imperialist war requires a fight to oust the pro-capitalist labor fakery. Yet groups like the Labor Party and social-democratic U.S. Labor Against the War limit themselves to peace crawls and lobbying elected officials.

It’s high time to turn massive working-class opposition to the war into militant labor action. The Internationalist Group, U.S. section of the League for the Fourth International, calls for *workers strikes against the war*. Coordinated *antiwar plant gate rallies, lunchtime and stop work meetings* can be a first step. Unionized transport workers should *“hot cargo” (refuse to handle) war materiel*. These are the kind of tactics that class-conscious workers have used the world over against colonial and imperialist wars. In the weeks leading up to the invasion of Iraq, train drivers in Scotland refused to move a munitions train, while antiwar protesters joined with rail workers stopping and chasing military supply trains around northern Italy. In the U.S., at the height of the invasion, police fired on protesters and dock workers at an antiwar protest in the port of Oakland, injuring a half dozen longshoremen and arresting 35 (see *The Internationalist* No. 16, May-June 2003).

Serious struggle against the war will necessarily extend to within the armed forces themselves (see “Not One Person, Not One Cent for the Imperialist War Machine,” on page 23). A number of soldiers and officers have refused orders to go to Iraq, such as Lt. Ehren Watada, currently undergoing a court-martial trial. Earlier this month, press conferences were held in Norfolk, Virginia and Washington, D.C. to announce an “Appeal for Redress” by over 1,000 active-duty and reserve military personnel calling for “prompt withdrawal of all American military forces and bases from Iraq.” The Appeal is couched in patriotic rhetoric and directed to Congress, and it is a far cry from the underground papers and antiwar soldiers groups that surfaced during the Vietnam War which are chronicled in the recent movie, *Sir! No Sir!* But even the present “volunteer” U.S. armed forces are not immune to unrest in the ranks, particularly as soldiers come to see themselves as an oppressor force, trapped in a dirty colonial war deeply resented by Iraqis and vastly unpopular in the U.S.

Class-struggle action against the war should seek to draw in all sectors of the oppressed. Students should organize to *drive military recruiters out of the high schools and off the campuses*. In the face of major atrocities and escalation there should be *mass walkouts and school shutdowns*. Mobilizations in minority neighborhoods can *unite black, Latino and immigrant working people in common action against the racist war* and the capitalist politicians who unleash it and

fund it. At immigrant rights protests over the last year the Internationalist Group has uniquely emphasized that you can't fight racist anti-immigrant hysteria without fighting against the imperialist war that spawns it, from World War I to today. Ultimately, there is not one single tactic that can "put a stop to war," like the general strike that anarchists and anarcho-syndicalists dreamed of at the beginning of the last century.

The only "antiwar movement" that ever stopped a war was the Russian Revolution of 1917, led by the Bolshevik Party under V.I. Lenin and Leon Trotsky. The Bolsheviks' program in fighting against the imperialist world war was key to preparing revolution. While reformists and centrists pushed pacifist appeals to lay down arms and pressure imperialist governments for a peace without annexations, the Russian revolutionaries called to "turn the imperialist war into a civil war." In the same vein, the League for the Fourth International calls for *class war against imperialist war*. Since, in von Clausewitz' famous dictum, "war is the continuation of politics by other means," it is necessary to struggle against the war politically. While popular-front peace groups invariably feature "antiwar" Democrats on their speakers platforms, it is necessary to *break with all the capitalist parties* (Republicans, Democrats and minor parties such as the "red-white-and-blue" Greens) and to *build a revolutionary workers party*.

The bottom line is, since it is imperialism that keeps generating war after war, it will take *international socialist revolution* overthrowing capitalism to put an end to the endless slaughter.

White House Prepares "Plan C": "Preemptive" Attack on Iran

The 2003 attack on Iraq, like the 2001 invasion and occupation of Afghanistan, was sold as part of a global "war on terror." In fact, it was and is a war to terrorize the planet into submission to the *diktat* of U.S. imperialism. It was supposed to be a walkover: initial plans called for withdrawing substantial numbers of troops within three months and most within a year. Instead, four years later, U.S. forces are ramping up to the level at the time of the invasion, over 150,000, plus thousands of mercenary "contractors" and an Iraqi puppet army of 130,000 soldiers. Yet still they haven't been able to put a dent in the entrenched insurgency, while tit-for-tat massacres by Sunni and Shiite suicide bombers and death squads have launched a sectarian civil war. The results of "Plan A" were summed up in the title a book on the Iraq war by *Washington Post* correspondent Thomas Ricks, *Fiasco* (Penguin, 2006). The new commander of U.S. forces in Iraq, General David Petraeus told Congress this week that the situation was "dire" and not to expect improvement any time soon. Referring to the "surge" that Petraeus is supposed to implement, military analyst Andrew Krepinevich (author of *The Army and Vietnam*) commented: "If this is Plan B, we'd better start working on Plan C."

In fact, the Bush administration already has a "Plan C," for nobody but nobody expects "Plan B" to work. The Shiite fundamentalist regime installed by the United States is sup-

posed to ensure "reconciliation" with the Sunni minority that ruled Iraq since its foundation by the British after World War I? Not a chance. The Iraqi "prime minister," Nuri Kamal al-Maliki, opposed an increase in U.S. troops in Baghdad because it might mess up his plans for "ethnically cleansing" the capital and driving Sunnis out at gunpoint. He stood up Bush, the most powerful imperialist leader in the world, at a formal dinner in Amman, Jordan last November and didn't show up for a press conference in Baghdad to announce the "surge," which the U.S. president claimed was an "Iraqi plan." As for an alternative plan, the political analyst Joe Klein commented in his column in *Time* (22 January): "Plan C has to be a smart, detailed withdrawal from Iraq that doesn't leave chaos and regional war in its wake." It isn't, and it doesn't. The administration's Plan C is to escalate the escalation by attacking Iran. The White House war planners think they can keep the blowback limited, but it wouldn't be their first miscalculation in the Iraq theater.

The fact is that Plans A, B and C were all cooked up by the same chefs, the coterie of neo-conservative ideologues who were calling for a war on Iraq as far back as the mid-'90s. War secretary Donald Rumsfeld and his deputies Paul Wolfowitz and Douglas Feith may be gone as their doctrine of invasion/occupation by a "lean" military force turned into disaster. But the point men for the latest administration "strategy" are the neocon armchair generals William Kristol of the *Weekly Standard* and Fred Kagan of the American Enterprise Institute. Last May, Kagan was calling for a troop "surge" and war threats against Iran in an elaborate "how to" do it "Plan for Victory in Iraq" (*Weekly Standard*, 29 May 2006). In September, Kristol was pushing for a resolution for the use of force against Iran. The White House rejected the idea of asking Congress for a war powers resolution as a lost cause, but adopted the strategy. "Ex"-CIA Iran specialist Reuel Marc Gerecht declared that there had been a "tidal shift" of opinion of policymakers on military action against Iran and it was "highly likely the Israelis will launch a strike before the end of George Bush's presidency" (*London Daily Mirror*, 4 January). An Israeli strike would be "backed up by American and possibly British air support from Iraq" even at the risk of "sparking a military explosion in the Middle East."

In the last month the U.S. has repeatedly escalated provocations against Iran. In mid-December, American forces arrested four Iranians in Baghdad who were later released at the insistence of the Iraqi "government," which said they were diplomatic envoys. On December 23, the United Nations voted to impose economic sanctions on Iran over its program to develop nuclear energy. In his January 11 address announcing the escalation of U.S. troop levels in Iraq, Bush issued a threat that was seen as a "declaration of war" in Tehran, declaring: "Iran is providing material support for attacks on American troops.... We will interrupt the flow of support from Iran and Syria." Hours later, U.S. special forces stormed an Iranian office in Erbil in northern Iraq, arresting six diplomats and provoking a gunpoint standoff with Kurdish forces who are normally

Washington's closest allies in Iraq. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice issued a statement saying the attack had been authorized by Bush personally. So with hundreds of U.S. soldiers being killed by "improvised explosive devices" consisting of a couple of 155 mm shells strapped together and set off by a cellphone, garage door opener or egg timer, Washington is once again on the warpath looking for high tech weapons in the region and searching for a Ho Chi Minh Trail in the middle of the desert (no need for defoliation here).

It is standard strategic doctrine for military forces the world over to judge threats by the potential adversary's capabilities rather than simply its declared intentions. And the U.S. has been sharply increasing its forces in the region capable of striking Iran. In his January 11 speech, Bush announced the dispatch of a second aircraft carrier strike group to the region, equipped with scores of combat aircraft, cruise missile firing ships and Patriot anti-missile batteries. Such forces have nothing to do with fighting insurgents in Iraq and everything to do with preparing a confrontation with Iran. Under the headline, "Next Target Tehran," a British strategic analyst wrote in the London *Guardian* (15 January) laid out the U.S. battle plan:

"Weapons of mass destruction will provide the rationale for military action, though it won't be limited to attacks on a few weapons factories. It will include limiting Iranian retaliatory capability, using bombers to destroy up to 10,000 targets in the first day of any war, and special forces flying in to destroy anything that's left.

"In the aftermath, the US will support regime change, hoping to replace the ayatollahs with an Iran of the regions."

So after busting up and laying waste to Iraq; U.S. war planners intend to break up Iran as well. Bush's saber-rattling against Iran caused consternation in Congress. Senator Joe Biden warned Secretary of State Rice that if the administration thinks "they have authority to pursue networks or anything else across the border into Iran and Iraq, that will generate a constitutional confrontation." But Bush & Co. figure the Democrats' bark is worse than their bite, and are proceeding undeterred with their escalation plan.

From the outset, the architects of the U.S. terror war have tried to provoke a wider conflict. The playbook is familiar. This is Richard Nixon announcing that he has a plan for peace in Vietnam and then attacking across the border Cambodia. But Cambodia was a small, defenseless country while Iran has a large army, a large population, lots of mis-



Darrin Dovaiganes/AP

Popular-front antiwar movement ties protesters to Democratic Party of war and racism. Jesse Jackson speaking at rally in Los Angeles, 15 March 2007.

siles and lots of oil. The neocon/Israeli plans for war with Iran have been causing consternation among the Pentagon brass for months. Top generals have been leaking their concerns to Seymour Hersh, the top-flight investigative journalist who exposed the cover-up of the My Lai massacre in Vietnam, revealed the huge Israeli nuclear arsenal and broke the story of the sadistic Abu Ghraib torture center in Iraq. Hersh reported (in "The Iran Plans," *New Yorker*, 17 April 2006) that the Joint Chiefs of Staff tried to get the option of tactical nuclear weapons removed from the Iran battle plan, without success. Just because a few "wimpy" five-star generals and admirals have qualms about setting off a regional conflagration doesn't phase the Christian fundamentalist fanatic in the White House who believes that god ordered him to invade Iraq, or the Zionist war hawks in Tel Aviv with their Masada complex who would risk incinerating

the world in order to "secure" Israel.

Early last summer, the Bush regime gave Israel a "green light for the bombing operation" in Lebanon, even before the mid-July border incident with Hezbollah that became the pretext for launching the Israeli attack (Seymour Hersh, "Watching Lebanon: Washington's interests in Israel's war," *New Yorker*, 21 August 2006). But tenacious and well-equipped Hezbollah forces fought the Israeli army to a standstill, so a beefed-up United Nations force had to be brought in to occupy southern Lebanon, acting as border guards for the Zionist state. Simultaneously, the U.S. launched a war against Islamic fundamentalists in Somalia using the Ethiopian army as proxies. While the Ethiopian invaders achieved quick success with a lightning invasion in late December, their troops are seen as occupiers by the Somali population and already there have been several clashes with protesters leaving numerous dead.

The Internationalist Group and League for the Fourth International, following the Bolshevik program of Lenin and Trotsky and the early Communist International, stand foursquare for *defeat of the U.S. terror war and defense of the Iraqi and Afghan peoples, Iran, the Shi'ite population of southern Lebanon and the Somalis under attack by U.S. imperialism, its NATO and Israeli allies and proxies such as Ethiopia. We defend Iran's right to obtain nuclear arms* or any other weapons needed to combat the imperialists (and also for the North Korean deformed workers state which faces nuclear blackmail by the U.S.). Revolutionary Marxists hail every real blow landed against the U.S./British colonial occupiers and their pup-

pet forces in Iraq and Afghanistan, as well as against the Zionist army in Lebanon and the Occupied Territories of Palestine. At the same time as we defend the Iraqi and Palestinian peoples, we condemn indiscriminate terror against civilian populations in Iraq and Israel proper. Unlike a number of left groups who hail the "Iraqi resistance," Iranian mullahs' regime and Lebanese Hezbollah as well as the Palestinian Fatah and Hamas, our stance for military defense of the semi-colonial countries and peoples against imperialism does not imply the least political support for the Islamic fundamentalist (Sunni or Shiite) and Arab nationalist leaderships.

These bourgeois (and even semi-feudal) misleaders have in the past allied themselves with the imperialists and would do so again, if U.S. rulers gave them half a chance. Recall the alliance between Islamic *mujahedin*, including Osama bin Laden, and the CIA in provoking and fighting against Soviet intervention in Afghanistan. The Islamic Republic in Iran makes common cause with Western fascists in denying the Holocaust and whipping up anti-Semitism. In fighting imperialism tooth and nail, proletarian revolutionaries in the Near East must politically combat these arch-reactionary forces who attack ethnic and religious minorities, imprison women in the veil, and have jailed and have murdered communists by the thousands. Standing on the program of permanent revolution, Trotskyists look to the multi-ethnic and multi-national working class throughout the region, including Arab, Kurdish, Iranian and Hebrew-speaking workers, to fight against their Islamic, nationalist and Zionist rulers for a socialist federation of the Near East. To overcome the Sunni-Shiite bloodbath in Iraq, it is necessary to unite Iraqi workers in common struggle against the imperialist occupiers, as well as supporting Iranian workers under attack by the mullahs' regime.

Popular-Front Peace Movement Ties Antiwar Protesters to the Democrats

In the United States, the struggle against the war in Iraq has been channeled through a number of antiwar coalitions, each of which is led by one or a couple of left organizations. United for Peace and Justice (UPJ) is led by the social-democratic Committees of Correspondence for Democracy and Socialism (CoC) and the ultra-reformist Communist Party U.S.A. (CPUSA); the Troops Out Now Coalition (TONC) is led by the International Action Center (IAC) and its parent, the Stalinoid Workers World Party (WWP); International ANSWER is led by the Party for Socialism and Liberation (PSL), a split-off from the WWP; and the World Can't Wait (WCW) coalition, which also participates in the UPJ, is led by the Maoist Revolutionary Communist Party (RCP); the Campus Antiwar Network (CAN) is led by the social-democratic International Socialist Organization (ISO).

Although the several pacifist coalitions have plenty of organizational differences and squabbles, in their fundamental politics they are nearly identical. They all are forms of a "popular front" by which reformist left groups subordinate the workers movement and opponents of imperialist war to the ruling class by means of a formal alliance with one or

another bourgeois sector. Thus each of the coalitions have their own favorite capitalist politicians. If the TONC/IAC gets Ohio Democratic Congressman Dennis Kucinich on its speakers platform, the UPJ will bring up Rev. Jesse Jackson (or Congressman Jesse Jackson Jr.). World Can't Wait – Drive Out the Bush Regime! is endorsed by several Democratic Congressmen, including John Conyers, Major Owens, Bobby Rush and Maxine Waters as well as Al Sharpton and Brig. Gen. (Ret) Janis Karpinski, the commandant of the Abu Ghraib torture prison who "saw the light" after she was made a sacrificial lamb by the Pentagon tops. The result (and intended purpose) of these pop-front coalitions is that the program of revolutionary struggle, for class war against imperialist war, is carefully excluded.

The speakers outdo each other in promising to "support our troops," proclaiming that "peace is patriotic" and making clear that their concern is to defend the interests of U.S. imperialism from the mess that George Bush got them into. They talk of "money for education, not for war," as if this is a dispute with the Congressional Budget Office over spending priorities rather than a bloody imperialist slaughter. Above all, in one form or another they all call for "troops out now" as their main demand (although the UPJ, the most right-wing of the antiwar coalitions, often fudges that). Certainly, the U.S. forces should get the hell out of Iraq, and Afghanistan, and the rest of the Near East, and Africa, and Latin America, the Philippines, South Korea, etc. But the key question is how they get out.

Revolutionary Marxists have insisted with Lenin and Trotsky that the only way to stop imperialist war is by overthrowing the capitalist-imperialist system through workers revolution. We seek to drive the imperialists out of Iraq and elsewhere through mobilizing workers struggle, from the Near East to the imperialist heartland. The popular-front peace movement, in contrast, is consciously appealing to a section of the ruling class (including not a few generals) who want to pull out of Iraq in order to stave off a catastrophe for U.S. imperialism. We already saw what this can lead to in the Vietnam War. As soon as U.S. troops were pulled out in 1972, the antiwar movement simply disappeared, even though it took three more years for the Viet Cong to win the war, which Trotskyists and every other genuine opponent of imperialism hailed. And although the Pentagon had to pull back for a few years, unable to intervene directly in Angola for example, by 1980 the U.S. launched a new Cold War against the Soviet Union over Afghanistan.

Many of the popular-front leftists in fact sided with imperialism over Afghanistan, supporting the Islamic counterrevolutionaries in the name of national independence and anti-Sovietism. Trotskyists, in contrast, hailed the Red Army intervention in defense of a regime that freed women from the veil and educated young girls. Many of the bourgeois forces who opposed the *losing* Vietnam War enthusiastically supported sending American troops to Kosovo in 1999, when Bill Clinton declared war on Yugoslavia in the name of "human rights." And

continued on page 70

Imperialist War Machine...

continued from page 29

calls are “empty rhetoric” or “hot air” or “rrrevolutionary phrasemongering” (as the Spartacist League has claimed over our call for the defeat of the U.S. imperialist war on Iraq and Afghanistan). When the Internationalist Group and League for the Fourth International raise demands, we seek to carry them out in practice. It is the fake-socialist opportunists for whom talk of defending Iraq (SL) and defeating U.S. imperialism (LRP) are just empty words on paper.

Trotskyism vs. Shachtmanism

The neo-Shachtmanite League for a Revolutionary Party has dug itself a deep foxhole with its line of “preferring” a conscript imperialist army, and sees itself obliged to publish voluminous articles in defense of its idiosyncratic policy. LRPers bridle when we link their policy with that of Democrat Rangel. But it’s no amalgam. “Antiwar” congressman Rangel calls for a draft with rhetoric about fighting inequality; the “anti-imperialist” LRP declares its preference for a draft with rhetoric about splitting the army. Although they use different arguments, what they want is the same. If military conscription were imposed, they would be in an unholy alliance with the Pentagon, aiding it to resolve the manpower shortage that is driving U.S. generals in Iraq crazy. Moreover, while the LRP’s pro-draft stance may be rather quirky, and some of its arguments downright silly, the *pro-imperialist* content of its line is deeply rooted in its political origins. As we noted in our earlier article: “Significantly, the latter-day Shachtmanites of the LRP came up with their pro-draft line right at the onset of Cold War II, when Democratic U.S. president Jimmy Carter wanted to bring back the draft in order to fight the USSR in Afghanistan.”

From the outset, Shachtman’s description of the Stalinist-ruled Soviet Union as “bureaucratic collectivist” – like the “state capitalist” line of Karl Kautsky before him and Tony Cliff after him, as well as the LRP’s own brand, “statified capitalism” – were all anti-Marxist inventions which explained nothing about the class character or economy of the USSR. The purpose of these threadbare “theories” was to give a cover to their refusal to militarily defend the homeland of the October Revolution under imperialist attack. The authors of these theories broke from Marxism to go over to pro-capitalist, anti-Soviet social democracy. Shachtman’s mythical “Third Camp” never existed: it was just a way station on the road from Soviet defensism to outright support for imperialism in the Korean War, supporting the Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba and the U.S. war on Vietnam. Shachtmanism is counterrevolutionary to the core, antithetical to revolutionary Marxism in every way, and furnished some of the most virulent anti-Communists to U.S. imperialism, including Ronald Reagan’s U.N. ambassador Jeanne Kirkpatrick and the “neo-conservative” ideologues behind the invasion of Iraq.

The LRP contests that it is Shachtmanite and lays claim to being some kind of Trotskyists, even though they do not share

“Trotsky’s belief that the USSR remained a workers’ state after the culmination of the Stalinist counterrevolution,” and even though “some of our founding members were adherents of Shachtmanism, from which they broke over thirty years ago.” They even pretend they would have sided with Trotsky against Shachtman in 1940. This is simply eyewash to confound the uninitiated. Trotsky’s analysis of the Soviet Union as a bureaucratically degenerated workers state was not just another position or “belief” but a hallmark of Trotskyism. What centrally distinguished Shachtmanism was its founder’s refusal to defend the Soviet Union in World War II, on the grounds that it was no longer a workers state. The LRP may not like “bureaucratic collectivism,” but, like its progenitor, it argues that right around 1940 a social counterrevolution occurred in the USSR (unnoticed by anyone at the time). Its pretense of not being Shachtmanite on the specious grounds that the “Russian question” was only incidental to Trotskyism is no more valid than the claim by the Communist Voice ex-Albanianite ex-Maoists that they are not Stalinists because they disagree, *inter alia*, with the popular front.

The counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union and the Stalinist-ruled East European deformed workers states under the hammer blows of imperialism was a world-historical defeat for the international proletariat. Yet amid the devastation, authentic Trotskyism was vindicated. Precisely because the co-leader of the Russian October Revolution and founder of the Red Army continued to stand for defense of the Soviet workers state, despite its Stalinist bureaucratic degeneration, the Trotskyists showed how to defend past gains of the working class in order to make new ones. In the Second Cold War in the 1980s, from the CIA-backed Afghan *mujahedin* to the CIA-funded Polish Solidarnosc to the CIA-orchestrated Yeltsin countercoup in 1991, the Maoists, Shachtmanites and other social-democratized renegades from Trotskyism howled with the imperialist wolves. What characterized the LRP is that they sought to pose as a critical left wing of the anti-Soviet pack, taking the same fundamental positions, but verbally distancing themselves from the openly counterrevolutionary leaders.

In loudly declaiming its “preference” for a conscript army in the midst of an imperialist war, the LRP is giving a gage of its fidelity to imperialism. It’s a loyalty pledge. The suggestion that in this imperialist epoch, military conscription is somehow an anti-capitalist measure is patently absurd. Note that the LRP is not only opposes struggle against the introduction of a draft when the Pentagon needs it, it dismisses any “agitational” call for concrete proletarian action against the war as “empty rhetoric” and “hot air.” Luckily the neo-Shachtmanites have no noticeable impact on the working class, but particularly because they masquerade as Trotskyists and spice up their politics with a dash of leftist rhetoric, it is necessary to expose their swindle before class-struggle militants and revolutionary minded youth. Where the LRP “prefers” a draft imperialist army, genuine Trotskyists “prefer” to oppose the imperialist war machine at every step, as part of the fight to bring down the whole capitalist system. ■

“State Capitalism”:

Anti-Trotskyist “Theory”

A Cover for Refusal to Defend USSR Against Imperialist War



The League for the Revolutionary Party claims that the Soviet Union under Stalin and his heirs was “statified capitalism.” Like all varieties of “state capitalist” and similar theories that portray the parasitic Stalinist bureaucracy as some kind of exploiting class, this schema explains nothing about the functioning of the Soviet economy. Instead, in rejecting Trotsky’s Marxist analysis of the bureaucratically degenerated Soviet workers state, it serves instead as a cover for refusing to defend the USSR in war. We reprint here excerpts from a letter about the LRP from the League for the Fourth International to a South African contact.

New York
26 August 1998

The LRP [League for the Revolutionary Party] has been around for a couple of decades now as a petrified state capitalist grouping. Of the various “state cap” organizations, the LRP has sought to put the most left face on what is at bottom a very rightist position. These are not the heirs of the revolutionary syndicalists or the 1920s, or left-wing anarchists of the ’20s and ’30s, or the clot around Grandizo Munis in the Fourth International in the 1940s – ultraleftists who described the Soviet Union as a form of capitalism. The LRP are the heirs of Max Shachtman, who broke with Trotskyism to proclaim a “third camp” (“neither Washington nor Moscow” was the Shachtmanite slogan) that was a cover and a stepping stone to open support for the imperialist “first camp.”

In recent decades, “state capitalist” theories and their various close relatives (like Shachtman’s “bureaucratic collectivism”) have almost invariably been a cover for support for the bourgeoisie. In order to justify their refusal to defend the bureaucratically degenerated and deformed workers states against counterrevolution, the “state capitalists” pretend that social counterrevolution has already taken place. This leads them into the most grotesque contortions trying to prove that

the economies of the deformed workers states are just like capitalist economies, when the reality is completely at variance with them. If the law of value was operational generally in the deformed workers states, massive levels of inefficiency and bureaucratic mismanagement would have led to the wiping out of many enterprises. Yet nothing of the sort occurred. Supply and demand were ships passing in the night. There was no mass unemployment, no business cycle, no tendency of the rate of profit to fall, nothing that could even be identified as a rate of profit at all.... But look at it from another angle: no serious bourgeois economist pretends that the Soviet Union was just another capitalist country – they would be drowned out by laughter.

So why would anyone come up with such a “theory” that explains no known economic behavior? Because it is really an excuse for class treason. The authors want to argue that there is nothing even remotely progressive about the Stalinist-ruled states, that they should not be defended in any way against imperialism by the working class or socialists. Thus it is no accident that [James] Burnham and Shachtman broke with Trotskyism in refusing to defend the USSR against imperialism as the first shots of World War II were being fired. Tony Cliff came up with his “state capitalist” line in 1948, just as the Cold War was rung in. Cliff broke with the Fourth International in 1950 in refusing to defend North Korea against the imperialists, at a time when British troops were fighting in Korea under the UN flag. During the Korean War, Shachtman authored leaflets for U.S. military intelligence which were air dropped over North Korean troops. Later he endorsed Kennedy’s Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba and the U.S. war on Vietnam.

The granddaddy of all these theories was that of Kautsky, who in his 1919 anti-Bolshevik diatribe, *Terrorism and Communism*, argued that Soviet Russia under Lenin was “state capitalist,” and that this was *worse* than tsarism: “Today, however, both State and capitalist bureaucracy have merged into one system. That is the final result of the great Socialist upheaval which

the Bolsheviks have introduced. It represents the most oppressive of all forms of despotism that Russia has ever had." Using this sophistry as his justification, Kautsky supported the military attacks by imperialism against the young Soviet republic, including supporting the social-democratic, British- and German-backed government of Georgia in the Caucasus. Thus from the beginning, "state capitalist" theories have served as the handmaidens of war on the Soviet Union.

These facts can hardly be hidden, particularly at times of big struggles between imperialism and the Stalinist-ruled degenerated/deformed workers states. During the Vietnam War, for example, the Shachtmanite International Socialists in the U.S. went through contortions to pretend that what was going on in Southeast Asia was just another anti-colonial struggle for self-determination and had nothing to do with social revolution. To avoid being totally discredited in the burgeoning New Left, the I.S. finally came out for military victory for the South Vietnamese National Liberation Front (though not for North Vietnam, and without abandoning its previous characterization of the NLF as an agent of Sino-Soviet "imperialism"!). After it made this opportunist shift, the I.S. attracted a layer of antiwar protesters. What is today the LRP originally came out the I.S., in the form of a 1973 split that produced the Revolutionary Socialist League. The core of the RSL was made up of these ex-New Leftists who joined the I.S. a few years earlier and who wanted a kind of "left Shachtmanism" to disguise the fact that their "third camp" politics ultimately meant support to U.S. imperialism....

From the outset, the RSL and now the LRP have tried to combine a practice of tailing whatever is popular in radical/liberal milieus with their "state capitalist" line on the Soviet Union and the deformed workers states in general. They rejected Tony Cliff as too right-wing and openly reformist, and so they had to come up with their own "theory" to justify a more left-sounding line. It is striking that there are myriad "state capitalist" theories: each group has another one, picking different dates as to when the social counterrevolution supposedly took place, having slightly different explanations of how capitalist categories really hold sway in the bureaucratic planned economy. Why so many theories? Because they are not based on a scientific Marxist analysis of the Stalinist-ruled, bureaucratically degenerated/deformed workers states, but instead they are excuses to cover their own opportunism. If you look at the peculiarities of each group's explanation, you can see how their "theory" is concocted to justify their actual practice.

Thus, for example, Cliff repeatedly stresses (in his book, *Russia: A Marxist Analysis*) that the "regulation of economic activity by the state is, in itself a partial negation of the law of value, even if the state is, as yet, not the repository of the means of production." Why this insistence? Because he was justifying the position that the Soviet Union was no more progressive than capitalist Britain with the Labour Party in office having nationalized various industries (coal, rail, health services). This was Cliff's justification for de facto siding with imperialism in the Cold War. As opposed to Cliff's Labourite brand of "state capitalism," Shachtman's "bureaucratic col-

lectivism" termed the Soviet Union under Stalin to be a form of "barbarism." Why? Because Shachtman was signing up with the much more right-wing U.S. imperialists, ultimately arguing that capitalist "democracy" was preferable to Stalinist "totalitarianism." The Maoists declared that the Soviet Union was "social imperialist" during the mid-1960s, supposedly justifying a more militant posture. But as the Spartacist tendency wrote at the time, Mao's line was just "Stalinism under the gun," and contained within it the seeds of a possible alliance with American imperialism against the Soviet Union. By 1972 this had come to pass.

As an esoteric aside, I have in front of me a lengthy article by Hiroyosi Hayasi, the leader of the Japanese SWP, on "Soviet State Capitalism." Here Hayasi argues that state capitalism in the Soviet Union was historically progressive because it "achieved the forcible formation of national capital." For him, the USSR was just like Mozambique or any other "Third World" country that erects a big state sector of the economy to lay the basis for future bourgeois development. There are numerous problems with this argument, not the least being that if "Soviet state capitalism" served to accumulate capital, why did its demise lead to massive destruction of the means of production instead of further capitalist development? But the key is that Hayasi is justifying support to Japanese capitalism against Soviet and Chinese Stalinism. The benighted Soviets and Chinese could do no better than the "extremely 'uncivilized' and barbaric" Stalin regime, which, he says, was still "the most suitable form for Soviet state capitalism." Such arguments are deeply chauvinist, and ultimately serve to support one's "own" bourgeoisie in war.

So what about the LRP's variant in the "state capitalist" kaleidoscope? One of the their leaders, Walter Daum, wrote a book on *The Life and Death of Stalinism*, which is reviewed in the No. 37 of the LRP's journal *Permanent Revolution* (Fall 1990). A sidebar on "The LRP and the Russian Question" goes over their history dating back to the Shachtmanite I.S. They write that Shachtman's "bureaucratic collectivist" theory "fostered a purely democratic solution" — which is putting it mildly since Shachtman regularly supported the bloodiest bourgeois dictators against Stalinism. Vietnam's Marshall Ky or the Cuban counterrevolutionary *gusanos* as democrats? Not hardly. But they recognize that this "served as a cover for leftists to make their peace with 'democratic' capitalism, as indeed Shachtman and many followers did." The article goes on to say that the group that became the RSL, and which then split again to produce the LRP, "groped toward a notion of state capitalism but were deterred by the theory of Tony Cliff," whose "whole political outlook was to accommodate to reformism." So the LRP is very well aware of how its forebears, both "state capitalist" and "bureaucratic collectivist," covered for an accommodation to capitalism.

But what of the LRP itself? It claims to differ from the run-of-the-mill "state capitalist" theories by saying that the Soviet Union was "stified capitalism." The only real difference is that while Cliff and most other state capitalists argued that it didn't matter that you couldn't explain the workings of the So-

viet economy with the traditional Marxist categories of the capitalist economy, saying that the USSR was like one giant firm, the LRP claims to have discovered how it's all really there, cyclical crises and everything. It proclaims the superiority of its theory for explaining the "increasing backwardness" of the Stalinist-ruled countries as being due to the falling rate of profit (!), patting itself on the back for formulating a "theory of Stalinist imperialism," and similar Cold War anti-Soviet tripe.

In producing such theoretical marvels, it resorts to crude falsification. In another article in the same issue of its magazine, the LRP quotes Trotsky's famous remark in *The Revolution Betrayed*:

"Theoretically, to be sure, it is possible to conceive a situation in which the bourgeoisie as a whole constitutes itself a stock company which, by means of its state, administers the whole national economy. The economic laws of such a regime would present no mysteries."

According to the LRP, "It follows that a totally state-owned economy does not have to be non-capitalist." But Trotsky immediately added: "Such a regime never existed, however, and, because of profound contradictions among the proprietors themselves, never will exist—the more so since, in its quality of universal repository of capitalist property, the state would be too tempting an object for social revolution."

Trotsky was arguing that one could create a mental construct of a capitalist state with a single capital, but such a thing could never exist in the real world. The LRP tries to pretend this is just an empirical question, writing: "Trotsky doubted that the old bourgeoisie itself could nationalize a whole economy in practice, and he was right: it took the Stalinists to do it." These latter-day Shachtmanites are caught up in their own contradictions. On the one hand, they want to claim that they alone have understood the weakness of Stalinism: "Most theories saw the USSR as a strong power and successor to traditional capitalism, for good or for bad. We said the opposite, and Stalinism's collapse has confirmed our prediction." Yet at the same time they want to claim that the Stalinists succeeded where the "old bourgeoisie" could not in completely centralizing capital! In any case, it was Trotsky who explained that the weakness of the Stalinist bureaucracy as a parasitic excrescence of the workers state, a contradictory petty-bourgeois layer rather than a fundamental class.

All the "state capitalist" theories resort to such distortion and falsification of Marx, Lenin and Trotsky because such arguments are deeply anti-Marxist. Cliff, for example, writes in his book: "None of the Marxist theoreticians doubted that if the concentration of capital could reach such a stage that one capitalist, a collective of capitalists or the state, concentrated the total national capital in its hands while competition on the world market continued, such an economy would still be a capitalist economy." Not so. In the *Grundrisse der Kritik der politischen Ökonomie: Rohentwurf* (Outlines of the Critique of Political Economy: Rough Draft), Marx's outline for *Capital*, he writes: "Conceptually, competition is nothing but the inner nature of capital, its essential character, appearing and realized as the interaction of many capitals on one another, the inner tendency as external necessity. Capital exists and can exist

only as many capitals..."

Beyond the pseudo-Marxist gobbledygook used to argue their anti-Marxist theories, despite their disclaimers of having nothing to do with Shachtman or Cliff, the LRP's theories are fed by the same anti-communism as their predecessors. Their essence and their purpose is as a cover for counterrevolution. As Trotskyists, we understand that the destruction of the Stalinist-ruled, bureaucratically degenerated and deformed workers states represented a world-historic defeat for the proletariat, greatly strengthening the capitalists in their offensive against the working masses. We not only warned against this, we mobilized our resources on a global scale to fight against capitalist restoration in East Germany, and again in the Soviet Union. The LRP, on the other hand, hailed counterrevolution, proclaiming in 1990: "The future is brighter now that the bestial obstacle of Stalinism is being smashed" (*Permanent Revolution* No. 37). This could have been said by U.S. president George Bush or any number of social-democratic betrayers. Let the LRP try telling this to the workers of the USSR and East Europe!

Like many pseudo-Trotskyists who have finally been forced to admit the fact of counterrevolution in the USSR (after denying it for several years to cover up the fact that in August 1991 they made common cause with the counterrevolutionary Yeltsin), the LRP now says there was a defeat. How to square this with their earlier hailing of anti-Stalinist "revolutions"? Simple, they declare that "the revolutions of the last year, made possible by the immense social power of the working class, are being hijacked by pro-bourgeois and pro-Western forces." Where Proudhon declared that capitalism is theft, the LRP proclaims it highway robbery! It's notable, also, that for all their claims to have rediscovered the real Trotsky, despite distancing themselves from Shachtman, the LRP dates the USSR's supposed degeneration into capitalism at the end of the 1930s, just at the point that Shachtman broke from Trotskyism in refusing to defend the Soviet Union against world capitalism with the onset of the second imperialist world war.

The 57 varieties of "state capitalists" and neo-Shachtmanites all live in a fantastical house of mirrors, going through contortions to deny the most basic facts of social, economic and political struggle in our epoch. They pretend that the Soviet economy obeyed the same laws as the capitalist economies, when for more than seven decades the capitalists sought to destroy the Soviet Union as a mortal threat to their existence. For the "state caps," the Cold War, which dominated world politics for nearly half a century, had to have been nothing but a hoax. When capitalist restoration occurred, for them it was either a monumental non-event or something to be hailed as portending a "brighter future," when for tens of millions of working people it spelled economic misery and nationalist bloodbaths. The LRP and its cohorts preach such nonsense in order to put a "left" gloss on what is at bottom naked support for capitalism. In the final analysis, their arguments are justifications for support for imperialist war....

Communist greetings,

Jan Norden

Full Citizenship Rights for All Immigrants!

For Militant Workers Action to Stop ICE Raids and Deportations!

The following article was distributed as an Internationalist Group leaflet at immigration rights demos on May Day.

On May 1, 2006 vast numbers of immigrants marched in the streets of cities and towns across the United States protesting immigration bills that would label them criminals, militarize the U.S.-Mexico border and set the stage for mass deportations. In many cities, including Los Angeles, they were the biggest demonstrations in history. U.S. rulers were shaken as they saw millions of people who toiled for years in the shadows show the courage and determination to fight for their rights.

Last year's immigrant-bashing bill, H.R. 4437, passed by the U.S. House of Representatives, died in Congress. But now its key components are back, in immigration "reform" proposals by Republican president George Bush and the Democratic Party majority in Congress. Meanwhile, the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) cops of the Homeland Security Department have unleashed nationwide raids, going after immigrant workers in particular, as "Minuteman" fascist vigilantes hunt immigrants on the border and stage anti-immigrant provocations across the U.S.

On this May Day 2007, we call on the workers movement to come out in defense of immigrants, not just in words, but in militant labor action. Today, union bureaucrats and liberal Democrats will make pro-immigrant noises from the platforms, but their vague calls for "legalization" won't obtain legal rights and union conditions for more than 13 million undocumented workers. They say "stop the raids and deportations." But how? By lobbying Congress? Forget it. *The only way to stop the wave of anti-immigrant repression is to mobilize labor's power against the ICE Gestapo.*

The Internationalist Group says: Labor must demand full citizenship rights for all immigrants, documented or undocumented. When the migra tries to stage its raids in a union town like New York, thousands of workers should pour into the streets to block the immigrant catchers. For labor action to put a stop to Minuteman provocations! ¡La lucha obrera no tiene fronteras – Workers' struggle has no borders!



Internationalist photo

Internationalist Group and CUNY Internationalist Clubs march in demonstration for immigrant rights in New York, May 1.

The fight for immigrants' rights is a political battle and it must be waged politically, but with working-class politics. Take the issue of the war. We have repeated in headlines and signs, "War on Iraq, Immigrants Under Attack." The *migra* raids are the home front of this imperialist war. Immigrants have been labeled the "enemy within" and treated as "potential terrorists." Many immigrants rights coalitions respond by calling on demonstrators to wave the American flag and emphasizing the more than more than 40,000 non-citizens who have volunteered for the army in the hopes of gaining citizenship – if they don't end up dead, like José Antonio Gutiérrez, an undocumented immigrant from Guatemalan who was one of the first U.S. soldiers to die in Iraq.

Flag-waving will get immigrants nowhere. For the masters of the Pentagon, the soldiers are just "cannon fodder" to

continued on page 45

**Democrats and Republicans, Enemies of Immigrants
Forge a Revolutionary Workers Party!**

Defeat U.S. Imperialism in the Near East, and "At Home"!

War on Iraq,

Immigrants Under Attack

**Full Citizenship Rights
for All Immigrants!**

**Mobilize Union Power
to Defend Immigrant
Workers!**

Since mid-December there has been a dramatic intensification of repression against immigrants in the United States. Particularly affected are undocumented immigrant workers, who have been picked up by the hundreds in a series of raids by the Immigration Control and Enforcement (ICE) police of the Department of Homeland Security. Huge squads of black-uniformed ICE cops have swooped down on plants from Massachusetts to California and even in Times Square in New York City. Families are ripped apart, with mothers and fathers loaded onto fleets of buses with whited-out windows while their children are left in school or day care centers. Those arrested are sent far away, often more than 1,500 miles, to immigration jails from Georgia to San Diego to await deportation.

The fact that these raids have taken place with barely a peep of protest from the unions and the antiwar movement is outrageous. The immigrant workers are being targeted as part of a broadscale effort by the U.S. government to regiment the population for war. "Illegal" immigrants are treated as the "enemy within," labeled "potential terrorists" by immigrant-bashing right-wing politicians and Homeland Security chiefs. We *demand* that the labor movement urgently take up the cause of our class brothers and sisters being persecuted by the ICE Gestapo. *The next time there is a raid in a union stronghold like New York, workers should massively pour into the streets to block this atrocity.*

Protest statements count for little. It is necessary to bring out the ranks of labor in struggle to *defeat* the imperialist war abroad and the bosses' war on immigrants, racial minorities and working people "at home."

The raids started off with mass arrests of immigrants at Swift & Co. packing plants in six states (see "Outrage! U.S. Arrests Over 1,200 Immigrants in Factory Raids," *The Inter-*



Ahmad Terry/Rocky Mountain News

Angry relatives and supporters of arrested immigrant workers confront ICE cops at Greeley Colorado, December 12.

nationalist No. 25, January-February 2007). This was followed, on January 24, with the arrest of 21 workers at the Smithfield Packing Co. plant in Tar Heel, North Carolina. This was the plant where more than 1,000 workers walked out and shut down production last November in defense of immigrant workers who had been fired because of "no match" letters from the federal government alleging discrepancies in their Social Security numbers. The firings sought to intimidate workers in a hard-fought unionization campaign by the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW), but the workers' bold walkout forced the company to back down temporarily (see "Labor Revolt in North Carolina," *The Internationalist* No. 25).

The Internationalist Group put out a leaflet, distributed at the January 27 antiwar march in Washington, D.C., calling for mass union protests in defense of the arrested Smithfield workers. The UFCW, we wrote, should "shut down unionized meatpacking plants from coast to coast!" Packing house workers are overwhelmingly immigrants, many lacking the legal documents demanded by the bosses' government. This industry illustrates the dependence of U.S. capital on foreign-born workers to do the heaviest and most dangerous work. According to official estimates, there are more than 13 million undocumented immigrants in the United States today, the vast majority of them workers. There is no way that the government can deport them all. No matter how many "no-bid" contracts the feds award to

Halliburton to build concentration camps, they can't lock up everyone, and the economic consequences for the capitalists would be disastrous.

But the factory raids continue in an attempt to sow fear among immigrant workers. The likely intent is to prevent a repeat of the mass demonstrations of millions of workers that took place last spring, leading up to a mass walkout on May 1 that shut down packing plants and numerous businesses from coast to coast. In late February, the hated immigration (*migra*) cops seized some 200 janitors at 63 locations in 17 states working for a chain of labor contractors who supply cleaning crews to restaurants.

The latest raid, on March 6, kidnapped 350 workers at a factory in New Bedford, Massachusetts that manufactures survival vests, backpacks and grenade pouches for use by the U.S. military in Iraq. With Coast Guard helicopters hovering overhead and a boat in the cove at the rear, employees ran for the exits but were forced back. Workers described a scene of sheer terror in this Nazi-like raid. People were screaming and crying as they were ordered to line up in different areas, citizens on one side, non-citizens on the other. According to the *New Bedford Standard-Times* (7 March), *six hundred* federal agents, police and officials were involved in the raid. Detainees were not allowed to make calls or answer cellphones. Agents drew pistols and forced workers onto the ground.

The fact that the New Bedford company was producing military goods with undocumented workers, is hardly unusual. War profiteers always use cheap labor: in Nazi Germany, the plants were staffed with slave laborers. In mid-January, ICE raids picked up immigrant construction workers at the Naval



Internationalist photo

Internationalist Group marched in support of striking immigrant workers in Brooklyn on February 18.

Air Station in Key West, Florida, at the Quantico Marine Base in Virginia, and building barracks at Fort Benning, Georgia. In an earlier case, a military contractor in San Diego was charged with hiring "illegal aliens" to help construct the metal barrier being erected as part of the militarization of the Mexican border!

After being arrested, the immigrants are held in detention camps, such as the one outside Raymondville, Texas where more than 2,000 immigrants are housed in ten huge, windowless tents where they are confined 23 hours a day. "I call it 'Ritmo,' like 'Gitmo,'" the U.S. torture center at the Guantánamo naval base in Cuba, said immigration lawyer Jodi Goodwin (*Washington Post*, 4 February). Many of these camps are privatized, such as the ones run by the Corrections Corp. of America and Geo Group, Inc. A January report by the Inspector General of the Justice Department on five ICE detention facilities found inhumane and unsafe conditions, including inadequate health care, vermin, lack of clean underwear and undercooked poultry, as well as missing and non-working telephones. Altogether, some 26,000 people are currently being held in these *American concentration camps*.

But beyond the barbaric conditions of the *migra* raids and camps, the "crackdown" on immigrant workers includes murderous terror by officials and racist vigilante groups. On January 12, a Border Patrol agent in southern Arizona shot and killed Francisco Javier Dominguez Rivera, a migrant from Cuautla in the Mexican state of Morelos. On January 28, a truckload of immigrants was ambushed and the driver killed near Tucson by several armed men, believed to be anti-immigrant vigilantes, who were wearing camouflage uniforms and military-style berets. On February 8 in the same area, a pickup truck of immigrants was fired on by two men with high-pow-

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LAPD Assaults Immigrant Rights March



On May 1, supporters of immigrants' rights again marched in cities around the U.S. Thousands of undocumented workers braved the threat of police repression and deportation following the recent wave of raids by the ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement) cops.

In Los Angeles, the police department unleashed hundreds of paramilitary police (right) against a peaceful demonstration in MacArthur Park. Cops fired rubber bullets point-blank at demonstrators, leaving huge welts (left). The mad dog LAPD attack squads also fired on and beat television camera crews, causing an uproar in the media.

The organized workers movement must use its power to defend immigrants under attack!

ered assault rifles who killed three immigrants and seriously wounded a woman; two dozen immigrants were reported missing (from the *Immigration News Brief*, 4 March, available by writing to wnu@igc.org).

Stop the Raids Meeting in Western Connecticut

One place where there has been labor-based protest against the immigration raids is in the western Connecticut city of Danbury. In 2005, the mayor sought to deputize state troopers to deport immigrants. Instead, the ICE cops seized two dozen immigrant workers in the space of four months using classic "sting" operations. In one case a federal agent posed as a contractor and then arrested eleven day laborers. At a meeting of over 400 people at Western Connecticut State University in Danbury on February 25 called to protest the federal raids, some arrested immigrants who had just gotten out of jail were in attendance. Also there to tell their stories were two workers from the Swift packing plant in Utah that was raided last December. The meeting was organized by the Regional Coalition for Immigrants Rights, in which the leftist group Socialist Action is active, and was endorsed by the Western Connecticut Central Labor Council.

At the event, which was protested by 40 or so anti-immigrant racists, the Swift workers recounted how the company had known for months about the possible raids, and had turned over personnel records to the government. Anabel

Pimental held up a photo of her brother, sister-in-law and their children asking how they could take away the parents and cruelly break up this family. Eddie Acosta, coordinator of the AFL-CIO centers for day laborers, denounced the "guest worker" programs included in pending immigration reform legislation as barely disguised slavery. He called for legalization of all undocumented workers in the U.S. But Acosta did not mention that the labor federation supports the liberal Democrats like Senator Ted Kennedy whose immigration "reforms" include "guest worker" indentured servitude and do not give immigrants without papers anything remotely resembling legal rights. In fact, hardly a word was said from the podium, including from would-be leftists, against the Democrats or the labor fakers who support them.

A spokesman for the Internationalist Group spoke from the floor during the discussion period and received considerable applause when he emphasized that all of the talk about solidarity means nothing unless labor mobilizes its power to defend immigrants. He pointed out that the UFCW should have shut down packinghouses nationwide after the December raids. He also noted the presence of the meeting of striking Brooklyn immigrant workers (see page 47), calling on NYC labor to come to their defense. The IG spokesman objected that talk of "legalization" was deliberately vague and instead it is necessary to demand full citizenship rights for all immigrants. And he em-

continued on page 46

Police-State Repression: Warrantless Searches, ICE Agents in Unmarked Cars, Parents Torn Away From Their Children

San Diego Migra Raids Terrorize Latino, Immigrant Communities

**Mobilize the Working Class
to Smash Racist Terror!**

**Full Citizenship Rights
for All Immigrants!**

SAN DIEGO, April 16 – Beginning in the last week of March and on into April, agents of the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) division of the Homeland Security Department unleashed a massive dragnet in the San Diego area. Residents of Latino and immigrant barrios saw the ugly face of a police state as ICE agents roamed the streets in unmarked cars, staked out schools, seized people coming out of parking lots and roused whole families out of apartment buildings. Children were separated from their parents.

In little over two weeks, according to official figures some 359 people were arrested in the San Diego area by the hated immigration cops (*la migra*). Other reports speak of more than 550 detained, including dozens of legal residents. Only 62 of those seized were among those sought on immigration charges, the other 297 were picked up in random sweeps without arrest warrants. Many have already been deported.

While the U.S. imperialists are sinking in the quick sands of the Near East, their terrorist “war on terror” having turned into a debacle, on the home front they are targeting immigrant working people as scapegoats. The official repression goes hand in hand with immigrant-bashing attacks by racist vigilantes such as the Minuteman Project, which has been particularly active locally. Fearing a repeat of the massive immigrants rights demonstrations a year ago, when tens of thousands marched in the largest demonstration in San Diego’s history, the government wants to “shock and awe” the Latino population.

The feds seek to terrorize hardworking immigrants into submission by portraying them as criminals and potential terrorists. For the ruling class and its politicians it is not enough that hundreds die crossing the deserts and mountains that border Mexico and the U.S. as a result of “Operation



Adilene Muñoz, 8, at April 10 protest against ICE raids. Her parents were arrested and deported to Tijuana.

Gatekeeper,” begun by the Democratic Clinton administration. Now the Republican Bush regime is criminalizing and terrorizing millions with the spectre of mass deportations. The Democrats talk “immigration reform” while voting to militarize the border and triple the number of Border Patrol agents.

We say everyone who lives and works in the United States has a right to be here, with the same rights as everyone else. The Internationalist Group calls for **full citizenship rights for all immigrants**, documented or undocumented, immediately and without conditions. We call on the workers movement to **defend foreign-born workers against racist repression and xenophobic attacks** and to **block the raids with union power!**

The immigration raids point are the spearhead of a wholesale assault on the democratic rights of all. This was driven home by the wanton police attack against an April 13 street party of a couple hundred anarchists and others who wound their way through downtown San Diego with puppets, music and dancing to “Take Back the Streets.” SDPD cops waded into the party, pepper-spraying the crowd while beating and

**Full Citizenship Rights for All Immigrants!
Forge a Revolutionary Workers Party!**

arresting three non-violent party-goers. The police sought to make sure that there was no record of their vicious attack by arresting a journalist for Indymedia as she videotaped the beating, and confiscating her camera. We demand that the frame-up charges be dropped!

On top of this, Mexican ex-president Vicente Fox is coming to San Diego this week. Last fall, Fox unleashed his paramilitary federal police (PFP) on striking teachers and indigenous protesters in the state of Oaxaca, arresting hundreds. More than 20 strikers were killed by gun thugs of the governor backed up by Fox. A demonstration has been called for Wednesday, April 25 at 6 p.m. against police brutality from Oaxaca to San Diego. We urge all opponents of cop terror and defenders of the oppressed to come out to protest the orgy of repression.

While *migra* raids have been occurring with increasing frequency across the U.S. for some time, the cynically labeled "Operation Return to Sender" in San Diego comes amid a wave of factory raids specifically targeting immigrant workers. As we noted, "ICE officials bragged that they were the largest-ever in U.S. history" ("Outrage! U.S. Arrests 1,200 Immigrants in Factory Raids," *The Internationalist* No. 25, January-February 2007). In the past two years there have been more immigration arrests in San Diego than in any other county in California. In Escondido police staked out the Farr primary school, waiting for parents to pick up their kids.

The *San Diego Union Tribune* (4 April) reported ICE agents arresting people "from San Ysidro to Fallbrook, from Barrio Logan to Brawley." The Latino population "is going from panic to terror," North County human rights activist Tina Gillings commented (*El Latino*, 5 April). Arrests took place at shopping centers, bus stops, homes, workplaces and outside of schools. Maria Aparicio, an immigrant woman who gave an interview to the *San Diego Union Tribune* gives us a clear depiction of the police-state in action:

"[A]gents were waiting and stopped her car as she was taking her husband to work and her 17-year-old brother, a U.S. citizen, to school. She said they handcuffed both and wouldn't answer any questions about why. Her mother accompanied agents back to the family's apartment to search for more people, she said. They found none. Then they arrested her mother."

Aparicio's husband is now in federal detention, while her mother was returned to Mexico. Using the language of the slave catchers from the pre-Civil War era, San Diego ICE spokeswoman Lauren Mack vowed to go after "fugitives and criminals" as the government calls undocumented workers (*Diario San Diego*, April 5, 2007).

Emboldened by the racist policies enacted by the Democrats and Republicans, Minutemen vigilantes have increasingly harassed immigrant workers, working in tandem with the Sheriff's department. These racist thugs have been spotted lurking around Vista High School and even try to stage



Adilene Muñoz, 8, at April 10 protest against ICE raids. Her parents were arrested and deported to Tijuana.

provocations at immigrant rights protests. As *Diario San Diego* (7 April) reports: "Minutemen showed up to provoke and state their support for the raids and to demand the arrest of 'illegal immigrants'." These would-be lynch mobs are a threat to public safety and should be dispersed forthwith by worker-immigrant union defense groups.

Liberal and bourgeois Latino and immigrant rights groups have been trying to calm people down. Rather than pouring into the streets in protest, they call for sending letters to Congressmen or having an "economic boycott." During the huge protests of 2006, these same groups gave the Catholic church and Democratic politicians control of the microphone and chanted, "Hoy marchamos, mañana votamos" (Today we march, tomorrow we vote). So now that the Democrats have control of both the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives, what is the result? They have voted to increase the Pentagon budget and more money for the Border Patrol. War and domestic repression are the common program of both capitalist parties.

Various liberals and reformists have protested the raids, such as an April 1 demonstration at the San Diego County Federal Building, called by the City College based "Sí se puede" group. But their purpose, as one of their affiliates put it, was only "fix this broken immigration system, to make a statement to the president". The Raza Rights Coalition, including the Union del Barrio, and the American Friends Service Committee held a protest at Chicano Park on April 7, but instead of calling on the interracial working class to struggle against the racist rulers, Raza Rights leader Christian Ramirez said: "We hope that Congress adopts a measure in May that it agrees on immigration reform and sends a bill to the President" (*El Latino*, 12 April).

From Democratic Party liberals to Chicano nationalists,

Stalinists and Quakers, they all promote illusions in the possibility of reforming the state through pressure. The hard truth is that the capitalist Congress is not going to enact immigration "reform" in the interests of the working people. At most they seek to supply more modern-day indentured laborers without rights – now called "guest workers" – to agribusiness and military contractors. Immigrant-bashing is a by-product of a capitalist system that extracts enormous superprofits from sub-minimum wage labor and needs to keep the working class divided on racial, ethnic and national lines. The popular front of liberals, reformists and nationalists tries to defuse potential class struggle and channel discontent into the dead-end of bourgeois elections.

What's needed is to forge a revolutionary workers party that hammers home the lesson that an injury to one is an injury to all; that raises awareness that immigrants are not defenseless, but are an increasingly important part of the working class; and that immigrant workers can be a human bridge bringing the experience of sharp class struggle in their countries of origin into the heartland of imperialism. We say: *Workers' struggle has no borders!* In particular, we stress that it is necessary to link the fight for immigrants' rights with the struggle for the liberation of the black population from oppression going back to the days of slavery, on which American capitalism was founded.

The Internationalist Group and the League for the Fourth International seek to mobilize the working class to smash racist terror and defeat U.S. imperialist war abroad – as well as the bosses' war on working people, oppressed minorities and immigrants "at home" – the only way possible, through international socialist revolution. ■

Stop ICE Raids...

continued from page 39

feed their war machine. *We say it is necessary not only to oppose but to defeat the imperialist war abroad and the bosses' war on immigrants and working people at home, and to defend those under attack, from Iraq to the U.S.* But you won't hear that from the speakers platforms today, because as in all the "antiwar" marches, the organizers are looking to the Democrats – who are just as much a war party as the Republicans.

The Democrats are also enemies of immigrants and workers. Both the Bush initiative and the STRIVE Act (H.R. 1645) co-sponsored by liberal Democratic representative Luis Gutiérrez and conservative Republican Jeff Flake call for a "guest worker" program that amounts to virtual slavery, chaining immigrant workers to an employer and subjecting them to deportation if they dare to leave. This is indentured servitude just like back in colonial days. Such "guest" workers will have no effective legal rights, and they will be used to drive down wages for all workers.

While right-wing Republicans and open racists fulminate against "amnesty," the Democrats talk about a "path to citizenship." But their "path" leads to a dead

end. The STRIVE Act calls for immigrants to pay a \$2,000 fine as well as back taxes, to leave the country within 90 days and apply for a non-immigrant visa. After a six-year waiting period they could apply for citizenship, which at the current rate would take another five to eight years. Who wants that?

The Democrats as well as Republicans are pushing for *militarization of the border*. The STRIVE Act would increase the Border Patrol to 24,000 agents, six times the size it was when Democrat Bill Clinton took office in 1993. It would open 20 new "detention facilities" with space to hold 20,000 more immigrants. Meanwhile, crossing the border without papers would be made a crime subject to up to five years in prison. The Gutiérrez-Flake STRIVE Act, H.R. 1645, like Bush's proposals, is an immigration law in the interest of the giant corporations and cockroach capitalists who want to rake superprofits off low-wage workers without rights.

Last year, the various immigrant rights and Latino political groups supported the so-called Kennedy-McCain bill, even though that, too, provided for beefing up military controls, "guest workers," and the rest. This year there are differences over how to deal with the Democrats and their latest immigration "reform" bill. This has reached the point that in Los Angeles there are two different marches today, with the reputedly more "militant" March 25 Coalition marching in the morning and the "moderate" Multi-ethnic Immigrant Workers Organizing Network in the afternoon.

The differences are at most tactical. While the March 25 Coalition and its national counterpart, the "National May 1st Movement for Worker and Immigrant Rights," oppose the Gutiérrez-Flake bill and call for a "boycott," the "moderate" labor, community and church groups consider H.R. 1645 "promising" and oppose a walkout. But they will all have their Democrats on the platform. The more militant talkers will have former U.S. Rep. Cynthia McKinney in Los Angeles, the "moderates" will have party chairman Howard Dean in Miami.

Similar differences have arisen in the labor movement, where John Sweeney's AFL-CIO opposes the "guest worker" provisions of the bi-partisan immigration bill, while the "Change to Win" split-off led by Andrew Stern of the SEIU (service employees) along with UNITE-HERE (garment, hotel and restaurant workers) and the UFW (farm workers) want to work with their Democratic Party pals to support "guest workers," presumably to get some kind of rake-off. The bourgeois immigrant rights groups and pro-capitalist union tops are all in the Democrats' orbit.

So, too, are the self-proclaimed socialists who specialize in "coalition-building" with these misleaders. Whether they are petrified Stalinists, like the Communist Party U.S.A. (CPUSA), which openly calls to vote for Democrats, or the Mao-Stalinists of the Revolutionary Communist Party (RCP) and its liberal campaigns (World Can't Wait); Stalinoids like the Workers World Party (WWP), Party of Socialism and Liberation (PSL) and their various antiwar groups; or social democrats like the International Socialist Organization (ISO)

and the No Human Being Is Illegal coalition, they all play the same game. Appealing to Democratic Party liberals, these reformists tailor their programs to what their bourgeois would-be “partners” will go for.

Last year they were all talking “amnesty.” The Internationalist Group, which has campaigned for years to demand *full citizenship rights for all immigrants*, objected that undocumented workers have committed no crime for which they need to beg forgiveness. As the immigrant marches dried up during the mid-term election campaign, and many activists switched to electing Democrats, the reformist pseudo-socialists allowed themselves a little “left” cover by talking of “full legalization,” whatever that means. But now that they are all trying to pressure the newly Democratic Congress, their empty rhetoric is back to “amnesty,” “equality,” “human rights,” etc. All these calls are purposefully vague so that they won’t embarrass liberal “allies.”

We have emphasized that the struggle for immigrants’ rights, while formally a democratic right, is at bottom a *class* question. Genuine defenders of the overwhelmingly working-class immigrant population have fundamentally counterposed interests to those of the capitalists and their parties. Ruling class politicians – Democrat and Republican alike – seek an immigration “reform” that “legalizes” the inferior status and lack of rights of millions of proletarians, the better to exploit them and keep their wage slaves divided. We demand full citizenship for everyone who works and lives in this country to lay the basis for a common struggle against the bourgeoisie.

In order to unite the exploited and oppressed, it is vital that immigrant workers understand the centrality of black oppression in the United States, which was founded on chattel slavery. Black working people, in turn, must see the need to fight for full democratic and labor rights for immigrants, and to reject the boss propaganda about “stealing American jobs.” It was particularly important that on January 15, hundreds of Latino immigrants joined with black workers at the Smithfield Packing Co. plant in Tar Heel, North Carolina to march on Martin Luther King Day. Last fall when dozens of immigrant workers were fired over their immigration status, 1,000 workers walked out together and shut the plant down.

The fight for immigrants’ rights faces a fundamental choice between the path of class collaboration and that of class struggle. Without the labor of undocumented immigrants, whole industries would grind to a halt, including construction, meatpacking, garment and service workers.

Working people as a whole, and particularly the oppressed black, immigrant and poor people must break with the partner parties of American capitalism. We need to build a workers party on a revolutionary, internationalist program against the twin parties of American capitalism. The cause of immigrant workers, because they confront the limits of the national state, has an enormous revolutionary potential. May Day, the international workers day, was born in the United States but for decades it was not celebrated here, due to the

joint efforts of the capitalist bosses and their labor lieutenants to banish the specter of workers revolution. In 2006, the huge immigrant marches brought back May Day. Now we must restore its revolutionary content.

While capitalist immigration laws are inherently racist and exclusionary, the French Revolution of 1789, the Paris Commune of 1871, and the Russian Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 led by V.I. Lenin and Leon Trotsky, granted all foreign-born workers immediate citizenship rights. This is the revolutionary heritage that class-conscious working people must take up today. ■

War on Iraq...

continued from page 42

phasized that the Democratic Party is no friend but an enemy of immigrants, that the thousands of mainly Near Eastern and South Asian immigrants arrested after the 11 September 2001 attacks were arrested under the provisions of Democrat Bill Clinton’s 1996 immigration “reform.”

The IG speaker underscored that it was necessary for immigrants in the U.S. to understand the need to support the struggle of black people in this country that was founded on slavery. That several hundred immigrant workers from the Smithfield plant in North Carolina turned out on January 15 to march on Martin Luther King Day is recognition of this key fact. The participation of black and white workers in addition to immigrants in the November walkout at Smithfield was crucial to the success of that struggle. Above all, it is necessary to build a multi-racial and multi-ethnic revolutionary workers party to lead the struggle for workers revolution that alone will secure genuine equality and liberation for all the exploited and oppressed. ■

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An Injury to One Is An Injury to All!

Mobilize NYC Labor to Defend Brooklyn Immigrant Workers!

The following Internationalist Group leaflet was distributed at a march supporting striking Brooklyn immigrant workers on February 18.

Over the past year, immigrant workers in the United States have begun to organize big-time to fight for their rights. Last spring there were mushrooming protests by millions of immigrants: first to defeat the draconian HR 4437 bill, which would make criminals of all undocumented immigrants and those who help them, and then to demand “immigration reform” and a “path to citizenship.” On May 1, hundreds of thousands of foreign-born workers took the day off to demonstrate for immigrants’ rights. Packinghouses, restaurants and many other workplaces simply shut down. But the protests fizzled out when the immigrant-bashers in Congress made it clear that there would be no pro-immigrant reforms in 2006. Instead, Republicans and Democrats voted for a 700-mile fence along the increasingly militarized Mexican border.

The immigrants’ rights movement of 2006 was organized by a variety of bourgeois forces – notably the Catholic church, Hispanic chambers of commerce, and the Democratic Party – who then called it off in the run-up to the November mid-term elections. Now that the Democrats control both houses of Congress, they are planning a repeat. But the fundamental force to achieve full rights for immigrants lies not in the capitalist politicians but in the *class* power of this overwhelmingly proletarian population. And across the country, immigrant workers are organizing. Here in New York City, workers at a number of food distribution warehouses in the Bushwick area of Brooklyn and nearby Ridgewood, Queens have undertaken a struggle to unionize their plants. The struggle is being led by the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), a labor union which seeks to revive the traditions of the anarcho-syndicalist “Wobblies.”

The Internationalist Group calls on all of NYC labor to take up the fight of the embattled immigrant workers. As the



Members of IWW's Foodstuff Industrial Union 460 at January 15 march.

old “Wobbly” slogan put it, *an injury to one is an injury to all*. On February 18, supporters of immigrant and labor rights will demonstrate in their defense. The demonstration will begin at Sunrise Plus (formerly EZ-Supply), then proceed to Handyfat Trading and end up at an Associated Supermarket in Bushwick. Other workplaces that have been organizing include Amersino Marketing, Giant Big Apple Beer and Top City Produce. In the space of two months, more than 20 immigrant workers have been fired by these companies. On December 28, thirteen union members were fired at Sunrise Plus. On January 5, Handyfat sacked nine workers, some of whom had worked there for more than a decade. The reason given was failure to submit I-9 Employment Eligibility Verification forms. The real aim: union-busting.

Last April, the owner of Amersino Marketing fired workers and threatened to close the warehouse in the lead-up to a National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) union representation vote. To rig the election, the boss invented a non-exis-

tent "night shift" consisting of his friends. Although workers at Sunrise Plus/EZ-Supply voted for the IWW in an NLRB-certified vote, the owner refused to bargain. Under pressure from the union, in November the bosses agreed to a contract including a \$2.45 per hour increase in wages, a grievance procedure, paid vacation and sick days and anti-discrimination provisions. But on December 26, the bosses reneged and ripped up the tentative contract.

Two days later the union, the IWW's Foodstuff Workers Industrial Union 460, submitted a federal labor complaint over back wages and overtime. Within hours, Sunrise Plus fired union supporters, and the rest of the workers walked out. Likewise, the owner of Handyfat Trading fired the workers within days of the union's federal lawsuit, preferring to shut down rather than pay over \$100,000 in unpaid back wages. At Top City, workers demonstrated at 5 a.m. on December 18, backed up by IWW members and other supporters, refusing to go to work until the company agreed to start paying minimum wage and overtime. The boss agreed. But on February 3, he closed the plant, supposedly to "restructure" and pay off debts.

The bosses are closely coordinating their anti-labor drive, sending identical letters to workers demanding I-9 papers. They are being advised by a notorious union-busting lawyer, Alfred DeMaria, whose firm specializes "in the field of combating union organizational campaigns" (see Diane Krauthamer and David Graeber, "Not Without a Fight: NYC's Food Warehouse Workers Unionize," NY Indymedia, 28 January). The union is fighting in court, picketing and mobilizing on the streets. But these are small companies, located in an isolated warehouse district deep in the industrial backwaters of Brooklyn and Queens. *To win will require bringing to bear the power of New York's organized workers movement.*

The struggle of the Brooklyn immigrant workers is part of a class struggle and it requires a *class-struggle political program* to win. Since the employers are Chinese (Yu Q Wang at Amersino, Denis Ho at Handy Fat, Lester Wen at Sunrise Plus) and a few Chinese workers are scabbing, the union and largely Latino workers must underline that they are fighting in defense of all workers, whatever their ethnicity. (Several Chinese immigrant workers were among those fired.)

Although undertaking legal action against the bosses' union-busting actions can be a correct tactic, it is necessary to make clear that *there is no justice for the workers in the capitalist courts*. And the police are the armed fist of the ruling class, who gunned down Sean Bell with 50 shots and have been trying for a quarter century to execute former Black Panther Mumia Abu-Jamal, the powerful "voice of the voiceless." Union conditions will not be won by relying on rigged NLRB "elections" but by exercising the workers' collective strength.

This requires a sharp break from the capitalist parties, both Republicans and Democrats and their satellites. In New York City, the stench of the Democratic Party is so great that a "Working Families Party" was set up by pro-capitalist union bureaucrats so that working-class and minority voters could elect Democratic candidates while holding their noses. To defend immigrant workers it is necessary to build class-struggle oppositions

against the bourgeois labor fakers who shackle the unions to the class enemy. What's urgently needed is a struggle to cohere the nucleus of a revolutionary workers party that would wage a *class war* against bosses' war on working people and the oppressed, from Brooklyn to Baghdad.

At the January 15 march in defense of the immigrant workers in Brooklyn, a spokesman for the Internationalist Group emphasized the need to broaden the struggle:

I bring you greetings and solidarity from the Internationalist Group, part of the League for the Fourth International. The importance of the struggle by the fired and locked-out immigrant workers in Brooklyn cannot be overstated. Your fight is the fight of immigrant workers all over the country.

Last month [December 2006], the *migra* immigration cops staged factory raids at Midwest packinghouses, arresting more than 1,200 workers, most of whom will be or already have been deported. But they can't deport more than 12 million immigrant workers, the U.S. economy depends on them. We don't give a damn about the papers the bosses and their government demand. We are all sisters and brothers in struggle. We are members of an international class, the working class, and we have a common enemy, the capitalists. We demand full citizenship rights for all immigrants.

I want to call your attention to a similar struggle going on in North Carolina, at the Smithfield Packing plant, the largest pork processing plant in the world. The company fired 50+ immigrant workers, supposedly over problems with their papers, in the middle of a unionization drive. But 1,000 workers walked out and forced management to back down. The workers stood together – black, Latino and white – even though the company had deliberately tried to set one group against another. That's why they won. (See article in *The Internationalist* No. 25, January-February 2007.)

This struggle in the heart of Brooklyn is not isolated from what's going on around the world. The same ruling class that is carrying out a bloody war and occupation of Iraq is also waging war on us here in the U.S. It's necessary to *defeat* the imperialist war abroad and to *defeat* the bosses' war on immigrants, on working people, on democratic rights "at home."

It's all the same war, and we can defeat it. In December 2005, the transit workers showed that they could bring New York City to a screeching halt. And they did. But the Democratic Party attorney general, Elliot Spitzer, who is now governor, slapped a million-dollar-a-day fine on the union and a thousand-dollar-a-day fine on the members, and the union tops buckled.

The Democrats just as the Republicans are a war party, they are a party of the bosses, they are no friends of the workers, and to stand up to them and their state apparatus, we need a revolutionary workers party.

I want to end by saying that the immigrant workers in Brooklyn must not stand alone. All of New York City labor should come to their aid. If workers at each small shop act alone, the employers can pick us off. But if we act together, we have the power to win! ■

Outrage! Teenager Prosecuted for “Procuring a Miscarriage”

Defend Amber Abreu – Drop All the Charges!

State of Massachusetts Wants to Charge Her with Manslaughter for Attempted Abortion

FEBRUARY 22 – On January 6, 18-year-old Amber Abreu went to the hospital in Lawrence, Massachusetts after trying to terminate a pregnancy by taking a drug, misoprostol, that is a key component of the abortion pill RU-486. The result was a miscarriage. The doctors rushed the 1-1/4 pound expelled fetus to the Tufts-New England Medical Center in Boston, where it remained alive for four days. The police, meanwhile, went after Amber using an archaic law dating back to the 1840s to charge her with “procuring a miscarriage.” Cops dragged Abreu into court in shackles and then held her in the state’s maximum security prison at Framingham for days until friends and relatives could come up with \$15,000 bail. The young woman, a recent immigrant from the Dominican Republic, faces seven years in jail on this outrageous charge. But the state wants to go even further. According to the *Boston Globe* (25 January), “Prosecutors said that Abreu may be charged with homicide,” for which she could face a sentence of life behind bars.* This whole prosecution is an obscene miscarriage of justice.

Amber Abreu is innocent. We demand that all charges against her be dropped. The crime here is to prosecute the teenage immigrant for what should be every woman’s right. You don’t have to go back to the Salem, Mass. witch trials of the 17th century to find examples of the hideous persecution of women. The judicial victimization of Amber Abreu is a witchhunt by anti-abortion forces. We demand the abolition of all laws outlawing or restricting abortion. *For free abortion on demand!*

Amber Abreu came to the United States 18 months ago, obtained a general equivalency degree and started to study at Northern Essex Community College, taking English as a Second Language. Far from being a murderer, she is a victim of the maze of legal restrictions imposed on women seeking to terminate an unwanted pregnancy. Having had a prior abortion, which cost \$200, she didn’t want to ask her mother to pay that again. So she took a drug, known by the brand name Cytotec, that is freely available over the counter in the Dominican Republic and widely used there by women as a home remedy in a country where abortion is illegal. Amber was between 23 and 25 weeks pregnant. Since abortion is illegal in Massachusetts after 24 weeks, so the prosecutors are awaiting a determination by the medical examiner of how far advanced the fetus was in order to

*Amber is currently (end of June) charged with manslaughter, for which she could still face years in jail.



Deborah Hammond/AP

Amber Abreu in court with court-appointed stand-in for defense attorney (right) on January 25.

charge Abreu with homicide. This is an abomination.

It is also part of the on-going war on abortion rights in the U.S. The case of Amber Abreu highlights the fact that what’s at issue is not just the legal “right to choose,” it’s about the actual access to abortion services. In many states laws have been passed to prevent teenage women from terminating a pregnancy without notifying their parents. Clinics have been besieged by right-wing “god squads” seeking not only to harass women seeking an abortion, but also to shut the facilities down. In several Midwestern and Mountain states this has succeeded to the point that there are only one or two abortion clinics left. On top of this, the anti-abortion bigots resort to outright murder, posting the names and addresses of abortion doctors on the Internet, shooting them in their homes and bombing clinics. Right-wing terrorist John Salvi killed two workers at a Planned Parenthood abortion clinic in Brookline and wounded five others in 1994. The Internationalist Group calls for militant working-class defense of abortion clinics.

continued on page 55

Protest Against “Minuteman” at NYU

Upwards of a hundred demonstrators converged on New York University’s Kimmel Center April 9 to protest the appearance of Chris Simcox, co-founder of the fascist vigilante group, “Minuteman Project.” The racist Simcox was hosted by the College Republicans in a phony “debate” on immigration.

This latest provocation came a few weeks after a sinister “Find the Illegal Immigrant Contest” at NYU sponsored by the College Republicans, which was met with an outpouring of angry protest by hundreds of demonstrators. It also came shortly after the Columbia University administration announced disciplinary measures against seven students from among the hundreds who protested a Minuteman speech at Columbia last October.

Organized on short notice, tonight’s protest was initiated by the Coalition for Immigrant Rights at NYU. The CUNY Internationalist Clubs helped publicize the protest and mobilized a contingent of 20 students and workers. Our chants – including “Mobilize workers power to smash racist terror,” “Racists out” and “*La lucha obrera no tiene fronteras*” (The workers struggle has no borders) – were picked up by the crowd, which included a sizable contingent from the Progressive Labor Party as well as activists from a number of



Oscar Duran/El Diario-La Prensa

Internationalist Group and CUNY Internationalist Clubs mobilized against co-founder of “Minuteman” racist vigilante group at New York University. Above photo was run on page 1 of *El Diario-La Prensa*.

other groups.

Police initially penned protestors in with steel barricades, but demonstrators soon poured out of the pen and picketed in front of the entrance to the Kimmel Center. Inside the auditorium, scores of protestors – who had to go through a metal detector and show NYU ID cards – held up signs, shouted, chanted and frequently drowned out Simcox’s immigrant-bashing diatribe. The Minuteman founder called the protestors “the face of the devil” (*El Diario-La Prensa*, 10 April).

We print below the speech at the protest rally given by our comrade which was greeted enthusiastically by the crowd.

My name is Erica Torres and I am a student at City College and a member of the Internationalist Club. Together with the Internationalist Group, we’ve been working to bring out students from several CUNY campuses today along with workers from key unions and immigrant organizations in the city.

Let’s be clear: the “Minutemen” are not some kind of debating society. They are violent racist vigilantes who work hand in hand with the Ku Klux Klan, Aryan Nations and other fascists. At Columbia University last October one of these racist thugs

continued on page 56



Internationalist contingent at April 9 NYU protest against Minuteman racist vigilantes.

Spartacist League Says Don't Run Them Off Campus Drive Out Racist "Minuteman" Anti-Immigrant Vigilantes!

Accompanying the mounting state repression against immigrants in post-9/11 America, racist vigilantes have escalated violent anti-immigrant attacks. The most prominent of these sinister groups are the so-called Minuteman Project and the Minuteman Civil Defense Corps which in 2005 grabbed headlines by staging armed "border patrols" hunting "illegal aliens" along the Mexican border. Some virulent immigrant-bashers in the media such as CNN's Lou Dobbs and Fox TV's Hannity and Colmes have sought to give a veneer of respectability to the Minutemen. But beyond the media hype, these are nativist fascist action squads which seek to terrorize immigrants and provoke police repression against leftists.

The Internationalist Group has warned: "The Minutemen are shot through with fascist outfits like the Ku Klux Klan, National Socialist Movement, Nazis, 'neo'-Nazi skinheads and their ilk. These are not just racist bigots: they are armed and dangerous" ("The 'Minutemen': Racist Vigilantes Seek to Provoke Police-State Crackdown," *The Internationalist* No. 24, Summer 2006). The IG has actively participated in anti-Minuteman mobilizations in the New York area, including in Babylon, Long Island in 2005,



Internationalist photo

Internationalist Group at 4 October 2006 protest at Columbia University against provocative speech by Minuteman co-founder Gilchrist.

in downtown Manhattan and at Columbia University in 2006 and most recently at New York University, when Minuteman co-founder Chris Simcox spoke there (see article on facing page). We wrote of these violent provocateurs:

"Their aim is to goad the federal government into launching an all-out round-up of 'illegal' foreign-born workers.... [T]he immigrant-bashing thugs must not merely be protested, they should be run out by the overwhelming power of the organized working class. Revolutionaries seek to mobilize the unions to come out in force to chase off the fascist vermin who represent a danger to the safety and well-being of the minority, immigrant and working-class population. Militant worker-immigrant defense must be organized to disperse these would-be killers while their forces are small and vulnerable."
 —"For Militant Workers Defense of Immigrants!" *The Internationalist* No. 22, September-October 2005

Recently, the once-Trotskyist Spartacist League (SL) published an article titled "Fascistic Minutemen and Anti-Immigrant Bigotry" (*Workers Vanguard*, 27 April) in which they argue that these immigrant-hunting vigilantes are *not* fascists but only fascist — and because of that "ic," leftists should *not* seek to drive them out when they show up on campuses. The SL



Southern Poverty Law Center

Racist vigilantes hold immigrants at gunpoint.

argues, incredibly, that “these racist bigots are not, at this time, a fascist organization that advocates or carries out deadly physical assaults on the labor movement and the oppressed.” It’s okay to stop them when the racist vigilantes stage provocations in the streets against immigrants, says the SL, but “when the Minutemen appear as reactionary ideologues on campuses, we do not support the liberal/reformist position of disrupting their meetings or seeking to drive them off. Rather, as in the case of other right-wing ideologues like David Horowitz, we seek to refute their poisonous anti-immigrant politics through protest and exposure.”

The SL’s attempt to compartmentalize the Minutemen vigilantes into carefully parsed components is downright surreal, as is its attempt to cover itself by branding efforts to “disrupt their meetings” as innately reformist. What the SL is really trying to do here is provide a veneer of pseudo-Marxist rhetoric to cover its latest lurch to the right, which consists of a grotesque, *social-democratic* opposition to a policy of militant mobilizations against these racist gangsters. In the pursuit of this they go so far as to claim, outrageously, that the Minutemen do *not* advocate or carry out “deadly physical assaults” on workers and the oppressed.

The SL rightly excoriates groups like the International Socialist Organization (ISO) and the Party for Socialism and Liberation (PSL) for working with the Democratic Party, in “antiwar” coalitions and elsewhere. But in making believe that the deadly Minuteman terrorists are *not* fascist, and merely “fascistic,” in opposing efforts to drive these racist vigilantes out of campuses, the SL places itself well to the right of the ISO and PSL reformists. This puts them in the company of bourgeois liberals who defend the fascists’ supposed “right” to stage their immigrant-bashing provocations. The SL’s whitewash of the racist Minuteman killers is a repudiation of Trotskyism and its own past actions in seeking to drive out fascist scum. Any SL member with an ounce of class consciousness should be outraged by this *betrayal*. If there *isn’t* any internal outrage over this basic question, one has to conclude that the latter-day SL is very far gone indeed.

So according to the Spartacist League, the “Minutemen” do not advocate or carry out deadly physical assaults on the oppressed. Izzatso? Maybe the SL has been reading too many press releases from Minuteman co-founder Jim Gilchrist, a former Republican Congressional candidate whose job was to be the “moderate” face of the movement. When reports surfaced of white supremacist groups recruiting for the Minutemen, Gilchrist declared that skinheads and members of Nazi groups such as the National Alliance and Aryan Nations were banned from participation. This is just eyewash for the media (and gullible liberals looking for an excuse to turn a blind eye). In fact, when the 2005 Minuteman Project “patrol” got underway, journalists reported it was shot through with fascists. In an extensive article on the “project,” the



From CTV News video

Students unfurl banner on stage as Minuteman vigilante leader speaks at Columbia University, October 4. SL says students shouldn't “disrupt” Minuteman vigilantes’ provocation.

Southern Poverty Law Center quoted one, a Special Forces veteran armed with a revolver chambered to fire shotgun shells, saying “It should be legal to kill illegals.... Just shoot ‘em on sight.” Two others in the same unit, members of the National Alliance, carried semi-automatic pistols and scouted out sniper positions, saying: “You get up there with a rifle and start shooting four or five of them a week...” (SPLC *Intelligence Report*, Summer 2005).

It’s not just talk and fantasizing. Chris Simcox, the other Minuteman co-founder, has run a vigilante group in the Tombstone, Arizona area since 2002 called “Civil Homeland Defense,” that brags of having captured more than 5,000 border crossers. Working in conjunction with other local vigilante groups, including “Ranch Rescue” and “American Border Patrol,” which carry out armed patrols in camouflage uniforms, Simcox’ outfit regularly detained migrants at gunpoint. Roger Barnett, the leader of Ranch Rescue, which is active in Cochise County, Arizona, says he is “prepared to kill Mexicans.” A Cochise County sheriff’s department report on 14 illegal detentions by border vigilantes said that in nine cases shots were fired. A 2001 U.S. General Accounting Office report said that at least two immigrants were shot by vigilantes. In October 2002, masked gunmen in military garb opened fire on a group of migrants near Red Rock, Arizona, killing two (“Open Season,” SPLC *Intelligence Report*, Spring 2003). Altogether nine bodies of immigrants killed in execution style were found in a 20 square mile area of Maricopa County, Arizona in the period between March 2002 and March 2003. Another vigilante group in the Tucson area, Border Guardians, brags of working with the Ku Klux Klan and Ohio Nazis.

The killings have continued. On February 8, three Mexican immigrants were shot to death, three wounded and two missing when they were attacked by four masked gunmen with assault rifles near Tucson. Ten days earlier,

a man driving a load of immigrants was shot to death in the same area by four white gunmen in military-style fatigues speaking English, according to a survivor. Another incident took place near Sasabe on February 7 where 18 immigrants were ambushed by men wearing ski masks. The body of a badly beaten Mexican immigrant was found in the same area with signs of having been lynched (rope burns around the neck). In a fourth incident on February 21, paramilitary gunmen in pickup trucks ambushed a car near Chandler, Arizona. While the *New York Times* (9 February) said local authorities pointed to bandits, Arizona governor Janet Napolitano says that paramilitary vigilantes may have been responsible for the murders.

Around the country, local Minuteman groups have been busy terrorizing immigrants. In the San Diego area, John Monti, a member of "Save Our State" which is affiliated with the Minuteman Project, was arrested in March for assaulting two immigrant workers on November 18 along Rancho Peñasquitos Boulevard. Monti reportedly took pictures of the day laborers gathered there, started spewing racist epithets and then punched one of them (*San Diego Union Tribune*, 27 March). Also in March, the home of the leader of the San Diego Minutemen, Jeff Schwilk, was searched by police for evidence about attacks on migrant workers' encampments in McGonigle Canyon where residents' belongings were slashed. Minuteman videos of the attack have been posted on the Internet (*SDUT*, 22 March). And in Washington, D.C. on May 1, a member of the Herndon, Virginia Minutemen, Tyler Joseph Froatz, was arrested at the immigrant rights rally after violently assaulting Sarah Sloan, national staff coordinator of the ANSWER antiwar coalition. Froatz had in his possession a knife with a 12-inch blade, a second knife, a flare gun and a stun gun.

This is just a small part of the reams of evidence that the Minutemen and related immigrant-hunting groups engage in deadly physical assaults on oppressed Latino immigrants. To claim that the Minutemen are only "racist bigots" or ideologues and not fascists, to pretend that their "paramilitary component" is somehow separate, to deny that they advocate and use deadly violence against the oppressed, as the Spartacist League does, is to buy the lying propaganda of the racist vigilantes themselves. The fact that the vigilantes have splintered into a number of organizations changes nothing. This has been a characteristic of American fascism for decades, at least since the 1978 publication of *The Turner Diaries*, the white supremacist novel by the founder of the National Alliance, William Luther Pierce, which advocated race war carried out by loosely linked localized groups. For that matter, the Minuteman founders have since split in a dispute over money, with Gilchrist running the Minuteman Project and Simcox taking the Minuteman Civil Defense Corps. Now each can be the *Führer* of his own organization. But that doesn't alter the essential identity of these groups.

Stalinists and social democrats throw around the term *fascist*

loosely to describe any right-wing or repressive movement or government, ranging from the Pinochet military dictatorship in Chile to the Bush presidency in the U.S. today. They do so for a purpose: if the enemy is fascist, then according to the formula put forward by the Stalinized Comintern in 1935, the response is to form a "popular front" coalition with the supposed "democratic" bourgeoisie. Such class-collaborationist alliances serve as a roadblock to prevent the revolutionary mobilization of the proletariat. For revolutionary Marxists, in contrast, political characterizations must be based on the *class nature* of the movement or regime in question, in order to clarify the struggle of the working class. In analyzing fascist movements in Europe between the first and second imperialist world wars, Leon Trotsky stressed that these are movements of the enraged (and often financially ruined) petty bourgeoisie organized to unleash murderous violence against the workers movement and the oppressed, in the service of the capitalist class. "Fascism unites and arms the scattered masses. Out of human dust, it organizes combat detachments," wrote Trotsky in *Whither France?* (1934). In order to defeat fascism, therefore, what's needed is not a treacherous alliance with capitalists for "democracy," but organizing the workers and oppressed in defense of their class interests.

We have described Minuteman as nativist fascists. Different fascist groups have their own distinctive characteristics. In Italy, where the term originated, fascism used a certain amount of pseudo-socialist terminology, reflecting the origins of its founder Mussolini. In Germany, Hitler even called his fascist movement "national socialist." In Central Europe before World War II there were a host of *clerical fascist* outfits. On the other hand, in the United States in the same period, the Ku Klux Klan was virulently anti-Catholic. Today, Minuteman is directed mainly against immigrants. Yet they all share certain the essential common characteristics of fascist movements. In its article on the Minutemen, the SL writes that "the Minutemen have sought to recruit blacks and Latino citizens who buy into anti-immigrant bigotry, with some modest success." Fascism in the U.S. will target oppressed racial and ethnic minorities. That does not mean that some individual blacks or Latinos will not be sucked into a fascist movement to camouflage its real aims. (In Italy, Mussolini's Fascisti initially included some Jews.) But the vigilante squads that Minuteman assembled in Arizona were almost entirely white, like the lynch mobs of the KKK.

It is noteworthy that Minuteman actions have not just been directed against immigrants. As we noted in *The Internationalist* No. 24, they have also taken aim at leftist groups, including staging a provocation outside the Maoist Revolution Books in New York last June 23 [2006] and triggering a vicious police assault on leftist demonstrators in Los Angeles on July 8 [2006]. Recently in San Diego, a Minuteman provocateur who had been videotaping an anarchist street fair provoked a police assault on the gathering. If they were just anti-immigrant bigots and ideologues, why would they engage in such antics? In the New York case, several of the provocateurs who showed up outside the Maoist bookstore have since been identified as members of

the Stormfront Nazi group active in New Jersey. According to the SL, “the Minutemen have a paramilitary component akin to the 1977 Klan Border Watch, the brainchild of white-supremacist David Duke.” But where exactly is the “component” of this outfit that is *not* paramilitary vigilantes? Arizona, San Diego, Washington, New York – everywhere the Minutemen act the same. And if David Duke, Mr. “Klan-in-a-Suit,” were to appear on campus, would the SL now refuse to throw him out?

Because what is at issue here is not just analytical. The *Workers Vanguard* article compares Minuteman leaders to “other right-wing ideologues like David Horowitz” and asserts that when come to universities, rather than driving them off, the SL seeks to “refute their poisonous anti-immigrant politics through protest and exposure.” This is an astounding comparison at several levels. Does the ex-New Leftist, now ultrarightist David Horowitz have mobs of armed vigilantes roaming the border carrying out violent assaults? Of course not. On the other hand, once they hit campus are Chris Simcox and Jim Gilchrist just ideologues? Hardly. They are trying to gain some respectability for their vigilante terror squads.

Minuteman represents a clear and present danger to immigrants, blacks, labor and the left and they should be dispersed by worker-immigrant defense squads as an elementary act of self-defense. The SL’s opposition to anything that goes beyond “protest and exposure” of Minuteman is an act of sabotage of the struggle to defend immigrants against government and vigilante terror. It recalls the many “learned” polemics that the reformist Socialist Workers Party pumped out in the 1970s to justify its own opposition to shutting down fascist provocations – a stance that the then-revolutionary Spartacist League polemized against in many leaflets and even a special pamphlet (see *Young Spartacus* Nos. 32, 33 and 35, May-September 1975).

Spartacist members might also recall that a few years back when fascist ideologue David Irving showed up at the University of California at Berkeley in 1994, the SL actively organized to run him off campus. *Workers Vanguard* (28 October 1994) headlined: “Hitler-Lover David Irving Run Out! Hundreds Rout Nazis in Berkeley.” The article argued that fascists “thought they could cash in on the anti-immigrant hysteria being whipped up behind Proposition 187 to recruit and organize for their racist terror.” But that was when the SL and *WV* still stood on the program of revolutionary Trotskyism. If anything, Minuteman leaders Simcox and Gilchrist represent an even more immediate threat to the safety of immigrants than Irving did. As for anti-immigrant hysteria, can anyone deny that there is a wave of xenophobia being whipped up today as ICE cops round up thousands of immigrants in



La Voz de Aztlan

Mexican immigrant worker believed lynched by vigilantes in Arizona, February 2007. Note rope burns on neck.

factory and neighborhood raids and Young Republicans stage “catch an illegal” immigrant hunts on campuses from coast to coast?

The SL’s outburst of civil libertarian liberalism is justification for its shameful flinch over an incident at Columbia University last October when hundreds demonstrated against Minuteman *Führer* Gilchrist. The Internationalist Group was at the protest outside, front and center with our banner proclaiming: “Drive Out Racist Minuteman Vigilantes! Full Citizenship Rights for All Immigrants! Build a Revolutionary Workers Party!” (This so angered the Minutemen that they showed it on their web page.) A speaker from the CUNY Internationalist Clubs spoke from the microphone saying, “We must unite with the power of the working class to drive out these racist vigilantes who work hand in hand with the Ku Klux Klan!” Our signs declared: “‘MinuteKlan’ Get the Hell Out of New York!”

Inside, hundreds of students protested Gilchrist, and when he started to spew his racist filth, supporters of the Lucha club and the ISO marched up to the stage to protest, unfurling a banner saying “No One Is Illegal.” Minuteman goons then violently attacked the students kicking one in the head, while their leader scurried out the back door. After NYC mayor Bloomberg and the tabloid press howled about the rude reception given to the racist immigrant-basher, Columbia University’s president ordered disciplinary sanctions against the students for supposedly “disrupting” Gilchrist’s talk. But the student protesters stood their ground. The fact that the Minuteman leader fled the scene of his provocation was a good thing for immigrants and all working people.

The SL “defended” the Columbia students, but in terms that repeated the administration’s accusation. A Spartacus Youth Club leaflet declared, “Shutting them [the Minutemen] down in this context simply played into the hands of the reactionaries’ false and absurd claim that the

continued on page 57

Amber Abreu...

continued from page 49

Massachusetts has been denounced by theocratic reactionaries as a "land of Satan" because in 2003 and 2004 a state supreme court ruling made the commonwealth the only state in the country where gay couples can legally marry. At the same time, however, recent ex-governor (and now presidential contender) Mitt Romney vetoed every law expanding abortion rights and now declares himself a "right-to-lifer" (as well as opposing same-sex marriage and even civil unions for gays). Even many liberals, like Democratic senator and former presidential candidate John Kerry, declare they are "personally" opposed to a woman's right abortion. Rather than frontally taking on the vast array of forces opposed to abortion, extending from Catholic and evangelical Christian right-wingers to liberal Democrats, various bourgeois feminist groups have responded by fudging their language and supporting one or another "pro-choice" bourgeois politician.

The fact that Amber Abreu could be jailed for up to seven years or spend life in prison for trying to put a stop to an unwanted pregnancy is a horrendous atrocity. Yet the "mainstream" feminists haven't exactly rushed to highlight her case. According to an article by Juliette Terzieff in *Women's e-News* (12 February), the Cambridge-based Abortion Access Project has helped Abreu "identify medical and legal experts to support her public defender," and the American Civil Liberties Union is "monitoring the case" and has "spoken with the family about available services and support." But where is the national outcry over the hideous persecution of this 18-year-old immigrant who symbolizes the plight of young women, often terribly alone, who face desperate decisions that can ruin their lives? Columnist Eileen McNamara wrote a piece in the *Boston Globe* (28 January) titled "Bad Choices All Around," referring to "one teenager's bad choices," as if this "tragedy" was in any way Amber's fault! But McNamara at least recognizes this as "an indictment of a culture that tells all women abortion is their legal, constitutionally protected right, but tolerates a lack of access for the neediest women."

With the addition of two raving anti-abortion bigots to the United States Supreme Court, Samuel Alito and Chief Justice John Roberts, right-wingers are gearing up a drive to overturn the 1973 *Roe v. Wade* decision which legalized abortion in the U.S. While voters in South Dakota overwhelmingly rejected a near-total ban on abortions, anti-abortion forces have introduced new bills there. Around the country, "pro-life" reactionaries have been pushing to enact state laws which would outlaw abortion in almost all cases, even, in Georgia, in cases where the mother's life is in danger. (The Georgia bill calls for life in prison or the death penalty for women who have abortions and the doctors who provide them.) They want a total ban at the state level so that the minute *Roe v. Wade* is struck down, abortion will effectively be outlawed across large parts of the U.S. The response of the bourgeois feminists has been to crow that in last year's mid-term elections, "pro-choice" Democrats were elected! "We

should celebrate these electoral wins," writes Nancy Keenan, president of "NARAL Pro-Choice America," which used to be the National Abortion and Reproductive Rights League but appeased the reactionaries by removing the word abortion from its name.

The NARAL leader ascribed the electoral "successes" to the fact that "the public has grown tired of the divisiveness on this topic." So now these "pro-choice" advocates are calling for "prevention-based" measures like birth control that they hope will win support from some anti-abortion elements. In doing so they are following the lead of Democratic Party politicians like Hillary Clinton, who in a speech on the January 2005 anniversary of *Roe v. Wade* sought "common ground" with those who hold that there are "are no circumstances under which any abortion should ever be available" (!), calling for "assistance" so that "the choice guaranteed under our Constitution either does not ever have to be exercised or only in very rare circumstances." So where Bill Clinton declared that abortions should be "safe, legal and rare," Hillary Clinton wants them to be safe, legal and never!! But what would one expect from the war hawk who joined Bush in justifying the invasion of Afghanistan with hypocritical talk about safeguarding the rights of Afghan women (who are still imprisoned in head-to-toe *burkas*) and has repeatedly voted to support the U.S. imperialist invasion and colonial occupation of Iraq?

As the liberal Democrats and bourgeois feminists seek "common ground" with right-wing reactionaries, many leftists and would-be socialists tag along behind, using the language of "choice" instead of demanding that abortion be available on the simple request of the woman, at no cost to her, in safe and high quality medical facilities. For even the simple democratic right to abortion is profoundly affected by economic questions and legal status. As *Globe* columnist McNamara wrote, "A well-heeled suburban 18-year-old who chooses to terminate a pregnancy need only write a check." But this "choice," even where it is legally possible, does not mean real access to abortion for those without financial means. Democratic president Jimmy Carter signed the Hyde Amendment which banned the use of Medicaid funds for abortions. Today young women still die from the complications of back-alley or self-induced abortions. Many immigrant women, especially those lacking documents, hesitate to go to a hospital for fear of deportation. Amber Abreu was lucky she could get medical care, but now she faces years if not life in prison.

Racism is a fundamental factor here as well. White prosecutors in Lawrence, Massachusetts want to jail 18-year-old Abreu, supposedly out of concern for the "life" of an aborted fetus. In Kansas City, Missouri a year ago, police pulled over 32-year-old Sofia Salva, a black Sudanese immigrant, for traffic citations, but refused to take her to a hospital even though a videotape of the arrest shows her pleading at least a dozen times that she was bleeding and having a miscarriage. "How is that my problem?" says a woman cop. After holding Salva for nine hours in a jail cell, they finally sent her to a hospital where she delivered a premature baby that lived for one minute. Naturally, no charges have been brought against the

killer cops. Former Black Panther and renowned radical journalist Mumia Abu-Jamal wrote in a February 4 column from Pennsylvania's death row: "When I heard this story, I thought of the motto, 'protect and serve' – and wondered, 'protect who?' – 'serve who?'" The answer is that the police protect the property and interests of the capitalists and serve the interests of the bourgeois ruling class against those of the oppressed and exploited majority.

The question of the rights of working-class immigrant women is central to the history of Lawrence, Mass., the mill town on the banks of the Merrimack River which was the site of the 1912 strike by 20,000 textile workers that ended in a stunning victory for the strikers. The walkout began over wage cuts when the mill bosses slashed the pay of their workers (most of them women and children) because the legislature restricted children's working hours to 54 a week. The workers' demand was for 54 hours' work for 56 hours' pay! Even though it was relatively small, the pay cut could buy a few loaves of bread for the hard-pressed workers. The women workers waved signs proclaiming, "We Want Bread and Roses Too!" The strike committee, led by the radical Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), issued strike leaflets in more than a dozen languages to reach the Italian, French-Canadian, Portuguese, Polish, German, Austrian, Belgian, Russian, Syrian, English, Irish, Jewish and American strikers and hold them together for ten weeks.

At a key point during the protracted struggle, the strikers decided to send their children to supporters in other cities to care for them for the duration. As a trainload of children arrived in New York's Grand Central Station they were greeted by a crowd singing the workers' anthem, *The Internationale*. Lawrence authorities accused the strikers of exploiting their children (what of the exploitation by the mill owners?) and as a group of 40 children and their mothers marched to a train, they were set upon and viciously clubbed by the police. This dramatized the plight of the Lawrence strikers and contributed greatly to the eventual victory. Today, working people should protest the vicious persecution of Amber Abreu which throws a sharp light on the plight of poor immigrant and working women.

At a general level, many leftists pose the issue of women's liberation as a purely bourgeois-democratic issue, instead of recognizing, as Marxists do, that the oppression of women is bound up in the social conditions of capitalism. It is rooted in institution of the family, which is one of the mainstays of capitalism and a bedrock for conservative values. Women's oppression is intensified and compounded for poor and working-class women, who must endure a "double shift" of work, at low wages, followed by family care. Black, Latina and Asian women face a triple oppression as they face the added burdens of racism, while immigrants lack even the most basic formal democratic rights. The condition of women in semi-colonial countries is far worse: every year the number of women hospitalized after unsafe illegal abortions include 288,700 in Brazil; 106,500 in Mexico; 80,000 in the Philippines; 71,800 in Bangladesh; and 16,500 in the tiny Dominican Republic. To put an end to this horror story, the League for the Fourth International fights for workers

revolution throughout the capitalist world.

Revolutionary Marxists emphasize that to liberate women from the many forms of oppression they have suffered since the dawn of class society it is necessary to fight for their full integration into social labor, with equal pay for equal work; for free, 24-hour day care; for free, voluntary communal laundry and dining facilities; for free abortion on demand and free, high-quality health care for all; and for full citizenship rights for all immigrants. Many of these measures were included in the program of the Russian Bolsheviks led by Lenin and Trotsky, and were begun to be realized following the October Revolution of 1917. Carrying out such a program would be immensely easier today. But this requires a break from the capitalist parties and the formation of a revolutionary workers party that fights for a workers government, where those who labor rule. The Trotskyists stand for *women's liberation through socialist revolution*. ■

NYU Protest "Minuteman" ...

continued from page 50

kicked a student protestor in the head with a steel-toed boot.

The Internationalists joined many others to protest the Minuteman provocation at Columbia, where protestors stood up to this racist violence and succeeded in shutting down the Minuteman provocation. We must all defend the Columbia protestors against administration reprisals.

We say: "Minute-Klan" get the hell out of New York! That means they should be driven out whenever they try to stage one of their provocations to whip up lynch-type terror against immigrants. And that goes for junior "Minute-Klan" types like those who staged the vile "Find the Illegal Alien" stunt here at NYU in February.

Like the working class of New York, CUNY students are largely immigrants. We must unite with the *power* of the working class to drive out the Minutemen, because this is a question of power. The Minutemen are part of the attack on immigrants that has brought large-scale raids by the ICE immigration cops – "*la migra*" – all around the country.

We need to mobilize a stronger power to defeat these attacks, which are coming from the very top, from both the Republicans and the Democrats. That means joining with the power of the working class, including huge numbers of immigrants, who keep this city and this country running. We have to unite with workers around the world like the teachers of Oaxaca, Mexico, who continue to face bloody repression.

My family comes from Puerto Rico, which was the biggest colony in the world until it was surpassed by Iraq. We say: *DEFEAT U.S. imperialism*. The racist attacks on immigrants are closely connected to the imperialist war in Iraq that we *can* and *must* defeat. The fight against racism and colonialism can only succeed if it is a revolutionary fight. We need a revolutionary workers party for a socialist revolution.

La lucha obrera no tiene fronteras. THE WORKERS' STRUGGLE HAS NO BORDERS! Minuteman racists out of New York!! ■

CUNY Faculty Union Calls for Freedom Now for Mumia Abu-Jamal

The resolution reprinted below, calling for labor action to win freedom for Mumia Abu-Jamal, was unanimously passed by the Hunter College chapter and Hostos Community College chapter executive board of the Professional Staff Congress (PSC), the union of teaching personnel at the City University of New York. Jamal is the former Black Panther and renowned radical journalist who has sat on Pennsylvania's death row for the past 25 years, for a murder he did not commit. Mumia is an innocent man framed up by the racist capitalist injustice system.

The Hunter and Hostos chapters introduced the motion at the PSC's April 19 Delegate Assembly, for approval by the union as a whole. However, the social-democratic leadership had the motion tabled to the PSC executive committee to be "redrafted," while vowing it would not be watered down.

A political battle erupted at the following Delegate Assembly, on May 31, when the PSC leadership brought in a new text which sought to gut the original motion, removing the reference to the NYPD murder of Sean Bell as well as the call for union action. Outrageously, it sought to replace the demand for Mumia's freedom with the call for "a new and fair trial" – that is, an appeal for confidence in what it called the "appropriate legal authorities."

This set off a heated debate, beginning with PSC activist (a supporter of the Internationalist Group) who had introduced the original motion in April. Nelson Mandela sat in a South African jail for a quarter century, he noted, but no one called for a "new trial" by the apartheid courts – the call was to "Free Mandela," period. (Another PSC member and IG supporter, who sat through Mumia's 1995 appeal hearing and sought to report on how the courts trampled on Jamal's rights, was repeatedly denied the floor.) Several delegates spoke passionately against "the idea that a black radical journalist can get justice out of the court system" and referred to the government's murderous COINTELPRO (Counterintelligence Program) against Mumia and other former Black Panthers.

Proponents of the "redrafted" motion fought a losing battle. One chapter chairwoman summed up the sentiment of many when she called on the delegates to "have the courage" to "do the right thing" by calling forthrightly for Jamal's freedom. In a victory for Mumia's partisans, the outcome was a 2/3 vote in favor of striking out the calls for a "new and fair trial" and replacing them with the original demand, "Freedom now for Mumia Abu-Jamal." It is more essential than ever to translate this into labor action as outlined in the original motion below.

RESOLUTION ON MUMIA ABU-JAMAL

WHEREAS, the case of Mumia Abu-Jamal is a focus and symbol of the fight against racism and state repression, which

is keenly felt by large numbers of our coworkers, students and others in light of events like the Sean Bell case; and

WHEREAS, his appeal is before the federal circuit court, and this could be the last judicial decision in the case; and

WHEREAS, dozens of unions and labor councils around the country have come out for Jamal's freedom, insisting that an innocent man should not pass another day in prison for his radical views; and

WHEREAS, as far away as Brazil, the Rio de Janeiro state teachers union held a work stoppage for Mumia's freedom in 1999, at the same time as the SF longshore workers' stoppage for Mumia, and the Oakland teachers' union has held actions for this crucial cause as well; and

WHEREAS, an injury to one is an injury to all;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Professional Staff Congress calls for freedom now for Mumia Abu-Jamal; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the PSC shall take up the fight for coordinated labor action to free Mumia Abu-Jamal (including strikes and work stoppages) with unions around the city.

Drive Out Minuteman...

continued from page 54

left is trampling free speech" (reprinted in *Workers Vanguard*, 27 October 2006). Contrary to WV and the Columbia administration, the ISO didn't try to shut down the Minuteman provocation, although it would have been utterly justified and correct to do so. They simply wanted to make a limp liberal protest on stage. WV claims that an ISO speaker said at the rally outside the hall that the Minutemen "don't have a right to free speech." Perhaps someone said it, although that wasn't the position of the protesters inside. Marxists, in contrast, would have emphasized that the Minuteman provocation was not about any kind of speech but about their organizing for fascist terror. The way the SYC put it in its 1994 article about running off the Nazi Irving was correct:

"They are paramilitary action squads whose program is to kill, culminating in genocide... The hundreds of us who acted to stop the fascists... understood that this was an elementary act of self defense and defense of all the intended victims of fascist terror."

Ironically, in 1994 the ISO accused the protesters against the fascist Irving of fomenting "violence," claiming: "It was a few bad apples acting in the heat of the moment." That was then. Today the shoe is on the other foot as the now-centrist Spartacist League sinks deeper into opportunism.

For immigrant-worker defense to sweep away "Minuteman" racist vigilantes! ■

Hundreds March for Mumia at Philadelphia Court Hearing

Mobilize Workers' Power to Free Mumia Abu-Jamal!

Over 500 people turned out to demonstrate on behalf of Mumia Abu-Jamal outside the U.S. 3rd Circuit Court of Appeals in Philadelphia May 17. Inside the packed courtroom another 200 observed the proceedings in which the justices peppered prosecution and defense lawyers with questions about the deliberate exclusion of blacks in jury selection during Mumia's 1982 trial, the instructions to the jury on the death sentence, and evidence of judicial bias against Mumia. In court, the prosecution demanded that the death sentence against Jamal be reinstated while defense lawyer Robert Bryan asked for a new trial. Outside, hundreds of demonstrators circling the courthouse chanted over and over, "Brick by brick, wall by wall, We're gonna free Mumia Abu-Jamal." While some had illusions that a new trial could be fair, many declared that the entire "justice" system was racist to the core.

Among those attending the hearing were film star and fighter for social justice Danny Glover, former Communist Party spokeswoman Angela Davis, former Black Panther Party leader Kathleen Cleaver, former Georgia Congresswoman Cynthia McKinney, veteran activist Dick Gregory and prominent civil liberties lawyer Lynne Stewart (who is appealing her own frame-up conviction on bogus charges of "aiding terrorism" by defending her client). Also present were delegations from Germany, where thousands marched for Mumia's freedom last January, and from France, where in 2003 Mumia was named an honorary citizen of the capital, and last year a street was named after him in a Paris suburb. Virtually every left and socialist organization in the U.S. was represented in the crowd of hundreds who came to show their support for Jamal. The Internationalist Group spoke from the open microphone (see below) and marched with a prominent banner declaring: "Free Mumia Abu-Jamal! Democrats, Republicans, Racist Legal Lynchers: Forge a Revolutionary Workers Party!"

Former Black Panther and renowned radical journalist



Internationalist Group marched in Philadelphia, May 17, along with hundreds of protesters demanding freedom for Mumia.

Mumia Abu-Jamal has been on Pennsylvania's death row for the past quarter century, framed by the police for a murder he didn't commit. He has come to symbolize the struggle against the racist death penalty in the United States and internationally. Mumia was known as the "voice of the voiceless" for his hard-hitting reports as a radio reporter in Philadelphia in the 1970s, and his powerful prison writings against injustice (including hundreds of columns and five books) are read the world over. Mumia was convicted in a rigged trial under Judge Albert Sabo, notorious as the "hanging judge" for issuing more death sentences than any other judge in the United States (a record he still holds after his death). Even though a key issue in the PCRA hearing 13 years later was Sabo's conduct of the original trial, he insisted on presiding over the appeal, during which he ordered the arrest of one of Mumia's attorneys (Rachel Wolkenstein of the Partisan Defense Committee) and a defense witness (Veronica Jones) was dragged off the stand in handcuffs.

Although the 1982 trial and 1995 hearings were rac-

ist travesties, they were hardly unique. The intimate connection between the courts, cops and capitalist politicians in the system of racist injustice is illustrated by the power of the Fraternal Order of the Police (FOP), which is waging a vendetta against Jamal. Judge Sabo, a former Philadelphia sheriff, was a lifetime member of the FOP. But he was not alone. When the Pennsylvania Supreme Court heard the appeal of the '95 hearings, defense lawyers objected to the participation of Justice Ron Castille, who as former District Attorney of Philadelphia signed papers opposing Mumia's earlier appeals, and who received campaign contributions from the FOP. Castille's replied that four other Supreme Court judges (i.e., five out of a total of seven) had also received FOP money. FOP conventions have been addressed by Democratic president Bill Clinton and Republican president George Bush. Last December, an FOP lobbying blitz got the U.S. House of Representatives to vote by 368 to 31 to condemn the French city of St-Denis for naming a street "Rue Mumia Abu-Jamal."

Add to this Pennsylvania governor Ed Rendell, who has vowed to sign a warrant to execute Mumia, was Philly D.A. at the time of Jamal's original trial and later mayor. And Rendell's wife is a justice on the 3rd Circuit federal appeals court where a panel of judges is hearing Mumia's habeas corpus appeal. You have here the portrait of a tight-knit local ruling class which lords it over the oppressed with naked police power, whether the mayor is a Democrat, like former D.A. Rendell, or a Republican like former top cop Frank Rizzo who ran the "city of brotherly love" with an iron hand in the 1970s and early '80s. To register simply that the entire judicial and police apparatus is stacked against Jamal would be a grievous understatement. He was railroaded by a system in which racial minorities, and black men in particular, are routinely convicted and subjected to legal lynching – state murder – on the basis of trumped up charges, bought "witnesses" and phony "confessions" after being terrorized and often tortured by the cops. And not just in "up South" Philly: as a courageous fighter against police terror, Mumia was on the feds' hit list ever since J. Edgar Hoover put his name on the FBI's COINTELPRO lists in 1969.

Many who observed the proceedings in the courtroom were trying to decipher how the judges would rule from the tenor of their questions. Some took heart from the justices asking critical questions of both sides, in contrast to Sabo's hectoring of defense witnesses and attorneys in 1995. But as Ramona Africa, who survived the 1985 police bombing of the Philly MOVE commune, noted, "They can sit there and look very attentive and appear to be leaning toward the defense but it doesn't mean anything.... To me the most impressive part of the day was these people who came from all over for Mumia." As evidence of judicial bias against Mumia, lead defense counsel Robert Bryan managed to get on the record the report from a court stenographer who heard Judge Sabo saying during the 1982 trial that "I'm going to help them fry the n——r." But the judicial panel kept asking why this or that issue wasn't addressed in the 1995 appeal. An

observer who was present in 1995 commented that the judges seemed oblivious to the barrage of arbitrary rulings and threats by the raving racist Sabo which prevented numerous issues from being raised.

Judges asked Assistant D.A. Hugh Burns how he could square the jury selection – where prosecutors peremptorily removed 11 of 15 potential black jurors, but only 4 of 28 white jurors, ending up with a jury that had only 2 black people and 10 whites, in a city that is over 40 percent black – with the Supreme Court's *Batson* decision against racial criteria to select jurors. Bryan noted that it was unusual for a federal appeals court to allow the NAACP, which submitted an *amicus curiae* (friend of the court brief) on the issue of jury discrimination, to argue part of the defense case. The fact that the Philly district attorney routinely tried to remove blacks from juries is an established fact. There is even a videotape of a training session in which assistant D.A.'s are shown how to do it. In his summation, Bryan pointed out that it defied logic to believe that given the record of the Pennsylvania courts at the time, there wasn't racially biased jury selection in Mumia's case – particularly considering that this was a former Black Panther and MOVE supporter accused of killing a police officer. But two of the three judges told Bryan that they found it hard to tell if there was discrimination without knowing the racial make-up of the 150 people in the jury pool – information that is unavailable.

What happened in the courtroom was uneventful. Bryan said his best "guestimate" was that a ruling could come in 45 to 90 days. Speaking to the crowd of Mumia's supporters outside, he also noted that rather than deciding either to order a new trial (as the defense requests) or to reinstate the death penalty (the prosecution's demand), the appeals court could take an intermediate position. It could uphold Judge Yohn's 2001 ruling, but order a new sentencing hearing (at which a death sentence could again be imposed); or send the case back to Yohn for a new hearing with instructions to consider particular precedents. In response to a question, Bryan said that the confession of Arnold Beverly, who admitted to killing police officer Daniel Faulkner, for which Mumia was convicted, "has nothing to do with this case," which he is arguing strictly on judicial issues. Thus the court will not rule on the most fundamental issue, *that Mumia Abu-Jamal is innocent*. There is no reason to believe that a new trial would be a fair trial in this racist, capitalist injustice system.

The most important fact of the day's event was that hundreds of people traveled from around the country and the world to demonstrate their solidarity. Trade unionists from a number of unions were present in Philadelphia. But more than a show of support, what's needed is to mobilize *power*, the only language that the ruling class understands. There is no justice for the oppressed in the capitalist courts. We must bring out the power of the organized working class, in the plants and in the streets, to demand that Mumia be freed from the machinery of racist repression.

We reprint below remarks by a spokesman for the Interna-

tionalist Group at the May 17 Philadelphia rally for Mumia Abu-Jamal.

I'm speaking on behalf of the Internationalist Group and the League for the Fourth International, and I want to emphasize that the case of Mumia Abu-Jamal is an international issue. The eyes of the world are on us. Working people around the globe are watching what happens to Mumia. For Mumia has become the symbol of the struggle against the racist death penalty, in the United States and internationally. And we must mobilize the power of the working class to free him.

The United States is the only major industrial country that has a death penalty. Why? It goes back to the days of slavery. Mumia today is the target of the modern slave masters who seek to repress black people in particular. He is being persecuted because he is the "voice of the voiceless," because he spoke for and continues to speak for all the oppressed.

Every epoch has its great legal battles which lay bare the nature of the society in which they take place. Mumia is the Scottsboro case of our times. The Scottsboro case in the 1930s exposed the real nature of lynch law justice, of Jim Crow justice. Mumia's case today illustrates the way in which black people are kept down, particularly in the northern ghettos, in the wake of the civil rights laws, which supposedly outlawed legal discrimination, but did nothing for blacks in the north.

I bring you greetings from Brazil, where the teachers of the state of Rio de Janeiro voted to make one of their demands this past May Day, freedom for Mumia Abu-Jamal, and to call on labor to use its power on his behalf. Also in Brazil, the Conlutas labor federation voted to include in its demands for May Day, freedom for Mumia Abu-Jamal, and to call for labor action to free him. Brazil has the largest black population of any country outside of Africa, and they follow what happens to black people in the U.S. very closely.

These are not idle words. On April 23, 1999, at the initiative of our comrades of the Liga Quarta-

Internacionalista do Brasil, teachers throughout the state of Rio de Janeiro stopped work for two hours to have meetings to talk about the case of Mumia Abu-Jamal and demand his freedom. (Applause) They stopped work and stopped the schools. And they did this in conjunction with port workers in the United States. On April 24, 1999, dock workers shut down ports up and down the U.S. West Coast to demand freedom for Mumia. (Applause)

A lot of times you hear people say they are "talking truth to power." There is no point in talking truth to power. The judges in that court over there don't need us to tell them the truth. They are meting out class justice, capitalist class justice. We need to talk power to power, the power of the working class, which makes this society run, and can also bring it to a halt. We need to mobilize that power to free Mumia Abu-Jamal, our comrade and our hero, who is in jail because he has defended all of us.

I want to make a point about the persecution of Mumia. This is a bipartisan capitalist persecution, by both the Democrats and Republicans. Philadelphia isn't just "Rizzotown." In 1985, Mayor Wilson Goode, a black Democrat, bombed the MOVE commune in West Philly and burned down the entire neighborhood. The governor, Ed Rendell, a Democrat, has vowed to issue a new death warrant for Mumia. And his wife sits on the federal court over there. That's why we say it is necessary to build a revolutionary workers party that fights for all the oppressed.

One of the earlier speakers referred to a war going on, and that's right. The war on the people of Iraq is the same war being waged against working people, black people and the oppressed in the United States. We need to mobilize the power of the working class to defeat that imperialist war in Iraq and to defeat the war on working people here in the streets of Philadelphia. (Applause)

Free Mumia! ■

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A Quarter Century on Death Row – No Justice in the Capitalist Courts

It Will Take Workers' Power to Free Mumia Abu-Jamal!

Abolish the Racist Death Penalty!



© Lou Jones

The following article was printed in a special issue of The Internationalist dated 17 March 2007. See page 58 for a report on the May 17 hearing of Mumia's case in the federal appeals court .

Twenty-five years ago last December in the city of Philadelphia, Mumia Abu-Jamal was shot, arrested and beaten to within an inch of his life while in police custody. When he survived the cop assault, he was framed up, dragged through a racist travesty of a trial and sentenced to die, for a murder he did not commit. For a quarter century, the former Black Panther and renowned radical journalist has been kept in isolation on Pennsylvania's death row. The ruling class is deter-

mined to silence the innocent man who has powerfully exposed their crimes and championed their victims, for which he became known as the "voice of the voiceless."

After a federal judge overturned Mumia's death sentence in 2001 but upheld his conviction, both the defense and prosecution appealed the verdict. With his case before federal appeals court in Philadelphia, Mumia's life is in danger. A panel of three judges could restore the death sentence at any time and Democratic governor Ed Rendell, who was Philadelphia district attorney at the time of Jamal's arrest and engineered the 1981 frame-up trial, has pledged to sign a third death warrant. Since the Supreme Court has repeatedly refused to hear Mumia's

appeals, the decision of the Philadelphia circuit court could be the final legal decision in this case. The Internationalist Group urgently calls to rekindle mass protests and particularly to bring out the power of the working class to abolish the racist death penalty and win freedom now for Mumia!

Over the years, millions of people around the globe have taken up Mumia's cause. In Europe, it has had a great echo due to revulsion at the barbaric death penalty. In 2003, the city of Paris named Mumia an honorary citizen, the first time this status had been bestowed since it was given to Pablo Picasso in 1971. Last April, the city of St-Denis, a working-class suburb of Paris, named a street Rue Mumia Abu-Jamal at the initiative of a multi-ethnic youth group. This set off a firestorm of denunciations in the United States. The Fraternal Order of Police (FOP), which says it is the largest cop organization in the world, went ballistic and got a bill introduced in the U.S. Congress condemning the city of St-Denis for honoring Mumia.

On December 6, this resolution, HR 1082, written by a Pennsylvania Republican who was defeated in the last election and pushed by rabid right-wing immigrant-basher James Sensenbrenner, was rammed through the House of Representatives by a vote of 368-31. This lopsided vote gives a measure of the ruling-class hatred of Mumia. Voting against were members of the Congressional Black Caucus and the New York City delegation. Joining the racist lynch mob which "commends all police officers in the United States and throughout the world" were House Democratic leader Nancy Pelosi and liberal "antiwar" Rep. Denis Kucinich. Pelosi also announced that the Democratic-led Congress would continue to vote to fund the war on Iraq.

Three days later, hundreds rallied in the streets of Philadelphia to support Mumia Abu-Jamal on the 25th anniversary of his arrest.

Mumia's persecutors are on a rampage. He was jailed and sentenced to die as part of the government's war on the Black Panther Party (BPP). The state assassinated no less than 38 Panthers in its terrorist assault. Others died in jail. On January 23, six former Panthers, ranging in age from 58 to 71, were arrested in early-morning police raids, charged with a 1971 killing of a San Francisco policeman. The six are former Bay Area BPP organizers Richard Brown, Richard O'Neal, Francisco Torres, Ray Boudreaux, Hank Jones and Harold Taylor. Several of them were jailed in 2005 for refusing to testify in a grand jury frame-up on the same charges. In addition, two former New York Panthers who are already imprisoned on false charges of killing a New York policemen, Herman Bell and Jalil



Vanguarda Operária

Our comrades of the Liga Quarta-Internacionalista do Brasil brought Mumia campaign to Brazil. LQB sparked statewide work stoppage by SEPE teachers union in Rio de Janeiro (above) in April 1999 demanding "Freedom for Mumia Abu-Jamal."

Muntaqin (Anthony Bottom), were indicted.

The case against the "Panther 8" was built on "evidence" gained through torturing a group of 13 black activists arrested in New Orleans 34 years ago. A press release by the Center for Constitutional Rights notes, "In 1973, New Orleans police employed torture over the course of several days to obtain information from members of the Black Panthers who were stripped naked, beaten, blindfolded, covered in blankets soaked with boiling water, and had electric probes placed on their genitals, among other methods. A court ruled in 1974 that both San Francisco and New Orleans police had engaged in torture to extract a confession, and a San Francisco judge dismissed charges against three men in 1975 based on that ruling." The CCR compared this torture of African Americans in the U.S. with the "horrific" torture carried out by U.S. military and intelligence agencies in bases at Bagram, Abu Ghraib and Guantánamo.

The cops have also been on the warpath against Assata Shakur, who like several of the recently arrested former Panthers was part of the Black Liberation Army (BLA), an offshoot of the BPP. Shakur was wounded in a 1973 ambush by state troopers on the New Jersey Turnpike, and seized along with another BLA supporter, Sundiata Acoli. Acoli has spent the last three decades in jail, but Shakur escaped from prison and has since been living in Havana under the protection of the Cuban government. Labeled a "cop killer," like Mumia, because a state trooper was killed (by a police bullet) in the crossfire, even though she hadn't touched a gun and was shot with her hands up, Assata Shakur now has a \$1 million bounty on her head by the "Justice" Department. Ex-Panther Kathleen Cleaver compared this to the bounty by the state of Maryland on Harriet Tubman in the 1850s for her work in organizing



Rio de Janeiro CUT labor federation included demand for Mumia's freedom in general strike that November (right). Union banner also hails Zumbi, leader of Brazilian escaped slaves in late 1600s, and João Cândido, leader of 1910 revolt in Brazil's navy against whipping of black sailors.

the "Underground Railway" for escaped slaves.

Predictably, the government labeled the former Panthers "domestic terrorists," linking them to its "war on terror" whose purpose is to terrorize the world into submission to Washington's dictates. This underscores the fact, as we have repeatedly insisted, that imperialist war invariably brings with it police-state repression against the "enemy within." After the 11 September 2001 attacks, Arabs and those of Near Eastern and South Asian origin were particular targets. The net has since spread to undocumented workers from Mexico and Latin America, as the hated ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement) police of the Department of Homeland Security round up hundreds at a time in factory raids. To put a stop to the raids, to end the decades-long war on the Panthers, what's needed is sharp class struggle to defeat the imperialist war abroad and the bosses' war on workers, immigrants and minorities "at home."

Many of those protesting the glaring injustices in Mumia's case have called for a new trial, presuming (or hoping) that the hounding of this courageous fighter against injustice was an aberration. It is not. The drive to carry out a legal lynching of Mumia Abu-Jamal is not just another defense case. Many have compared it to the trial and imprisonment of the Scottsboro Boys in the 1930s, which summed up racist "justice" under Jim Crow segregation in the rural South. Mumia has come to symbolize the oppression of blacks under police siege in the Northern ghettos, but more than that he embodies the persecution of fighters for black freedom throughout capitalist America. He is the personification of the struggle against the racist death penalty that goes back to the chattel slavery on which this country was founded.

The relentless repression against Mumia is proof positive

that there is no justice for the poor, blacks and all the oppressed in the capitalist courts. This is particularly true for those seen by the rulers as a revolutionary threat to their system of exploitation of modern-day wage slaves. The Internationalist Group and League for the Fourth International have called to mobilize working-class action to demand freedom for Mumia Abu-Jamal. In April 1999, our comrades of the Liga Quarta-Internacionalista do Brasil initiated a statewide work stoppage by the teachers union in Rio de Janeiro, carried out in conjunction with the International Longshore and Warehouse Union which shut down U.S. West Coast ports, demanding that Mumia be freed. This was only a taste of the kind of class mobilization that will be necessary to win freedom for Jamal and put an end to the heinous system of state murder.

Already, dozens of unions and hundreds of union activists and leaders have come out in defense of Mumia Abu-Jamal. This includes not only West Coast and East Coast (ILWU and ILA) dock workers locals, the 1199 SEIU Hospital Workers union and several transit workers locals, but also local labor bodies such as the Alameda County Central Labor Council in California. The San Francisco Labor Council put forward a resolution to the 1999 AFL-CIO convention for "a nationwide day of labor action to free Mumia Abu-Jamal." But such motions, like the multitude of calls for union action against the draconian U.S.A. PATRIOT act, have remained a dead letter as the labor bureaucracy does everything to hogtie the power of the working class for fear that it could threaten the capitalist system it supports. Now more than ever, we call on working-class and union militants and all defenders of black, immigrant and democratic rights in general to mobilize the power of the working class to *free Mumia now!*

Mumia Targeted in Government War on the Panthers

At 4 a.m. on 9 December 1981, Mumia Abu-Jamal was shot in the chest by Philadelphia police. By that time, he had been in the crosshairs of the Philly cops and of the Federal Bureau of Investigations – as well as U.S. Army Military Intelligence, the Naval Investigative Service, the Air Force Office of Special Investigation and the U.S. Secret Service – for more than a dozen years, ever since he became a spokesman of the local Black Panther Party at the age of 15. In 1968, he was brutally beaten by racist thugs, including Philadelphia police, at a demonstration against Dixiecrat segregationist George Wallace. The 700 pages of (heavily expurgated) documents on him later turned over to Mumia under the Freedom

of Information Act show that by 1971, Mumia was placed on the FBI's Security Index (of people considered a threat to "national security") and in Category II of the Administrative Index (ADEX), listing those to be picked up and confined in concentration camps in a "national emergency."

Talking of a "war" on the Black Panther Party by federal, state and local governments is no exaggeration. By the late 1960s, the FBI's COINTELPRO (for Counterintelligence Program) had decided to concentrate on black radicals. A 4 March 1968 memo from FBI director J. Edgar Hoover declared: "The aim is to track, expose, disrupt, misdirect, discredit, or otherwise neutralize the activities of black nationalist organizations" (File 100-448006). Three weeks later, on March 25, Hoover instructed COINTELPRO to "prevent the coalition of militant black nationalist groups . . . prevent the rise of a 'messiah' who could unify and electrify the militant black nationalist movement . . . prevent the long-range growth of militant black nationalist organizations especially among the youth." The FBI chief went on:

"The Negro youth and moderate[s] must be made to understand that if they succumb to revolutionary teaching, they will be dead revolutionaries."

On April 4, Dr. Martin Luther King, long a target of intensive FBI surveillance, was gunned down in Memphis, Tennessee. The potential "messiah" gone, Hoover concentrated his fire on the Panthers, who he described in an interview with the *New York Times* (8 September 1968) as "the real long-range threat to American society."

Hoover's vow to turn black radicals into "dead revolutionaries" was no idle threat. In his book, *We Want Freedom: A Life in the Black Panther Party* (South End Press, 2004), adapted from his thesis for his Masters degree from California State University, which he obtained while on death row, Mumia Abu-Jamal quotes Attorney General John Mitchell, President Richard Nixon's top cop and hit man, who swore to "wipe out the Black Panther Party by the end of 1969." Mumia documents



Above: Port of San Francisco stands empty and idle during 24 April 1999 work stoppage that shut down ports along the U.S. West Coast demanding "Freedom for Mumia!" This is a taste of the proletarian power that will be needed to free this courageous champion of the oppressed and abolish the racist death penalty. Below: ILWU contingent chanted: "An injury to one is an injury to all, Free Mumia Abu-Jamal!"



how the feds used sinister "brownmail" of anonymous letters and smears trying to set one group of Panthers against another, leader against leader, husband and wife against each other. He discusses several cases of FBI agents and provocateurs in the BPP and other black groups who tried to instigate crazed terrorist plots and murdered Panthers.

These government plants included members of the US ("United Slaves") organization of Ron Karenga who as part of a US effort to gain control of the Black Studies Program at UCLA murdered L.A. Panther leaders Bunchy Carter and Jon Huggins. FBI fink George Sams in New Haven accused a new

Panther, Alex Rackley, of being an informer and murdered him, then tried to pin the killing on BPP chairman Bobby Seale and Ericka Huggins (whose husband Jon had been killed a couple of months earlier). Another government snitch, Louis Tackwood, set up a 1969 raid on L.A. BPP offices; in Chicago, an FBI fink, William O'Neal, vainly tried to get Chicago Panther chairman Fred Hampton and Bobby Rush (now a U.S. Congressman) to agree to a plot to bomb city hall. He provided the floor plan to facilitate the police/FBI raid in which Panthers Hampton and Mark Clark were slain.

In Philadelphia, the policy of local police under chief Frank Rizzo of having BPP members "arrested on every possible charge until they could no longer make bail" was held up as a model in COINTELPRO directives. In August 1970, Rizzo's racist cops raided the BPP offices and had the entire Panther leadership stripped naked and paraded on the streets to humiliate them. In Mumia's case, the FBI repeatedly tried to set him up: once for having an Exacto knife in his pocket when he was arrested; on another occasion searching him for weapons when he flew to a BPP meeting on the West Coast. In 1973, they tried to stick him with the murder of the British governor of Bermuda using the fact that the year before Jamal had taken courses at Vermont's Goddard College, "which attracts black extremists from Bermuda," according to a letter by the acting director of the FBI. All these attempts failed.

Jamal left the Panthers in 1970 as the BPP was falling apart in a split (stoked by FBI provocation) between the West Coast wing led by Huey Newton and Bobby Seale, which turned toward Democratic Party local politics, and the East Coast wing led by Eldridge Cleaver, who went into exile in Algeria. COINTELPRO was formally (but not actually) disbanded in 1974 after activists from Swarthmore College seized and publicized mountains of documents exposing the massive program of spying and provocation. In Philadelphia, Rizzo continued his own COINTELPRO operation, first as police chief from 1967 to 1972, and then as mayor during 1972-80, compiling files on 18,000 people. He ran the city as a mini-police state, subjecting the population – particularly black people – to a reign of unchecked cop power.

In *We Want Freedom*, Mumia writes that Philadelphia "is formally a northern city, but as it virtually straddles the mythical Mason-Dixon line, it is, in many ways, a southern city as well." Frank Rizzo ruled Philly "up North" in much the same way as Sheriff Eugene "Bull" Connor ran Birmingham, Alabama "down South." In 1967, Rizzo set his cops on 3,000 students protesting at the Board of Education, yelling: "Get their black asses!" In 1978, he sent an army of 600 police to assault a largely black Powelton Village commune of the MOVE organization, followers of the back-to-nature philosophy of John Africa who upheld the right of self-defense. TV footage and front-page photos in the *Philadelphia Inquirer* showed police viciously stomping MOVE member Delbert Africa in the head. In the crossfire, a cop was killed, leading to the imprisonment of 12 MOVE members, nine of whom are still behind bars 29 years later.

The rulers of the misnamed "city of brotherly love" have

long kept the black and Latino population down through unbridled police rule. In 1972, the state committee of the federal Civil Rights Commission called the Philadelphia police a "paramilitary institution," which acted like "a law unto itself." Police abuses in "Rizzotown" became so notorious in the late '70s that the federal Justice Department began an investigation. The feds produced a list of thousands of people, 271 pages of names, who had been beaten or shot by the police. The local Bar Association documented 299 killings by Philly cops during 1970-78 which they deemed illegal. And this reign of cop terror continued after Rizzo was replaced by a black Democratic mayor, Wilson Goode. In May 1985, city police, with Goode's approval, used C-4 explosives supplied by the FBI to firebomb a second MOVE commune, killing eleven black men, women and children, and burning down the whole Osage Avenue neighborhood in West Philadelphia.

After having been targeted by the FBI and local police as a spokesman for the Black Panther Party at the age of 15, Mumia Abu-Jamal earned the hatred of Rizzo and Philly cops for his coverage of police abuse as a radio reporter, particularly over the 1978 Powelton Village siege. Meanwhile, the police department was thrown into turmoil by an unprecedented 1979 federal lawsuit over years of brutality and rampant corruption on the force. Police officials were worried about an informer in their ranks leaking information to the Justice Department, particularly about the Center City district where cops were deeply involved in prostitution and drug rackets. Years later, in 2001, it was revealed that the cops organized a mob hit to take out the suspected leaker, police officer Daniel Faulkner. When Jamal showed up on the scene at 4 a.m. on 9 December 1981, seeing his brother, Billy Cook, staggering after being beaten by cops, the police saw their chance. With Mumia shot in the chest, they pinned the rebut of Faulkner on their nemesis.

Liberal Lawyers Betray Mumia

Philadelphia is an extreme example of how oppressed racial/ethnic minorities are ruled in racist capitalist America. With slavery defeated by the 1860s Civil War, and Jim Crow segregation formally outlawed following the 1960s Civil Rights Movement, across the country black ghettos and Latino barrios are treated by increasingly militarized police forces as occupied territories. Cops use "racial profiling" to "stop and frisk" dark-skinned people on the streets or in their cars: more than 500,000 people were searched by the New York Police Department last year alone, 85 percent of them blacks and Latinos. Vast numbers of minority youth are imprisoned (more than 2.1 million people are currently in jail across the country, a far higher percentage than in any other economically advanced country), then denied basic rights after release. Police hit squads murder "suspects" with abandon: a NYPD "street crime unit" gunned down Amadou Diallo with 41 shots in 1999 and the "club enforcement unit" assassinated Sean Bell with 50 shots in 2006.

The drive to lynch Mumia Abu-Jamal has been a judicial horror show from the start. After Mumia was shot in the chest that December 9, police picked him up and rammed his head into a telephone pole. When the police wagon arrived at

Jefferson Hospital, the cops threw him to the ground and beat him again. At the hospital doors Mumia was subjected to a new beating. His real "crime" in the eyes of the police is that he survived the attempt to murder him in the streets, so for the past 25 years they have been trying to lynch him in the courts. To accomplish this the government has fabricated a whole tissue of lies. "Mumia Abu-Jamal stood over Officer Faulkner and shot him in the face, mortally wounding him," claims House Resolution 1082. False. This story was concocted by prosecutor Joseph McGill, the bullet casings on the sidewalk do not match the gun Jamal was licensed to carry as a taxi driver, the bullet removed from Faulkner's body was a different caliber, the trajectory of the shot that killed the policeman is the opposite of someone standing over him, there were no divots (loose chips) in the sidewalk.

A cop later claimed that Mumia "confessed" in the police wagon, but his partner reported that Mumia said nothing. Two months later, at a conference of the police with the district attorney, a story was invented about Jamal "hollering" a confession in the hospital corridor, but this is denied by the physician, who said the patient had lost too much blood to be able to say anything loudly, and another police officer reported that that Mumia "made no comments." None of this was brought out at the 1982 trial, because the police claimed the officer was "not available" and Jamal's incompetent lawyer didn't subpoena him. Witnesses on the scene were coerced by the police into saying that Jamal shot Faulkner. A main prosecution witness, a prostitute, Cynthia White, was known to "turn tricks" for the police. A second prostitute, Pamela Jenkins, who was a key government witness in the federal investigation into the 39th Precinct corruption scandal, reported the police pressure to perjure herself and name Jamal as the shooter.

A third prostitute, Veronica Jones, said in a 1996 hearing that police coerced her into changing her account that she saw two men run from the scene; when she insisted on telling the truth about what happened, she was taken from the stand in handcuffs and jailed on an "outstanding warrant." Another witness, white cab driver Robert Chobert, later recanted key elements of his original testimony to an investigator for Jamal's defense team. His recantation was never brought out in court. Another eyewitness, taxi driver William Singletary, stated flatly in a deposition that Mumia Abu-Jamal did not shoot Faulkner, that the shooter was a black male wearing a green army jacket who then fled the scene. Altogether five witnesses reported seeing a man in a green army jacket on the scene, several saying they saw him fleeing. (Jamal had on a red quilted ski jacket with a blue stripe.) Yet Singletary was never called to testify by the prosecution or the defense, and others were not questioned about the man in the army jacket.

The vital importance of this became clear when one Arnold Beverly, who had previously told members of Jamal's defense team that he knew who shot the police officer, finally admitted, in June 1999, in a sworn and videotaped deposition, that "Jamal had nothing to do with the shooting" and that "I shot Faulkner in the face at close range." Beverly was wearing a green army jacket that

night. His deposition gives a detailed account of the events, and an explanation of why Faulkner was killed:

"I was hired, along with another guy, and paid to shoot and kill Faulkner. I had heard that Faulkner was a problem for the mob and corrupt policemen because he interfered with the graft and payoffs made to allow illegal activity including prostitution, gambling, drugs without prosecution in the center city area."

Several witnesses reported seeing two men fleeing the scene. The second one was quite likely Kenneth Freeman, who had been in a car with Mumia's brother, Billy Cook. Freeman, who was also wearing a green army jacket, later told Cook about "a plan to kill Faulkner. He told me that he was armed on that night and participated in the shooting."

The Beverly confession is consistent with the facts in the case, unlike the prosecution's story which is riddled with holes and contradictions, and also clears up the motive for the shooting of the police officer. Yet Jamal's own defense lawyers, Leonard Weinglass and Daniel Williams, refused to present his testimony. Nor did they call on Billy Cook to testify, nor did they ask Singletary about what he saw (in fact, lead attorney Weinglass undercut Singletary's credibility), nor did they question Chobert about his recantation of his previous testimony. Why not? Because they refused to raise at any time the innocence of Mumia Abu-Jama or allow any testimony on this vital issue. Rachel Wolkenstein, counsel of the Partisan Defense Committee, who had participated as one of the attorneys in the defense team, had interviewed Singletary and Beverly and insisted to Weinglass and Williams that their testimony must be presented in the 1999 federal habeas corpus appeal. In an August 2001 affidavit, Wolkenstein reported:

"Co-counsel Williams argued that if accepted, Beverly's account would mean that police had knowingly framed an innocent man, and Williams asserted that it was 'unbelievable' that police or the prosecution would do that."

At bottom, what was going on here was a battle over the fundamental issue of the capitalist state. In Rizzo's Philadelphia, of all places, it is utterly believable that the police and prosecution would frame up an innocent man. They did it all the time and everyone knew it. Even the federal government sued the Philly police department for its blatant corruption and systematic violation of rights. But as bourgeois liberals, Mumia's then-attorneys Weinglass and Williams refused to uphold his innocence, because to do so would go beyond the matter of strictly constitutional issues of law and inevitably point to the nature of the state as a machine for the suppression of the oppressed in the interests of the ruling class — and that they would not touch. On top of this, Williams published a vile "insider's account" of the Mumia defense, *Executing Justice* (2001), in which he outrageously declared, "I have no idea whether Mumia Abu-Jamal is innocent or guilty." For this outright treachery, Jamal rightly fired his backstabbing defense lawyers.

Mumia Abu-Jamal's new lawyers filed an amended appeal. As we wrote five years ago:

"The credibility of the charges brought in Jamal's new appeal is not why his former attorneys refused to touch them. It was

their credibility with the bourgeois legal system they didn't want to jeopardize. While lawyers are pledged to defend the interests of their clients, a trust that Weinglass and Williams horrendously betrayed as they stabbed Mumia in the back, they are also sworn in as 'officers of the court.' They can be disbarred or refused the right to representation in the courts, as President Clinton has discovered. But more fundamentally, they are an integral part of the bourgeois 'justice' system, which defends the interests of the exploiters and oppressors by meting out injustice to the exploited and oppressed. To argue that Mumia was framed by the police, prosecutors and courts as well as by the FBI – as he was – would mean indicting the capitalist state. That they would not do, because like the whole layer of liberals, rad-libs and reformists who only call for a 'new trial,' Weinglass and Williams peddle the illusion that you can get justice in the courts. Bottom line: they support the state that is hell-bent on silencing Mumia Abu-Jamal forever."

–"Battle Escalates for Jamal's Freedom," *The Internationalist* No. 13, May-June 2002

When in December 2005, the Third Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals in Philadelphia agreed to consider three of the claims raised by Mumia in his federal appeal, liberals who had been calling for a new trial proclaimed this a huge "victory." Yet the verdict of the court could well be to reinstate the death penalty lifted by U.S. District Court judge Yohn, for the three-judge panel is also hearing the prosecution's appeal. Or the judges could order a new sentencing hearing, in the present reactionary political climate, in which Democrats and Republicans compete over who is tougher on "terrorism." And if a new death sentence is handed down, there will be a fast track to execution.

The counts that the judges agreed to hear concern, first, the grossly racist jury-rigging in the original trial, when the prosecution struck eleven black potential jurors on peremptory challenges, and the final jury had a single black person, in a city that is over 40 percent black. Second is the question of judicial bias in the 1995 state appeals hearing before the same Judge Albert Sabo, the notorious "hanging judge" who presided over the original 1982 trial. Third is the issue of Prosecutor McGill's instructions to the jury, when he argued for conviction on the grounds that there would "appeal after appeal and perhaps there could be a reversal of the case, or whatever, so that may not be final." Even on these issues, the full story won't be heard. A court stenographer, Terri Maurer-Carter, revealed in 2001 that she overheard Sabo say of Jamal, "I'm going to help 'em fry the n---r." But her testimony is ruled out because it concerns the original trial, not the appeal. Nor will the videotape be shown where Philadelphia prosecutors were shown how to exclude black jurors.

What won't be considered at all includes:

- The state's manipulation of eyewitnesses into changing their testimony to finger Jamal.
- The state's suppression of the evidence of the shooter fleeing the scene.
- The state's use of a fabricated "confession," cooked up by the prosecutor and cops two months later.

- The state's destruction of crucial physical evidence, and keeping from the jury the fact the medical examiner's report said Faulkner was shot by a bullet of a different caliber than Jamal's gun.
- The hundreds of pages of documents showing longstanding police surveillance of and bias against Jamal.
- The denial of Jamal's constitutional right to representation by the multiple failures of his defense counsel at trial.
- The trial court's stripping of Jamal's right to defend himself.
- The court's denial of funds to hire experts to pursue potential issues and witnesses.
- The prosecution's use of Jamal's affiliation with the Black Panther Party a decade earlier to argue for the death penalty.

Mumia Abu-Jamal was sentenced to die because the government considered him a revolutionary threat to the system. When Jamal rose in court to read a statement protesting the guilty verdict, the judge let the prosecutor "cross-examine" him about a 1970 newspaper interview in which he quoted Mao Zedong's maxim, "Political power grows out of the barrel of a gun." Asked if he believed that, Mumia responded: "I believe that America has proven that quote to be true." He read from the rest of the interview to set the context, coming shortly after the police assassination of Fred Hampton and Mark Clark in Chicago. But the prosecution used this to claim that Jamal intended to kill a cop "way back then." To combat this blatantly political frame-up, limiting the defense to points of constitutional law won't do – it is necessary take on the system that vows to turn black radicals into "dead revolutionaries."

All Faith in the Power of the Masses, No Faith in the Capitalist Courts

Major courtroom battles always lay bare the class nature of society, for the judicial system is part of the machinery of the ruling class to ensure its domination. The Dreyfus case in France at the turn of the 20th century, in which a Jewish officer was the victim of an anti-Semitic frame-up; the Sacco-Vanzetti trial of two anarchist workers, arrested in the post-World War I red scare and executed in 1927; the 1930s trial of the Scottsboro Boys, exposing lynch law "justice" in the South; the trial and execution of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg at the height of the post-WWII anti-Soviet Cold War spy hysteria – all of these trials had to be fought politically, for fundamental social forces were involved. And in each case there were sharp differences over the defense, counterposing revolutionary politics to the dead-end of reformist and liberal legalism. Just as the racist frame-up and drive to execute Mumia Abu-Jamal is no aberration, neither is the betrayal by his former attorneys, whose loyalty to the bourgeoisie was greater than that to their client.

In the 1920s, in the Sacco-Vanzetti trial alongside the defense committee led by the International Labor Defense (ILD), headed by James P. Cannon, the founder of American Trotskyism, and linked to the Communist Party, a second defense committee was organized by the pro-capitalist union hacks of the American Federation of Labor, who accused the

CP of trying to get the defendants killed by demonstrating in the streets. In the Scottsboro case, the bourgeois liberals in the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) likewise denounced the Communist-led defense for calling for worldwide demonstrations on behalf of the nine black Alabama youths. In the 1950s, the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) refused to defend the Rosenbergs from McCarthyite witchhunting because they were accused of spying for the Soviet Union. And for years Amnesty International refused to defend Jamal because someone accused of killing a cop couldn't be a "prisoner of conscience."

Revolutionary Marxists are in favor of pursuing all legal avenues of defense against state repression in the capitalist courts. We do not object to Jamal's lawyers seeking a new trial and making appeals to every available instance in the judicial system, so long as there is a forthright defense against the repressors. But as communists we understand that the whole "justice" system is rigged against the poor, minority and working people for its job is to defend the interests of the ruling class against the victims of its system of oppression and exploitation. It is no accident that the courts stand behind the cops, because they are all part of the backbone of the capitalist state, which is defended by the capitalist politicians, bourgeois liberals, the bourgeoisie's "labor lieutenants" and petty-bourgeois reformist leftists alike.

These forces join together on the political platform of calling for a new trial, expressing the confidence (explicit or implicit) that Mumia could get a fair shake with a different judge. Social-democratic, Stalinist and pseudo-Trotskyist groups including Socialist Action, Workers World Party, International Socialist Organization, Revolutionary Communist Party and others all climbed on the "new trial" platform, appealing to the same liberal milieu that Mumia's former lawyers were looking to when they argued that asserting Mumia's innocence would not be "believable." Now that the legal team has changed, the leftist camp followers try to combine calls to "free Mumia" with appeals for a "new trial." Many of these same groups have in the past crossed the class line by bringing the courts into the labor movement, supporting suits against the unions over corruption in the case of groups like Teamsters for a Democratic Union and Miners for Democracy. This again shows their expectations of getting justice in the capitalist courts. Class-struggle union militants insist instead that "labor must clean its own house."

As did the International Labor Defense in the 1920s, we say that there can be no justice in the capitalist courts. Mumia's 1982 trial was a racist abomination, his liberal lawyers sabotaged his 1995 appeal, and even if a new trial were granted by the appeals court, it would hardly be fair. To defend Mumia it is necessary to mobilize the power of the working class in the streets, in the workplace – in sharp struggle, not just with paper resolutions – so that the rulers fear for their own system. That may have an effect on the courts, or the rulers may be so dead-set on carrying out their state murder – as was the case with Sacco and Vanzetti and the Rosenbergs – that they won't be stopped short of a revolutionary upheaval. But in every case,

the job of revolutionaries is, as Trotsky wrote in the founding program of the Fourth International: "To face reality squarely; not to seek the line of least resistance; to call things by their right names; to speak the truth to the masses, no matter how bitter it may be."

As James Cannon wrote in response to labor fakers who criticized the ILD during the fight to save Sacco and Vanzetti:

"The Sacco-Vanzetti case is no private monopoly, but an issue of the class struggle in which the decisive word will be spoken by the masses who have made this fight their own. It is, therefore, necessary to discuss openly the conflicting policies which are bound up with different objectives.

"One policy is the policy of the class struggle. It puts the center of gravity in the protest movement of the workers of America and the world. It puts all faith in the power of the masses and no faith whatever in the justice of the courts. While favoring all possible legal proceedings, it calls for agitation, publicity, demonstrations – organized protest on a national and international scale. It calls for unity and solidarity of all workers on this burning issue, regardless of conflicting views on other questions. This is what has prevented the execution of Sacco and Vanzetti so far. Its goal is nothing less than their triumphant vindication and liberation.

"The other policy is the policy of 'respectability,' of the 'soft pedal' and of ridiculous illusions about 'justice' from the courts of the enemy. It relies mainly on legal proceedings. It seeks to blur the issue of the class struggle, it shrinks from the 'vulgar and noisy' demonstrations of the militant workers and throws the mud of slander on them....

"The conscious proletarian elements with whom we identify ourselves unconditionally, are for the first policy. The bourgeois elements, and those influenced by them, are for the second."

–James P. Cannon, "Who Can Save Sacco and Vanzetti?" *International Labor Defender*, January 1927, in *Notebook of an Agitator* (1958)

We demand that the MOVE 9, the Panther 8, Sundiata Acoli and all former Panthers still behind bars be immediately released! Hands off Assata Shakur! Mobilize workers' power to free Mumia NOW! ■

Protest Exclusion of SL/PDC

As we go to press we have learned that the San Francisco-based Mobilization to Free Mumia Abu-Jamal, whose director is Jeff Mackler of Socialist Action, has required that all speakers at their events refrain from criticizing others in the Mumia defense "movement"; and that it has excluded the Partisan Defense Committee and Spartacist League from speaking at their events. At the same time, Mackler publishes an article praising the federal appeals court panel as preparing the way for a new trial and freedom for Mumia! So while fostering illusions in the racist bourgeois injustice system, these reformists carry out anti-communist exclusions. The Internationalist Group vigorously protests this ban whose purpose is to attract anti-communist liberals who who refuse to call for Mumia's freedom.

Against the *Tortillazo*, Impose Workers Control!

Mexico's Tortilla Crisis, Product of Capitalism

The following is a translation of a leaflet by the Grupo Internacionalista distributed at a January 31 protest in Mexico City.

2007 began with a spectacular increase in the price of tortillas, a staple of the Mexican diet, as basic as bread in the United States. After going from 6 to 7 pesos per kilo (roughly 25 to 30 cents a pound) during November and December of last year, by the second week of January the price of tortillas had shot up to 12 pesos (50 cents a pound) in many markets in Mexico City and as much as 18 pesos (75 cents a pound) in some cities around the country. Forgetting his previous declared opposition to price controls, in order to escape the prospect of massive protests the new government of Felipe Calderón announced a price ceiling of 8.5 pesos. In reality, this was not a blow against speculation but a 40-percent rise in the price of tortillas, on top of a 28 percent hike in the price of subsidized milk. The new price for tortillas was labeled “voluntary,” and it only affected a small part of the market. Not by accident, Calderón was accompanied by various tortilla manufacturing magnates as he announced the measure.

Now the Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD) led by Andrés Manuel López Obrador and the Broad Progressive Front (FAP – consisting of the PRD, the Party of Labor and Democratic Convergence) in “strategic alliance” with “independent” labor groups have announced a “mega-march” to protest against the price increases for basic commodities. But what is this *popular front* calling for? The bourgeois “opposition” which is calling this demonstration announced that it would undertake legal proceedings “against whoever is responsible” for hoarding and speculation – as if they didn’t know who the people are! They are also proposing to set up a trust fund to subsidize tortillas, such as existed in the period when the Conasupo (National Company for Popular Supplies) handed out “*tortibonos*” (cards entitling families to a certain quantity of tortillas per day, according to the number of family members). But beware. According to the neo-liberal schema, these reduced prices would not be for everyone but only for the neediest. In fact, López Obrador is nothing but a “neo-liberal with a human face,” and his aim is to control the protests and keep them circumscribed within the capitalist framework.

An increase in the price of tortillas is a brutal attack on the livelihood of the working population. For many families with limited resources, tortillas constitute a large part of their diet. And the reality is that the starvation policies of the new regime only accentuate what at bottom is nothing but an inescapable trait of capitalism. For that reason, in order to combat the *tortillazo* (the tortilla attack) it is necessary to mobilize the workers against the capitalist system itself. In order to make genuine

price control a reality, it is urgently necessary to form *worker-neighborhood supply committees* with the power to shut down, on their own, businesses which do not respect the specified price, to ensure an adequate supply of flour and to seize the stocks from the hoarders. And since those who are really behind the tortilla war are the big monopolies, it is necessary to impose *workers control over the whole chain of production and distribution* of grain, flour and dough. To combat the speculative networks, it’s necessary to impose *workers inspection of the accounting books of the agro-industrial giants*.

We also fight for a *sliding scale of wages in order to counter the effects of inflation* (wages should be raised according to the rate of inflation), and for a *sliding scale of working hours*, in order to put an end to unemployment and to distribute the available work among all workers. Such measures will not be undertaken by any capitalist government, whether of the PAN or the PRD and its allies. Various components of the FAP, such as the capitalist farmers of El Barzón for example, are linked (although in a subordinate fashion) to the agro-industrial chains. We do not call for action by the PAN regime, which wants to impose a value-added (sales) tax even on medicines and food. In order to combat the government policy of price hikes, it is necessary to *break with the López Obrador popular front* and mobilize the working masses under the leadership of a *revolutionary workers party* that fights for a *workers and peasants government* to undertake *international socialist revolution*.

This crisis has been generated not only in Mexico. Among the various factors behind the increasing cost of tortillas, the rise in price of corn on the international market has been cited, due in part to the increasing use of the grain to produce ethanol. In addition, there is the increase in price of natural gas and gasoline, and other raw materials. While all these factors have had an effect, the speed of the price increase for tortillas is the result of a shortage of white corn flour, due to hoarding by the large companies that monopolize the sector: Minsa, owned by Raymundo Gómez Flores (former head of the Banca Cremi banking chain), Grupo Maseca (Gruma) of Roberto González Barrera (owner of the Banorte bank) and the international agro-industrial giant Cargill. This *oligopoly* is the direct result of the privatization of the industry carried out in the last two PRI administrations, of Carlos Salinas de Gortari (1988-94) and Ernesto Zedillo (1994-2000), and more generally, of the policies implemented as part of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA).

According to journalist Luis Hernández Navarro, from 1994 to date, the price of tortillas has gone up by 738 percent (*La Jornada*, 16 January). Over the same period, the mini-

mum wage has only tripled. What this means is that today, the minimum wage buys *less than half* of what it did 13 years ago. With its economic policies, the new government is really taking tortillas from the tables of millions of working people and urban and rural poor. But the alternative is not to go back to the old PRI system, as the PRD suggests. Hernández Navarro offers an idyllic description of that “model”:

“In the name of modernization, the new model dismantled a framework in which the state regulated the market by establishing price guarantees and regulating imports....

“The former model stimulated production by guaranteeing farmers a fixed price for their products, providing credit and technical assistance. In order to protect internal prices, the government controlled how much grain entered the country through export permits. Conasupo bought up about 15-20 percent of the harvest and through its affiliates distributed it to remote communities that lacked sufficient supplies.”

The reality is that Conasupo was notorious for corruption. When it was headed by Raúl Salinas, it served as his source for his illicit funds, using practices such as importing and selling contaminated milk. The producers were subject to blackmail by PRI managers who controlled the silos and the purchase of the grain harvest. On the other hand, neither the poverty of small peasants nor forced migration began 15 years ago.

One only has to read the book of José Luis Calva, *Crisis agrícola y alimentaria en México, 1982-1988* (Fontamara, 1988), to see how the consumption of beef, pork, fish, beans and bananas dropped by over 25 percent from 1981 to 1986, while grain imports shot up. What is true is that with NAFTA, the Mexican agricultural crisis turned into a disaster that has depopulated a large part of the countryside of its men and youth. It would be normal for a capitalist country, and all the more so for an agricultural country like Mexico, to maintain reserves of basic grains in order to overcome periodic droughts and market fluctuations such as are currently taking place. But Mexico cannot do this today because corn production has been ruined by massive imports. Calderón’s “solution” is to intensify this ruin by importing 650,000 tons of duty-free rice. In doing so, he is speeding up the timetable laid out by NAFTA, which calls for eliminating import duties on grain starting in January 2008.

Proletarian revolutionaries, both in Mexico and the United States and Canada, opposed NAFTA as a colonialist treaty harmful to the working people of all three countries. We also opposed the privatization of state enterprises such as Conasupo and its corn processing affiliate, MINSA. But it is not a matter of yearning for a “golden age” when Mexico’s capitalist economy consisted mainly of state-owned companies. Mexican agriculture has always been subject to the laws of the capitalist market. Even before flour production was privatized in 1993, Mexico’s capitalist governments were imposing industrialized flour to replace the production of tortilla flour in small shops. Moreover, by keeping the cost of tortillas low and the price of corn high, it was subsidizing Mexican industrialists by lowering the cost of reproduction of “its” workforce. In other words, they were using “food sovereignty” to keep workers drowning in poverty due to low wages.

The current crisis recalls the situation in May-June 1996, when masses of desperate residents of working-class suburbs of Monterrey and Durango assaulted freight trains because they were starving. The bourgeois populist-nationalist PRD of Andrés Manuel López Obrador at most would beg the flour cartel to soften its monopolistic practices. But in order to smash these monopolies and expropriate them in the interests of the working people, imposing workers control, it’s necessary to undertake a struggle for a workers and peasants government. Only through *permanent revolution* that extends north of the border, from Oaxaca to *Oaxacalifornia* and the industrial heartland of imperialism, which mobilizes the mass of poor peasants and Indians under the leadership of a class-conscious proletariat and its vanguard party, will it be possible to emerge from this hell of poverty and turn starvation into a bad memory of the past. ■

Don’t Beg Congress...

continued from page 34

many continue to support the U.S. occupation of Afghanistan today. As then-Trotskyist James Burnham noted in a 1938 pamphlet, *The People’s Front: The New Betrayal*:

“Most significant of all is the application of the People’s Front policy to ‘anti-war work.’ Through a multitude of pacifist organizations, and especially through the directly controlled American League against War and Fascism, the Stalinists aim at the creation of a ‘broad, classless, People’s Front of all those opposed to war.’... They rule out in advance the Marxist analysis of war as necessarily resulting from the inner conflicts of capitalism and therefore genuinely opposed only by revolutionary class struggle against the capitalist order; and, in contrast, maintain that all persons, from whatever social class or group, whether or not opposed to capitalism, can ‘unite’ to stop war....

“The truth is, of course, that through the People’s Front, the Stalinists are making ready to support the government, and to recruit the masses for such support, in the new imperialist war.”

And, indeed, by the time the imperialist Second World War came around, a war for redivision of the planet between the various colonial powers, the former “peace movement” lined up solidly behind Franklin D. Roosevelt and the war aims of U.S. imperialism.

The fundamental truth proclaimed by Lenin in World War I remains valid today. As the Bolshevik leader wrote in his 1916 pamphlet, *Socialism and War*: “A revolutionary class cannot but wish for the defeat of its government in a reactionary war, and cannot fail to see that the latter’s military reverses must facilitate its overthrow.... Socialists must explain to the masses that they have no other road of salvation except the revolutionary overthrow of ‘their own’ governments, and that must take advantage of these governments’ embarrassments in the present war precisely for this purpose.” Then and now, the road to peace lies through international socialist revolution, and to lead that struggle we must above all build a revolutionary workers party and reforge a genuinely Trotskyist Fourth International. ■

Partial Decriminalization of Abortion in Mexico City, A Limited Bourgeois Reform

Mexico: For Free Abortion On Demand!

MEXICO CITY, April 24 – This evening, a plenary session of the Legislative Assembly of the Federal District (ALDF, Mexico City’s municipal parliament) approved, by a wide margin, a reform of the current abortion law. The most significant change is a new phrasing of Article 144 of the Penal Code, which henceforth defines abortion as “the termination of a pregnancy after the twelfth week of gestation” (*Milenio*, 20 April). In other words, ending a pregnancy during the first three months will no longer be penalized, because it will not be legally defined as an abortion. Because of another legislative reform, abortions will be provided free of charge to women who request them at the city government’s health care facilities (hospitals and clinics).

This measure is of a limited character: abortion in the second and third trimester remains a criminal offense – the reform only reduces the prison term for women who exercise their right to terminate an unwanted pregnancy. Moreover, young women under the age of 18 will be required to obtain their parents’ permission, an ominous and potentially deadly restriction. Nevertheless, the reform has provoked a frenzied reactionary hysteria from the clergy and its political representatives. Feminist groups, on the other hand, declared a victory. Throughout Latin America, the partial decriminalization of abortion in Mexico City is being viewed as crack in the wall of Catholic reaction that could open the way toward bringing down the prohibition of abortion in Brazil and other countries on the continent.

Against the religious obscurantists and political reaction-



Eduardo Verdugo/AP

Women demonstrate in favor of decriminalizing abortion in first trimester of pregnancy. Beyond “freedom of choice,” the liberation of women requires socialist revolution.



Internationalist Committee at College of Science and Humanities-South in Mexico City. Banner reads, “Free Abortion on Demand for Anyone Who Requests It!”

aries, as well as against the timid bourgeois reformers, all of them oppressors of women, we internationalist communists fight for the unrestricted right to *free abortion on demand*, at

the woman's sole discretion, with high quality medical care, at any point during the pregnancy. We also demand the broad distribution, free of charge, of contraceptives, as well as access to safe medications for early termination of an incipient pregnancy. At the same time, we emphasize that the complete liberation of women from social oppression can only be achieved through the destruction of capitalism, eliminating the poverty that makes it impossible for millions of mothers to properly feed their children. This would enable women's emancipation from the slavery of the family, with their full participation in work outside of the home, in conditions of equality and with the socialization of domestic chores. *For women's liberation through socialist revolution!*

Against this limited reform, the National Action Party (PAN) of Felipe Calderón, the Mexican Catholic Church, and a raft of ultra-reactionary and quasi-fascist organizations, like Provida (a "pro-life" organization linked to the clergy), have launched a crusade under the slogan of "protecting the innocent." Pope Benedict XVI climbed aboard, dispatching Colombian cardinal Alfonso López Trujillo to Mexico as a special anti-abortion emissary from the Vatican, and sending a letter to the Mexican Conference of Bishops. Cardinal Norberto Rivera, the primate of the Mexican bishops, threatened supporters of legal abortion with eternal hellfire in his sermons. Now the church hierarchy is threatening to excommunicate anyone who votes for decriminalization. The defense of "family values" led by clerical reaction has sharply revealed its true character: it is an attack on the most basic rights of women, and a buttress of the aberrant macho stereotypes that serve to "justify" women's oppression in the confines of the family, a key institution of bourgeois society that serves to inculcate the conservative values that sustain it.

The legislative initiatives that converged in this reform were first presented by deputies of the Revolutionary Institutional Party (PRI) and the Social-Democratic and Peasant Alternative. The final draft came from the parliamentary fraction of the Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD), the dominant force in the ALDF, while the hidebound reactionaries of the PAN howled with consternation. Nevertheless, it is significant that throughout the six-year administration of Mexico City by Andrés Manuel López Obrador (AMLO), the standard bearer of the PRD, a bourgeois populist-nationalist party, as head of government he did nothing to advance abortion rights. In addition to not wanting to endanger his presidential ambitions, and it turns out that AMLO is a great friend of the ultra-reactionary cardinal Rivera.

In the final analysis, the oppression of women is a direct product of the class divisions in society. Because of this, even though the right to abortion is an elementary democratic right for women, a merely democratic struggle limited to the institutions of capitalist "democracy" will not suffice to achieve it. In fact, all the bourgeois parties oppose full legalization of abortion. Communist legislative deputies would have voted critically in favor of the minimal reform passed by the Legislative Assembly, which partially decriminalized abortion, while at the same time proposing the complete elimination of

the anti-abortion law. But the question goes beyond legislative action. In reality, the struggle for women's rights requires a social revolution, which today can only be socialist.

The fight for women's emancipation confronts the combined forces of state repression, clerical reaction and its bloodthirsty mobs, macho violence in the family and in practically all spheres of life, the burden of ignorance, obscurantism and religious prejudices, as well as the decrepit state of the health care system, which offers services of very deficient quality to the workers, and practically nothing to the unemployed. It is for this reason that the fight for free, safe abortion on demand is a fundamental component of the fight for international socialist revolution.

Capitalism Means Hunger and Death

Until now in Mexico, abortion had been legally prohibited, with few exceptions. In the capital city, these were limited to cases of pregnancy as the result of rape, when the woman's life was in danger, or when the fetus was gravely deformed. Under these conditions, a clandestine abortion carries serious risks: the woman risks her life due to hemorrhage or massive infection. Furthermore, she and those who perform the operation are considered criminals by the state. Police periodically raid the clandestine clinics, arresting women, doctors and nurses.

In spite of all this, the practice of abortion is quite common. This is a sign of the real desperation of women who face the terrible choice of running the risk of an abortion or bearing unwanted children they can not support. In Mexico, where the government's own statistics admit that half of the population is mired in poverty, and 20 percent are in destitution, the problem of feeding another child is far from being an abstract dilemma. As soon as the new Calderón administration took office, January's tortilla crisis caused a 40 percent rise in prices, while Congress eliminated milk subsidies. So as the government is literally taking basic foods off the plates of the urban and rural poor, the question of whether or not to bear children is not limited to the "right to choose." This makes the talk of "saving babies" particularly obscene in a country where abortion is a crime, while 30 of every 1,000 infants die (when in Cuba the ratio is less than 6 per thousand), mostly due to gastrointestinal infections and illnesses that could be eradicated through vaccination.

The most reliable statistics indicate that there are more than one million abortions each year in Mexico. The overwhelming majority of women who decide to have an abortion must administer it themselves, or surreptitiously turn to facilities where poorly-qualified staff perform the procedure, and where they are often treated like garbage. According to statistics from the United Nations, 106,000 women are hospitalized every year in Mexico due to unsafe abortions. In the capital, complications of botched abortions are the third leading cause of maternal death. According to data from the Secretary of Health and Welfare, 100 women die every year in this country from unsafe abortions (and the true levels must

be much higher than the official government statistics). All this when, if performed properly, abortion is one of the simplest and safest medical procedures.

These statistics reflect, once again, the oppression characteristic of class society. Who are the women who die from the effects of unsanitary clandestine abortions? The wealthy, who can pay to check themselves into a foreign hospital? Obviously not. The ones who suffer the consequences of the criminalization of abortion are the poor women, and everyone knows it.

The fight for the decriminalization of abortion in Mexico's capital has a long history. Back in 1983 a bill was drafted to legalize abortion in the first trimester, but it was defeated. In 1979, the short-lived parliamentary fraction of the Revolutionary Workers' Party (the PRT, which falsely advertised itself as Trotskyist), along with various feminists from the Communist Party, sponsored a bill for "voluntary motherhood" that called for the complete legalization of abortion. Just like today, reactionary forces organized street protests, and even organized physical attacks against defenders of this reform.

In the current case, the limitations of this amendment to the law are not restricted to the continued classification of abortion as a criminal offense. Even when carrying out the abortion is legal, there's no guarantee that a woman could obtain one in an unrestricted and effective manner. For example, it's now legal throughout the country for a woman to have an abortion when the pregnancy is the result of a rape. (Significantly, the clerical reactionaries oppose even this.) However, even when a woman who has become pregnant due to rape gets a court order authorizing her abortion, hospital authorities and the government "Comprehensive Family Development" (DIF) agency often refuse to carry out the order.

Take the very well-known case of Paulina. Paulina Ramírez Jacinto was raped at the age of 13, but nevertheless was denied an abortion in Mexicali. The bishop and the governor of Northern Baja California state personally intervened to dissuade her, and when this did not succeed, to prevent her from terminating the pregnancy. A report from Human Rights Watch (March 2006) entitled "The Second Assault: Obstructing Access to Legal Abortion after Rape in Mexico" presents the cases of women who suffered similar ordeals in the states of Guanajuato, Yucatán and the capital district during 2005. A social worker in Mérida who helped a twelve year old girl who got pregnant from a rape gave this testimony:

"The authorities say: 'it's not possible.' I show them the article [of the state penal code] where it says that [abortion in the case of rape] is among the exceptions. ... In the DIF [where I was working] they wanted her to have the child by any means. ... [The authorities] would say that now many months had passed [so that the abortion would be impossible by that point] and I told them: 'That's because you have told me no for so many months'."

Even in the United States, where abortion is legal, actual access to abortion is heavily restricted. Just last week, the Supreme Court banned a third-trimester abortion procedure (intact dilation and extraction), which could open the door to a reactionary piecemeal assault on the right to abortion. A recent

case that demonstrates the obstacles facing women who want to terminate a pregnancy is that of the young immigrant woman, Amber Abreu, who is now facing criminal charges in the state of Massachusetts (under an archaic statute from the 1840's!) for an attempted abortion. As our comrades of the Internationalist Group wrote in an article in her defense (see page 48):

"The case of Amber Abreu highlights the fact that what's at issue is not just the legal 'right to choose,' it's about the actual access to abortion services. In many states laws have been passed to prevent teenage women from terminating a pregnancy without notifying their parents. Clinics have been besieged by right-wing 'god squads' seeking not only to harass women seeking an abortion, but also to shut the facilities down. In several Midwestern and Mountain states this has succeeded to the point that there are only one or two abortion clinics left. On top of this, the anti-abortion bigots resort to outright murder, posting the names and addresses of abortion doctors on the Internet, shooting them in their homes and bombing clinics. Right-wing terrorist John Salvi killed two workers at a Planned Parenthood abortion clinic in Brookline and wounded five others in 1994. The Internationalist Group calls for militant working-class defense of abortion clinics."

Now in Mexico, the reactionaries are going to turn to such terrorist methods, as Jorge Serrano Limón of Provida has already indicated. In reality, the struggle has already begun: no matter what the law may say, we will have to face all kinds of legal and extralegal roadblocks that they intend to put in the way, as well as to defend the medical staff and women at the clinics and hospitals where abortions are performed. No doubt reactionary doctors will say that they are "conscientious objectors" to refuse to perform abortions, like they did to Paulina in Mexicali. No way! It will be necessary to mobilize the class-conscious workers, the women, and all those who defend democratic rights to enforce this right and guarantee the unrestricted access to abortion. Indeed, the fight for free abortion on demand as part of a health care system of the highest quality is a fundamental concern for the *working class* as a whole.

For Women's Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!

The legal ban on abortion in Mexico offers a clear example of the level of oppression suffered by women in this country. Whether a woman gives birth or not must be for her alone to decide, not the Pope, nor the ruling class politicians, reactionary judges or anyone else. "We give birth, we decide," is a slogan chanted by many women who fight for this fundamental right. In this they are completely correct. Yet the fight for free abortion on demand is not a cause that only concerns women, but one affecting all working people. Women's oppression will not be abolished by a series of legislative measures. To realize their emancipation, it is necessary to destroy the foundations of this oppression: private property and the institution of the family that relegates women to domestic chores and childrearing. It will take the socialization of all the functions of the family to liberate women from this burden.

It's not only for Marxists that the degree of women's emancipation from their particular oppression is the most precise

index of society's degree of emancipation from oppression in general. The division of society into classes and the consequent appearance of private property brought with it the need to guarantee the transmission of inherited property from the propriety-owning man to "his" sons. This meant that women were separated from social production, and relegated to work in the home and the difficult labor of child-rearing. Converted into the property of men, imprisoned in the confines of the family, the woman has historically been oppressed because of her gender. If she also belonged to an economically oppressed social class, as a slave, serf, or worker, and/or a group subject to ethnic-racial discrimination, she suffers *double* and even *triple* oppression.

In recent decades, the steady reduction of workers' wages due to a bosses' offensive has resulted in the reintroduction of an ever-greater number of women into social production because of their need for economic survival and the capitalists' drive to reduce the costs of production. It's no accident that the great majority of Mexico's *maquiladoras* (free trade zone factories) hire women almost exclusively, whom they keep oppressed and terrorized by a multitude of means (the murders in Ciudad Juárez, for example, should be seen in this context). The integration of women into social production under capitalism, which is also an indispensable condition for their social emancipation, implies that macho oppression in the family is added to the exploitation that women suffer as workers. After working outside of the home for starvation wages, the woman must return home, and do all the housework.

Working women are not only oppressed by preventing them from ending an unwanted pregnancy, but also by being fired from their jobs for having children that they did want. As we wrote in our article "Mexican Maquiladora Workers Fight for Their Rights" (*The Internationalist* No. 1, January-February 1997), "It is standard procedure for *maquiladora* operators all along the [US/Mexico] border to administer pregnancy tests to female job applicants as well as women employees, in order to evade the provisions of Mexico's labor code, which provides for three months paid maternity leave and protection for pregnant women from dangerous tasks." Thus we Marxists who fight for the right to end an unwanted pregnancy also defend the right of women who want to have children.

It's important to note that despite the fact that the bourgeoisie only employs women in order to better exploit them, in times of working-class insurgency, when the oppressed masses are rebelling, the entire capitalist class takes sides against the conquests of women, because their own privileges are threatened. Under the Nazi regime, for example, the product of the German bourgeoisie's need to destroy the powerful German workers' organizations, the campaign to push women workers out of the factories and drag them back into the home reached its climax. The Nazi slogan for women was "*Kinder, Kirche, Küche*" (children, church, and kitchen). This could be repeated today without the slightest objection by one Carlos Abascal, a member of the sinister fascistic organization, El Yunque. A repugnant macho Mexican saying, "Keep your woman, like your rifle, always loaded and behind the door," echoes that of the Nazis. That the woman must remain

"loaded," that is, pregnant, gives an accurate accounting of the role that this society assigns to her: as a mere reproductive apparatus chained in the prison of the nuclear family.*

No matter how moderate the reform now passed by the ALDF may be, the reactionary clergy did not hesitate to attack. Bishop Felipe Arizmendi has threatened to excommunicate the "exterminator assassins"; Cardinal Rivera appealed to halt the "evil onslaught." The current deputy general secretary of the PAN, Abascal (who was interior secretary and minister of labor in the previous government of Vicente Fox) shamelessly declares that women should stop working outside the home and return to being "the heart of the household." On the Televisa network's news program *Primero Noticias*, Abascal showed a series of grotesque images of babies cut to pieces, falsely saying that this is what would be caused on a massive scale by the passage of the partial decriminalization bill.

Along with the processions that these reactionary forces have organized in Guadalajara, Querétaro, and the capital, now we must add the declaration from president Felipe Calderón and his wife "in favor of life," a joint statement by Protestant and Catholic churches against abortion, and the many activities and threats from reactionary clerical organizations like *Provida* and the Knights of Columbus. In a country where soldiers frequently rape and impregnate indigenous women, where military men raped and assassinated Ernestina Asunción, an elderly Náhuatl Indian woman from Zongolica in the state of Veracruz, when even the president of the Republic and the ombudsman responsible for "human rights" pardoned the rapists, a country where scores of Mexican women die every year from the complications of clandestine abortions, it is outrageous to hear these murderous government officials smear those who struggle for the right to safe abortions as "assassins."

The reactionary attack "in defense of the family" and of the bourgeois ideology of *machismo* is also accompanied by attacks on the rights of homosexuals, and puts the basic democratic principle of separation of church and state in question. At the beginning of this year, the Catholic clergy ranted and raved against the passage by the ALDF of a "civil union" law that granted homosexuals certain elementary rights like the right of inheritance and the right to health benefits due to either of the couple. This new law, however, does not recognize the right of gays and lesbians to adopt children, among other things. As Marxists, we insist: *Full democratic rights for gays and lesbians! State and church out of the bedroom!*

The capitalist nuclear family is a fundamental element of the reproduction of the social order. As such, it is essential for the production of the next generation of the exploited and likewise of the exploiters, and consequently for the transmission of the values of bourgeois society. To allow women to decide whether or not to get pregnant makes the reactionaries tremble precisely because it puts into question the ideology fundamental to their domination, consequently endangering the sacred rights of private property.

This is why even nationalist ex-leftists who have made their peace with the bourgeoisie often turn into ferocious opponents of the right to abortion. The most notorious example

of recent times is Sandinista leader Daniel Ortega, who was elected a second time as president of Nicaragua (with a former *contra* as his vice-president) while trumpeting his new-found Christian faith, and backed a law to criminalize abortion without exceptions. It's notable that the three countries in Latin America where the termination of a pregnancy is totally illegal, even in cases of rape and the endangerment of the mother's life – Nicaragua, El Salvador and Chile – are the very same countries where counterrevolutionaries backed by Yankee imperialism have triumphed.

Women's liberation requires abolition of private property in the means of production through a socialist revolution, which in turn will establish the material conditions for genuine emancipation. We fight for the mobilization of the proletariat, not only for full legalization of abortion, but also for the establishment of 24-hour daycare centers under union control. In Mexico, a workers and peasants government would make a systematic effort to liberate women from their enslavement by collectivizing the chores that this entails: it would establish not only daycare centers and schools but also collective cafeterias and laundries. On the foundation of a collectivized economy, we can lay the framework for overcoming the misery that has been the fate of the masses of toilers and indigenous peoples in Latin America since time immemorial.

The connection between the fight for elementary democratic rights and the need for socialist revolution is an integral part of our Trotskyist perspective and program for permanent revolution, which in turn implies the international extension of the revolution to the imperialist centers, to smash the counter-revolution and mobilize their enormous economic resources for the benefit of all the exploited. We communists of the Internationalist Group and the League for the Fourth International dedicate ourselves to making this perspective a reality. We invite you to join us in this struggle. *Free and safe abortions on demand! For women's liberation through socialist revolution!* ■

Battle in Venezuela...

continued from page 80

RCTV as well as other media conglomerates acted as key players in the April 2002 coup d'état against the Chávez government, which had become the *bête noir* of Washington and the bulk of the Venezuelan bourgeoisie. They didn't just back the coup, flocking to the Miraflores presidential palace to show support for the coup's figurehead leader Pedro Carmona, head of the Venezuelan chamber of commerce (Fedecámaras), who in the 47 hours he held sway abolished the National Assembly and Supreme Court, removed popularly elected governors and decreed naked military rule. The TV channels played an active part in preparing and carrying out the putsch by helping orchestrate a counterrevolutionary "general strike" and spreading disinformation about Chávez supporters shooting demonstrators. The reality was the opposite: those killed on 11 April 2002 were mostly *chavistas* gunned down by snipers of the Caracas Municipal Police controlled by the right-wing opposition. And when on April 13 thousands of Chávez supporters poured down into the center of the capital from the hillside

shantytowns to oppose the coup, the media maintained a total news blackout.

All of the counterrevolutionary media should have been seized the moment the coup was defeated, their executives arrested and placed on trial. Where charges were proven, they along with the other main coup plotters should have received appropriately severe sentences. This is a matter elementary military defense against imperialist-sponsored counterrevolution, which must be crushed with vigorous measures. We do not look to the Chávez government to carry out such measures, since it is a capitalist regime, resting on the bourgeois army. Proclaiming a "Bolivarian Revolution" (after Simón Bolívar, leader of the 19th-century Latin American struggle for independence from Spain) and more recently vowing to build "21st-century socialism," former army colonel Chávez has struck a radical pose, even declaring his admiration of the Russian revolutionary Leon Trotsky. Yet he has repeatedly sought to conciliate and buy off the right-wing opposition. Revolutionary Trotskyists, in contrast, seek to mobilize the mass of the working people to carry out revolutionary measures against the forces of counterrevolution through popular tribunals and workers councils (soviets) built in the struggle for proletarian revolution.

By no means do Trotskyists defend every measure by the Chávez government. He has set up a United Socialist Party of Venezuela (PSUV), which is a bourgeois state party, in order to keep various would-be socialist groups and the unions under the government's thumb. In 2000, he tried to impose state supervision of the unions by means of a plebiscite, which we opposed at the same time as we denounced the pro-imperialist policies of the misleaders of the CTV (Confederación de Trabajadores de Venezuela), then the largest labor federation. More recently Chávez has accused the leftist-led UNT (Unión Nacional de Trabajadores), now the country's leading union grouping, of being "poisoned" for not immediately agreeing to "subordinate itself" to the PSUV, even though the UNT leadership called to vote for Chávez in the presidential elections last December. In January, Chávez got the National Assembly to allow him to rule by decree for 18 months, in order to institute "revolutionary laws." The national press law makes it a violation to insult government institutions (like the army or head of state). We oppose all of these moves, which have a common bonapartist character, and fight for independence of the workers movement from capitalist state control.

But on the issue of the press and the refusal to renew the broadcast license of RCTV, our complaint is that in leaving control of the air waves in the hands of the coup-plotting media bosses following the crushing of the April 2002 imperialist-sponsored putsch, Chávez vainly sought to conciliate domestic and imperialist reaction, opening the way to new coups. The result was the December 2002/January 2003 bosses' lockout, a series of terrorist attacks in early 2004 (the so-called "*guarimba*") supported by the media, and the present hullabaloo over RCTV. What the imperialists are now trying to do is prepare the way for a "soft" coup such as they staged in Yugoslavia in 2000 and repeated in Ukraine in December 2004. Some of the same U.S.

“media consultants,” such as the Albert Einstein Institution, who advised “student” protesters in Belgrade and Kiev, are now up to their dirty tricks again in Caracas. When right-wing students demanded to be heard by the National Assembly, and then walked out rather than debate with pro-Chávez students, they left behind the last page of a *script* (literally) they had been following elaborated by the ARS Publicidad agency, which is closely tied to an NED-financed “election education” outfit.

Yet even now, Chávez didn’t expropriate or put the RCTV execs on trial, but only refused to renew their broadcast license, which the government has every right to do. In the United States, such licenses assigning frequencies are issued (and revoked) by the Federal Communications Commission. RCTV went off the air on May 27, and was replaced by a new non-commercial state channel, TVes. Yet RCTV can still transmit by cable. Liberals cite this to show how moderate the Venezuelan president is. But in fact, this “moderation” is a deadly threat to the prospects for genuine socialist revolution in Venezuela, as opposed to the left-leaning bourgeois populism of the “Bolivarian Revolution.” While Chávez demagogically talks of “permanent revolution” and praises Trotsky’s Transitional Program, Trotskyism represents the party of intransigent opposition to all bourgeois governments. Genuine Trotskyists seek to build a revolutionary workers party and class-struggle unions independent of all state control, to struggle for a workers and peasants government that begins socialist revolution and seeks to spread it internationally throughout the hemisphere and into the imperialist heartland.

Role of the Media in the 2002 Coup d’État

The April 2002 Caracas coup was elaborately planned for at least six months beforehand. It was prepared and executed in close collaboration with the U.S. government. Because of the discrediting of the main traditional capitalist parties, Democratic Action (AD – affiliated with the social-democratic Second International) and the Social Christian Party (COPEI), as hopelessly mired in corruption, the bourgeois media largely supplanted parties as active organizers of the coup. At the time, all but one of the Caracas daily newspapers were virulently hostile to the government (the other was neutral), while all TV stations were anti-Chávez except for the state-owned channel, which was knocked off the air during the putsch. Thus there was total control of public information by the counterrevolutionary opposition during the crucial two days. This was preceded by months of media pounding away at the government, which contributed to Chávez’ falling popularity at the time.

Based on documents obtained under the Freedom of Information Act, many reproduced in the book by Brooklyn lawyer Eva Golinger, *The Chávez Code: Cracking US Intervention in Venezuela* (Olive Branch Press, 2006), and available on the Internet site venezuelafoia.info, a good deal is already known about U.S. involvement in the failed 2002 coup. There was the usual financing of opposition political parties by the National Endowment for Democracy, the U.S. government outfit set up to replace the CIA’s covert funding operations when their cover was definitively blown in the 1970s. In Ven-

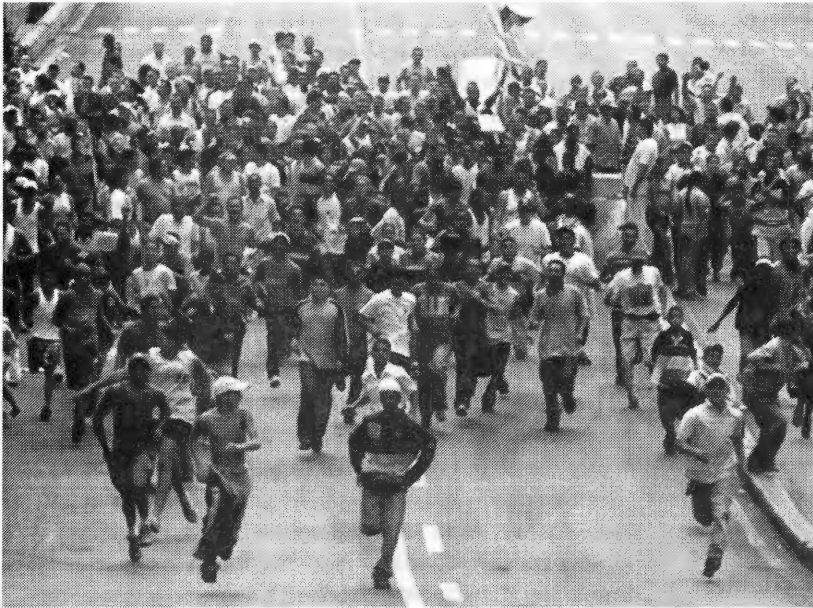
ezuela, the NED (via the International Republican Institute) created a new party (Primero Justicia – Justice First) out of the whole cloth. After the collapse of the coup and of the bosses’ lockout in early 2003, the NED set up and funded a get-out-the-vote organization (Súmate) to demand a recall referendum. It bankrolled the Carter Center to provide “independent” election monitoring. And it hired a polling company (Penn, Schoen & Berland Associates) to provide instant exit polls (carried out by Súmate) that reported 59 percent voting to recall Chávez, whereas in fact 59 percent voted to keep him in office. This is the U.S.’ idea of “free elections”: a “bought and paid-for” vote totally controlled by the U.S.

In addition, there was the traditional U.S. financing of pro-imperialist trade unions, in this case the CTV led by Carlos Ortega, with at least \$320,000 funneled through the American Center for International Labor Solidarity (ACILS – the renamed American Institute for Free Labor Development [AIFLD], which was notorious for acting as a CIA conduit in coups ranging from Guyana in 1959 to Chile in 1973). Ortega was one of the leading organizers of the 2002 Caracas coup, although he was then sidelined by the far-right business leaders around Carmona. The U.S. financed trips to Washington by Ortega (in February 2002) and Carmona (in November 2001) for consultations. There they met with Undersecretary of State for Western Hemisphere Affairs Otto Reich, a Cuban *gusano* who in the 1980s played a key role in the Reagan administration producing disinformation covering up the U.S. role in organizing the Nicaraguan *contra* mercenaries who waged a terrorist war against the Sandinista government.

Declassified cables show that the U.S. had detailed information from military sources at the beginning of April that a coup was in the offing. The American embassy also had two military attachés inside military HQ at Fort Tiuna, who were in close touch with the coup-plotters throughout the putsch. There was even an NED-funded police training mission by former New York City police chief William Bratton to improve the operations of the opposition-controlled Caracas Municipal Police, whose sharpshooters fired on demonstrators on April 11. But the role of the media was key, and not just in setting the political climate. A CIA “Senior Executive Intelligence Brief” (8 April 2002) on the eve of the coup reported: “President Chavez is facing continued strong opposition from the private sector, the media, the Catholic Church, and opposition political parties.... Disgruntled military officers are planning a coup....”

An article by Jon Beasley-Murray, an academic at the University of British Columbia, titled “The Coup Will Be Televised” in Gregory Wilpert, ed., *Coup Against Chavez in Venezuela* (Caracas, 2003), written on the day of the military putsch, begins: “So this is how one lives a modern coup d’état: watching television. Venezuela’s coup (and coup it is, make no mistake) took place in the media, fomented by the media, and with the media themselves the apparent object of both sides’ contention.” A follow-up article, “The Revolution Will Not be Televised,” begins: “So this is how a modern coup d’état is overthrown: almost invisibly, at the margins of the media.... A huge popular revolt against an illegitimate regime [the Carmona-led

Ricardo Mazalán/AP



Thousands of poor and working people rushed to the presidential palace to oppose the U.S.-backed April 2002 coup against Hugo Chávez. Coup-plotting TV magnates blacked them out. Now media tools of imperialist aggression scream about freedom of the press.

junta] took place while the country's middle class was watching soap operas and game shows." The author relates how he was receiving phone calls about discontent in the military, refusals by front-line units to carry out the orders of the seditious generals, mobilizations by thousands of poor people descending on the city center, none of which were reported on TV or radio. Instead, RCTV was broadcasting *Pretty Woman* and Warner Brothers Looney Tunes cartoons.

The media prepared the way for the coup by non-stop broadcasting of stories about the April 11 "general strike," which mainly consisted of a huge crowd (at least 200,000) of enraged middle-class and upper-class right-wingers marching on the oil company headquarters to defend the management. The TV portrayed as spontaneous crowd action the sudden turn to march across town to the Miraflores presidential palace, although news media knew this shift was decided on the night before by the coup plotters. Television broadcast extensive interviews with coup leaders, and the ceremony in which Carmona swore in himself as president. And then, when military units rebelled and poor and working people rose up against the coup, suddenly there was no news at all. Television also played a key role in transmitting over and over the lie that Chávez had resigned, which was key to giving a phony veneer of legitimacy to the military action. The U.S. government and imperialist media initially endorsed the pretense that the coup plotters were only filling a "vacuum of power." The *New York Times* (13 April 2002) editorialized approvingly: "Mr. Chávez, a ruinous demagogue, stepped down after the military intervened and handed power to a respected business leader, Pedro Carmona."

The television stations, including RCTV, played a key role in transmitting another lie, that *chavistas* killed more

than a dozen demonstrators. ("Armed Chávez supporters fired on peaceful strikers, killing at least 14 and injuring hundreds. Mr. Chávez's response was characteristic. He forced five private television stations off the air for showing pictures of the massacre," claimed the *Times* editorial.) An eyewitness account by Gregory Wilpert ("The 47-Hour Coup That Changed Everything," *Venezuelanalysis.com*, 13 April) reports how TV editors cropped the focus to show only images of some Chávez supporters firing pistols, but not that they were firing back at right-wing gunmen who were shooting at them. They also did not show the demonstrators pointing to what turned out to be police sharpshooters on the rooftops firing down on the crowd. Nor did they report that the majority of those killed on April 11 were *chavistas*. This was in fact a textbook case of how to lie with pictures and the pro-coup media played a key role in the fabrication of the virtual reality that was then repeated around the world.

Most revealing was when the CNN correspondent Otto Neustaldt later stated at a university forum that he was informed the night before by a contact in the opposition that "tomorrow the 11th there will be a video of Chávez, the demonstration will go towards Miraflores, and there will be deaths...." The next morning he was called to set up a videotaping of a *pronunciamiento* by the coup plotters, led by Vice-Admiral Hector Ramirez Perez, which he filmed at 2 p.m. The officers gave as one of the reasons for their action that Chávez was responsible for the deaths of six people supposedly killed by his supporters. Yet at the time the statement was taped (it was not broadcast until several hours later), *no one had been killed yet*. In other words, the shooting of unarmed demonstrators was part of a macabre deadly plot to manufacture martyrs for the opposition cause (see Wilpert, "The 47-Hour Coup...").

As to the dearth of information about the popular mobilization for Chávez, Neustaldt related that there were scores of journalists in the streets on April 12 and 13, but the media magnates refused to broadcast or publish their reports. RCTV chief Marcel Granier and other media execs went to Miraflores. Andrés Izarra, ex-director of a news program on RCTV testified to the National Assembly that he received direct instructions from Granier on the day of the coup and afterwards not to broadcast any information about Chávez, his ministers or his followers; and that Granier refused to broadcast the news that Chávez had not resigned. The 2003 documentary "The Revolution Will Not Be Televised" includes scenes of TV news anchors congratulating *Venevisión*, *Globovisión* and RCTV for the role they played in aiding the coup. And because Chávez left control of the media in the hands of these inveterate coup plotters, it didn't stop there. Two months after the April 2002 coup, the USAID program set up an Office of Transition Initiatives which shelled out

more than \$9 million ("in cash, to be paid for in local currency") for anti-Chávez television commercials to be aired in late 2002-early 2003. This was precisely at the time of the management lockout in the oil industry that the media portrayed as a general strike. The failed military coup was followed by an attempted economic coup, but it, too, collapsed.

Freedom of the Press and Workers Revolution

The question of freedom of the press comes up in almost every revolutionary or potentially revolutionary situation as events come to a head. This is because control of information is a key component of military dominance. The issue arose in Russia both in February-March 1917 and again following the October Revolution, when the soviets banned counterrevolutionary papers. More recently, the question of press freedom played an important role in the course of several years of government by the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) in Nicaragua, when *La Prensa*, owned by the Chamorro family and bankrolled by the U.S. government, was banned and then unbanned.

Today the imperialists are particularly active in using the battle cry of freedom of the press as a cover for their counter-revolutionary intrigues. Following the failure of the Venezuelan April 2002 coup, the December 2002-January 2003 lock-out, various referenda and elections, Washington is gearing up to try a repeat of the color-coded "revolutions" it has sponsored from Yugoslavia to Ukraine (orange), and ex-Soviet Georgia (rose). And to bring the students and petty-bourgeois activists of "civil society" into the streets, control of the media is key.

Marxists support freedom of the press as a democratic right. We vigilantly defend that right, even in cases of right-wing war-mongering flacks like the *New York Times*' Judith Miller*, because we know that restrictions on press freedom (as of all other democratic rights) will ultimately be used against the workers organizations, and particularly against revolutionaries. In 1945, the French popular front government banned the Trotskyist paper *La Vérité* in order to consolidate a postwar bourgeois regime, using laws supposedly directed against fascists. Similarly, workers militias have often been banned under laws ostensibly passed to suppress

* *New York Times* journalist Judith Miller was a key component of the Bush administration operation to invent "weapons of mass destruction" in Iraq, retailing stories from right-wing Iraqi exiles about biochemical weapons and a nuclear arms program, all of which were bogus. We denounced this fabrication and Miller's role in it in an extensive article "The U.S.' Pretext for Imperialist War: The Great Chemical Weapons Hoax" (*The Internationalist* No. 16, May-June 2003). Later, as part of the flap over the "outing" of a CIA operative by the White House in an effort to discredit revelations about the non-existence of the "WMDs," Miller was ordered by a judge to reveal her sources or go to jail for contempt of court. While stressing Miller's responsibility in the WMD fraud, we opposed her jailing because forcing journalists to reveal their sources would discourage those with knowledge of official skullduggery from revealing it, and thus would aid government efforts to stop leaks (see "Zionist Flack and 'WMD' Fabricator Jailed in Government Witchhunt: Free Judith Miller!" *The Internationalist* No. 21, Summer 2005).

fascist bands.

But in revolutionary conditions or wars, democratic questions are subordinate to fundamental class issues and the requirements of military defense. George Washington in 1776 during the War for American Independence shut down British Loyalist publications. Abraham Lincoln during the 1861-65 American Civil War closed down dozens of newspapers supporting or conciliating the Southern slave masters' Confederacy. Lenin and Trotsky supported closing counterrevolutionary papers, but they were careful to limit the prohibitions to the absolute minimum. In a 9 November 1917 decree of the Petrograd Soviet, Lenin ordered that only those papers be shut down which "(1) call for open resistance or insubordination to the Workers' and Peasants' Government; (2) sow sedition through demonstrably slanderous distortion of facts; (3) instigate actions of an obviously criminal, i.e., criminally punishable, nature." RCTV (and other networks) in Venezuela filled all three criteria.

As Trotsky pointed out in an August 1938 article on "Freedom of the Press and the Working Class":

"Naturally, if you are forced to use artillery and planes against the enemy, you cannot permit this same enemy to maintain his own centers of news and propaganda within the armed camp of the proletariat. Nonetheless, in this instance, too, if the special measures are extended until they become an enduring pattern, they in themselves carry the danger of getting out of hand and of the workers' bureaucracy gaining a political monopoly that would be one of the sources of its degeneration."

In Nicaragua, once the counterrevolutionary guerrilla war began in earnest, the Sandinistas were forced to shut down *La Prensa*, which functioned as the voice of the *contras*. We strongly supported this closure at the time, while saying it had to be the starting point for working-class action to expropriate the whole of the Nicaraguan bourgeoisie. Instead, after "suspending" publication of *La Prensa* in 1985, a couple of years later the Sandinistas signed the Esquipulas "peace" accords which called for the unconditional reopening of the counterrevolutionary paper. This was the beginning of the end for the FSLN, which eventually lost the 1989 elections to Violeta Chamorro, whose candidacy and newspaper were heavily financed by Washington.

In Chile in 1970-73, the U.S. government poured millions into financing the conservative newspaper *El Mercurio*, which kept up a steady drumbeat of yellow journalism against the Unidad Popular (U.P.) government of Salvador Allende. The CIA also bought the services of journalists, and even dictated the layout of the paper. Allende's bourgeois popular front, sworn to uphold capitalist legality, did nothing. This psychological warfare played an important role in preparing the way for the bloody Pinochet coup on 11 September 1973.

Bourgeois liberals sometimes look to "progressive" governments to reshape the media to get rid of or lessen the power of reactionary outlets like Fox News. In Mexico, the bourgeois nationalist PRD (and the Militante tendency inside this capitalist party) have effusively hailed Chávez' measures, citing them as an example of what should be done to break the TV duopoly of Televisa and TV Azteca, which was written into law in last

year's Ley Televisa. But calling on bourgeois governments to promote "diversity" in the media can have unintended results. The Chávez regime has set up a host of community TV stations, but don't count on them to let genuine Trotskyists calling for the replacement of his bonapartist government by workers soviets on the air waves. Showing a few black or dark-skinned Indian faces instead of the endless parade of blond beauty queens with European appearance is one thing. Allowing agitation for workers revolution is something else again.

In Venezuela, as we have pointed out, virtually the entire bourgeois press actively collaborated with the April 2002 putsch that briefly removed Hugo Chávez from power. Some media, such as RCTV, played an active role in executing that failed coup d'état and in the subsequent bosses' lockout. This was an attempt to strangle the Chávez regime economically, as the U.S. has tried to do against Castro's Cuba for more than 45 years. But unlike Cuba, a bureaucratically deformed workers state with a collectivized economy, semi-colonial Venezuela's capitalist economy makes it much more vulnerable to such economic warfare. The Venezuelan media acted as cat's paws for imperialist aggression. Workers should have seized the counterrevolutionary propaganda organs, but instead Chávez tried to conciliate the putschists. Refusing to renew the broadcast license of RCTV is a belated and far from adequate measure of military defense against imperialist-sponsored attack.

Some leftists, such as the Trotskyist Faction (FT) led by the Argentine PTS (Partido de Trabajadores por el Socialismo – Workers Socialist Party), have argued that since Chávez didn't shut down the coup-plotting media in 2002, and since he did not cancel the broadcast licenses of Globovisión and Venevisión, therefore the cancellation of RCTV's license "has nothing to do with measures of self-defense." But while admitting that imperialism and domestic reaction are seizing on the issue of RCTV as a battle cry for "freedom of the press," a statement by the FT's Venezuelan sympathizers of the JIR (Juventud de Izquierda Revolucionaria – Revolutionary Left Youth) ducks taking an explicit position on the issue. It claims that in street confrontations "when and if" they reach the level of 2002, "we are not neutral" and would be in the front lines in fighting against a new coup attempt. In those conditions, the workers should seize the media as Oaxaca (Mexico) strikers did last year, it says. But the mealy-mouthed JIR statement (in *La Verdad Obrera*, 31 May 2007) does not say where it stands in the present mobilizations, and implies that it opposes the removal of RCTV's license as a "restrictive measure" and "government censorship."

The FT refuses to see that the imperialist-sponsored reactionary mobilization is part of an operation aiming at the overthrow of the Chávez regime and massive oppression of the increasingly radicalized workers, peasants and urban poor. This willful blindness is of a piece with the FT's opposition to the death sentences meted out by the Cuban government against hijackers inspired by the U.S. invasion of Iraq in March 2003. While saying that "we do not deny that in certain circumstances of the class struggle a workers state or semi-colonial country must use exceptional measures to confront the oppressors or the provocations of the counterrevolution," it then condemned

the application of the death sentences to the hijackers (*La Verdad Obrera*, 21 May 2003). In fact, as we pointed out, U.S. rulers aggressively sought to whip up a counterrevolutionary hysteria in Cuba at this time, hoping to provoke a new wave of "boat people" heading to Miami. In those circumstances, genuine Trotskyists, while giving no political support to the Castro regime, defended Cuba's repression against the *gusano* plotters and hijackers (see "Liberals, Reformists Join Imperialist Hue and Cry: For Revolutionary Internationalist Defense of Cuba!" *The Internationalist* No. 16).

In Venezuela we call for the workers (not a left-talking colonel become president) to seize control of the media from the capitalist bosses. But that is only possible during situations of revolutionary upheaval and acute social struggle, such as in Oaxaca, where the Grupo Internacionalista, Mexican section of the League for the Fourth International, actively supported the strikers' seizure of radio and TV stations in order to break the murderous government's media blackout. In the meantime, we defend the belated and partial measure of refusing to renew the license of the largest of the coup-mongering media by Chávêz' bourgeois populist regime in the face of howls from the imperialists who see their latest putsch plans frustrated, at least temporarily. We seek to build an authentically Trotskyist, revolutionary workers party with its own press fighting for international socialist revolution, which is the only real guarantee against the triumph of reaction. ■

League for the Fourth International

Internationalist Group/U.S.

Internationalist Group, Box 3321, Church Street Station, New York, NY 10008, U.S.A.

Tel. (212) 460-0983 Fax: (212) 614-8711

E-mail: internationalistgroup@msn.com

Boston: write to P.O. Box 1044, Boston, MA 02117

Liga Quarta-Internacionalista do Brasil

Brazil: write to Caixa Postal 084027, CEP 27251-740, Volta Redonda, RJ, Brazil

Rio de Janeiro: write to Caixa Postal 3982, CEP 20001-974, Rio de Janeiro, RJ, Brazil

E-mail: lqb1996@yahoo.com.br

LQI/France

In France: write to MBE n° 244, 80, rue Legendre, 75017 Paris, France

LIVI/Deutschland

Germany: write to Postfach 74 06 41, 22096 Hamburg, Germany

Grupo Internacionalista/México

Mexico: write to Apdo. Postal 70-379, Admón. de Correos No. 70, CP 04511, México, D.F., Mexico
E-mail:

Imperialist Outcry Over Canceling Broadcast License of Coup-Plotting RCTV – Trotskyists Call for Workers to Seize Control

Venezuela: Battle Over the Media

In recent weeks, there has been an outpouring of frenzied denunciations from imperialist media and government spokesmen over Venezuelan president Hugo Chávez' cancellation of the broadcast license of RCTV, the largest television network in the country. The United States Senate, the European Parliament and the German president of the European Union have all issued statements claiming the action of the Venezuelan government is a violation of free speech, media freedom, etc. Human Rights Watch, the Committee for the Protection of Journalists, Reporters Without Borders and other "human rights" groups have done the same. All of these groups are financed by U.S. imperialism – notably through the CIA-funnel, National Endowment for Democracy (NED) – or some other government, and have repeatedly beat the drums for imperialist intervention in Yugoslavia, Iraq and elsewhere. In Venezuela, right-wing reactionaries have mobilized students from elite and Catholic universities claiming to defend "freedom of expression." Elsewhere in Latin America, Chilean president Michelle Bachelet "regretted" the decision and the Brazilian Senate called on Chávez to "reconsider" the measure.

The League for the Fourth International warns that the hue and cry from the masters of imperialism over Radio Caracas Television is part of a renewed effort to overthrow



Howard Vanes/AP

Uncle Sam, hands off! Rally in defense of Chávez' measure against RCTV, a key instigator of April 2002 imperialist-backed coup d'état.

the Venezuelan régime. This is not an issue of freedom of the press but of elemental defense against imperialist aggression. RCTV has acted in the past and continues to act as a direct instrument of U.S. imperialism.

In justifying its unrelenting attempts to undermine and bring down the Venezuelan president, the U.S. prates about "democracy." Yet Chávez has been repeatedly elected in general elections, the last time (December 2006) by over 61 percent of the voters. While giving no political support to the Chávez administration, which despite its socialist rhetoric is a capitalist government, we stand for the military defense of the nationalist regime against attack by imperialism and domestic reaction. And while defending the measure against one of the most notorious coup-plotting media, *we call on Venezuelan workers to mobilize independently to impose workers control over all the bourgeois media and the capitalist economy.*

continued on page 75



Juan Barreto/AFP

Students from Andrés Bello Catholic University and other elite schools protest non-renewal of broadcast license of RCTV, May 31.