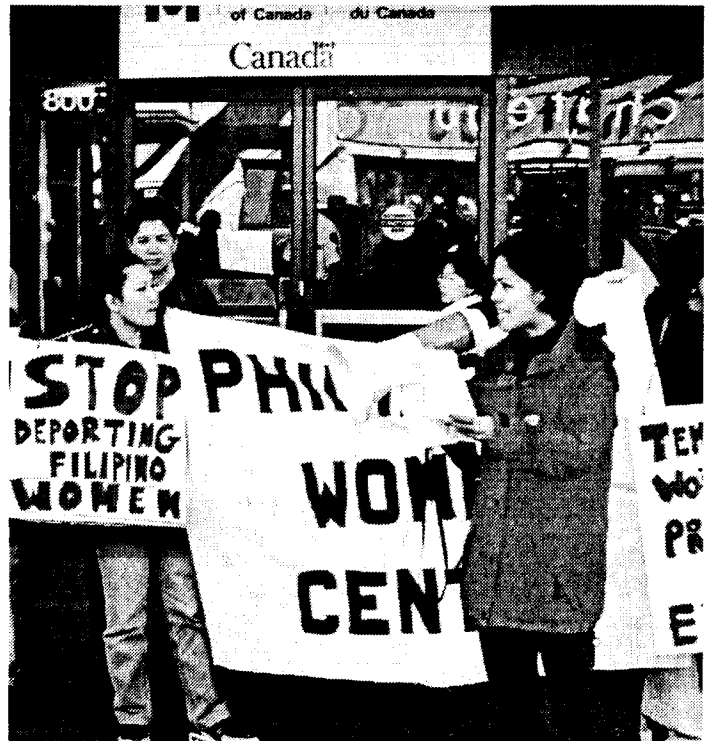


## Labor Must Fight Racist Terror Scare! **Down With the Anti-Immigrant Witchhunt!**



Peter Blashill/Globe and Mail



SC photo

**Left: Chinese immigrants detained at B.C. naval base, 1999. Above: Protest against racist deportations in Vancouver, March 1. Integrated labor movement must demand full citizenship rights for all immigrants!**

With their "war on terror" abroad in high gear, Washington and its imperialist "coalition partners" have seized the chance to ramp up their powers of repression at home. The Australian government has interned Iranian, Iraqi and Afghan refugees in desert detention camps, driving hundreds to threaten mass suicide, launch hunger strikes, even to sew their lips together with fence wire in desperate protest. In France, the Socialist-led government has intensified its years-long campaign of racist harassment and deportation known as Vigipirate. Heavily armed cops and soldiers patrol the subways and swarm through immigrant neighborhoods,

demanding papers and interrogating anyone who appears to be North African.

Here in Canada, the federal Liberal government has enacted its Anti-Terrorist Act (Bill C-36) and other repressive legislation. The capitalist rulers have instituted systematic "racial profiling" to witchhunt entire immigrant communities. The RCMP, in collaboration with the FBI and Scotland Yard, now maintains a database of the names, addresses, passport numbers and nationalities of men from 16 Near Eastern countries arriving in Canada from anywhere in the

*(continued on page 16)*

# Jamal Death Sentence Reversed

## Free Mumia Now!

The following statement was issued on 18 December 2001 by the Partisan Defense Committee in the U.S.

\* \* \*

Federal district court judge William Yohn today reversed the death sentence that has been hanging over the head of Mumia Abu-Jamal since his 1982 frame-up conviction for the killing of Philadelphia police officer Daniel Faulkner. Although Yohn rejected the mountains of evidence demonstrating Jamal's innocence—including the sworn confession of Arnold Beverly testifying that he had been hired to kill Faulkner—this ruling represents the first crack in the state's 20-year legal vendetta against Jamal. And the forces that have worked overtime to ensure Jamal's execution are literally screaming bloody murder. Maureen Faulkner, who has headed this campaign on behalf of the Philadelphia Fraternal Order of Police (F.O.P.), condemned Yohn as a "sick and twisted person." Democratic Party District Attorney Lynne Abraham, who has done more than her share to see that more black people are sentenced to death in Philadelphia than any other city in the U.S., immediately convened a press conference to announce that the prosecution will be appealing Yohn's ruling.

The F.O.P. and the Philly D.A.'s office fear that the explosive new evidence of Jamal's innocence, which the capitalist state and the press have worked hard to bury, could finally be heard in a court of law. Prosecutor Hugh Burns made that clear when he declaimed today, "If there was a new sentencing hearing, it would probably entail the empanelling of a jury...and whatever evidence the defendant wanted to review again would be presented to the jury." Yohn has also worked assiduously to ensure that the overwhelming evidence of Jamal's innocence is buried. His decision affirms the original frame-up murder conviction, which was secured on the basis of "eyewitness" testimony coerced by the police through the promise of favors and outright terror, a manufactured "confession" and completely concocted ballistics "evidence." Yohn's ruling only allows for a new sentencing hearing within 180 days which would at best consign Jamal to life behind bars.

As Mumia himself said of life imprisonment in one of his writings from death row: "'Life' is thus but a grim metaphor for death, for only death releases one from its shackles. 'Life,' it might be said, is merely slow death." **Mumia Abu-Jamal is an innocent man!** An award-winning journalist, former Black Panther and MOVE supporter, Mumia's only "crime" is that he is an outspoken champion of the oppressed and exploited. And he has continued to speak out, unbowed and unbroken, from his death row cell. **Don't let them bury Mumia alive!** Workers, minorities and all opponents of racist capitalist repression must now redouble their efforts to mobilize mass protest centered on the social power of the labor movement to demand Jamal's immediate freedom.

From the time the Partisan Defense Committee took up Jamal's case 15 years ago, we have insisted that the fight to save this innocent man cannot rely on the capitalist courts but must be based on social struggle. What has kept him out of the clutches of the executioner is mass protest and publicity, in this country and internationally, especially by trade unions representing millions of workers. Now more than ever the PDC says: No confidence in the capitalist courts, all confidence in the power of the working people and oppressed!

Jamal's case throws into stark relief the whole nature of racist American capitalism. His prosecution and conviction were an extension of the COINTELPRO terror campaign by the FBI in which dozens of Black Panthers were assassinated and hundreds more sent to prison. Among them was Geronimo ji Jaga (Pratt), who was finally released in 1997 after 27 years in prison hell for a crime the state **knew** he did not commit. Jamal's case is a demonstration of the machinery of repression wielded by the capitalist rulers against any perceived threat to a system based on the

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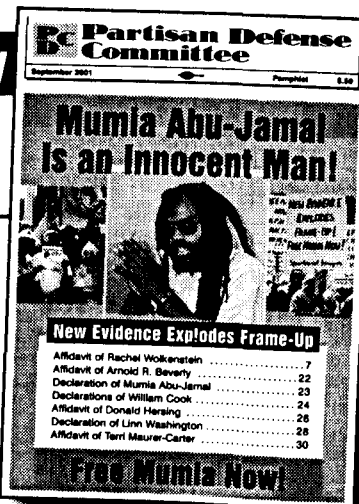
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September 2001

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**New Evidence Explodes Frame-Up**

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**Free Mumia Now!**

# Labor-Centered Mobilization Defies U.S. Rulers' "National Unity"



Workers Vanguard

February 9 labor-centered demonstration in defense of immigrant rights in Oakland, California.

The following article is adapted from *Workers Vanguard* (No. 775, 22 February), newspaper of the Spartacist League/U.S.

\* \* \*

For the first time anywhere, on February 9 organized labor was mobilized in Oakland, California to flex its muscle in defense of its immigrant brothers and sisters targeted under the U.S. rulers' "war on terrorism." Some 300 unionists, immigrants, blacks and youth rallied in opposition to the USA-Patriot Act, the Maritime Security Act (MSA) and the anti-immigrant witchhunt. At the core of this demonstration were over 30 dock workers from the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) Local 10. They joined transit workers, water utility workers, printers, federal park workers, day laborers, Asian and Near Eastern immigrants, college and high school students, and the revolutionary Marxists of the Spartacist League to declare that the U.S. working class will fight to defend all the oppressed against their common capitalist class enemy.

In initiating and building this united-front protest, the Bay Area Labor Black League for Social Defense and the Partisan Defense Committee sought above all to win workers to the need to tear through the straitjacket of "national unity" promoted by the U.S. capitalist rulers and break down the poisonous racial and ethnic divisions among the oppressed that they promote. Marching through downtown Oakland, past the headquarters of the shipping employers' Pacific Maritime Association and the Federal Building housing the

government enforcers of the capitalist attacks, the multiracial, working-class protesters chanted: "National unity is a lie—Bosses profit, workers die!" and "Immigrant rights, black rights: Same struggle, same fight—Workers of the world unite!" Banners of the San Francisco Day Labor Program; AFSCME Local 444; National Parks and Public Employees, Laborers International Local 1141 and the Spartacist League joined those of the PDC and LBL on the march.

For many black longshoremen, acting in defense of immigrants—including the unorganized port truckers—represented a conscious break with widespread sentiment that immigrants and blacks are competitors, not allies—a lie cultivated by the capitalist rulers and their labor lieutenants in the trade-union bureaucracy. At the rally, they joined forces with the Filipino Workers Association and with the largely Latino immigrant workers of the SF Day Labor Program, whose spokesman Eduardo Palomo declared: "We are here to resist the Patriot Act, the law that is going to harm all the workers of this nation.... We want all the workers in all parts of this nation to come out to protest this law." In mobilizing for the rally, *Workers Vanguard* supporters sought to win workers to the understanding that in defending immigrants, they were defending the whole working class.

This was no abstraction but flesh and blood reality to longshoremen threatened with losing their hard-won union jobs under the background checks mandated by the Maritime Security Act, a law pending in Congress aimed at purging

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## Oakland Mobilization...

(continued from page 3)

the waterfront of blacks, Latinos and other immigrants and at undermining union power. The political impact of this mobilization spread far beyond those who came to the rally, raising the class consciousness also of the hundreds who took stacks of leaflets to distribute, and the thousands reached through discussion, leaflets and copies of *Workers Vanguard*.

The protest was built in distributions to key workforces: longshore dispatch, port truckers, bus barns and transit yards, postal facilities, municipal utilities, industries with heavily immigrant workforces organized by ILWU Local 6 and the Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees union, in Chinatown and other immigrant neighborhoods, campuses and high schools. The campaign intersected struggles from Santa Clara—where the husband of Alia Atawneh, a Palestinian woman fired in an act of anti-immigrant persecution by Macy's, endorsed the rally—to Salt Lake City, where hundreds of immigrant airport workers were fired. Solidarity greetings from one of the lawyers representing these workers were read to the protest.

The seriousness of longshoremen at the rally, which Local 10 endorsed, was underscored by the fact that a number of lower-seniority B-men had foregone a trip to Los Angeles to pick up a weekend's work, a real sacrifice during a slow month at the Port of Oakland. At the end of the protest, several longshoremen made a point of taking home the mobilization placards on which they had written the name of their union. Discussions afterward at a celebration in a local bar and restaurant grappled with key questions: which way forward for workers, why we need a revolutionary workers party to get rid of capitalism and how to build it, why unions in themselves are not enough. One youth joined the Bay Area Spartacus Youth Club, and a number of workers expressed interest in joining the LBL.

Many longshoremen take a great deal of pride in their union, particularly in the gains that were won for black workers. At the same time, several longshoremen asked us why it took communists to fight to mobilize the social power of labor in defense of immigrant rights and in defense of the unions. To mobilize the multiracial proletariat in defense of immigrants, black people and all the oppressed requires a conscious struggle against the million and one ways the capitalist exploiters, aided and abetted by their labor lackeys, foster the racial and ethnic antagonisms that divide the proletariat and undermine its fighting strength. At bottom this is a question of program and perspective. The worldview of the labor tops—even those of the most “progressive” stamp—is defined by what is possible or “practical” under capitalism, a

system which is predicated on the exploitation of labor. We communists pursue another road, one based not only on improving present conditions but fighting to do away with the entire system of capitalist wage slavery.

This rally was held during Black History Month to underscore both the common interests of black and immigrant workers and the need for the labor movement to take up the fight against racial oppression. In a speech for the Labor Black League that was translated into Spanish, Adwoa Oni declared:

“The frenzied anti-Arab and anti-immigrant witchhunt is a deadly danger to all racial and ethnic minorities. This is especially true for the black population, whose forcible segregation at the bottom of this society is rooted in the history of chattel slavery and the defeat of Radical Reconstruction. Black oppression is the very foundation of this racist capitalist system—but also its ‘Achilles’ heel. It’s time to finish the Civil War! Forward to a workers state!”

Death row political prisoner, MOVE supporter and former Black Panther Mumia Abu-Jamal sent his endorsement, and a statement of support was read out at the rally. Speaking for the PDC, the legal and social defense organization associated with the Spartacist League, Steve Bull called for “mass protests centered on the social power of the labor movement to demand Jamal’s immediate release.” Also endorsing was Geronimo ji Jaga (Pratt), the former Black Panther who spent 27 years in prison on a similar government frame-up before mass protest brought about his release. Speaking at the rally, former Panther Kiiilu Nyasha brought attention to the plight of Haitian immigrants as well as that of Hugo Pinell and Ruchell Cinque Magee, political prisoners who have spent well over three decades in the prisons of the U.S. capitalist system of racist injustice.

This united-front action intersected contradictions within the labor bureaucracy and exposed how this conservative layer resting atop the workers organizations acts as the key internal obstacle to mobilizing workers power. From the time the new “anti-terror” legislation was introduced in September, ILWU International officials, instead of opposing the MSA, proposed that the capitalists make the ILWU a partner in the “national security” war, including against other sections of dock workers who are heavily immigrant. The Teamsters and East Coast International Longshore Association tops likewise refused to oppose the MSA. It was the ILWU tops who pointed to the port truckers to be targeted by the bill. As the call for the demonstration pointed out: “It is not the job of the workers to enforce the laws, ‘security’ or otherwise, that will be used against them: cops and security guards have no place in the union movement!”

In Local 10, however, with its heavily black membership, there was a lot of pressure from the ranks to do something to oppose this attack. Secretary-Treasurer Clarence Thomas helped build and spoke at the rally. Also present were both business agents, Trent Willis and Jack Heyman, who put the motion at a Local 10 meeting that the union endorse the mobilization. In his speech, Thomas noted, “There are people here today that don’t necessarily share the same political views” but “we’re all here to stand together against the issue of the USA-Patriot Act and the Port Maritime Security Act.” All those at the rally were able to compare openly Thomas’ views with those of the Spartacist League speaker, Brian Manning, as they presented two different perspectives on which way forward for

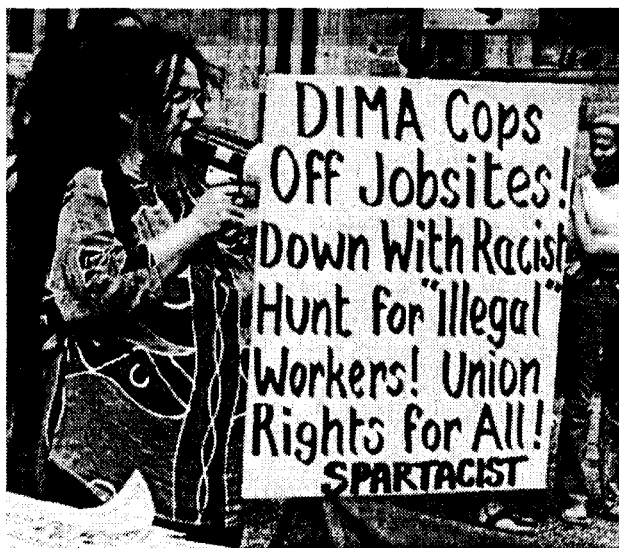
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## ICL Sections in Action

# Down With Anti-Immigrant, Anti-Labor Attacks!



Australasian Spartacist



AAP

**February 2: SL/A contingent at Sydney antiwar demonstration protests attacks on immigrants, publicizes Bay Area mobilization. Asylum-seekers imprisoned in Australian concentration camps.**

Since September 11, capitalist governments around the world have seized upon the U.S.-led "war on terrorism" to bolster the repressive apparatus of the state against workers and the oppressed. Everywhere, they aim their fire in particular at immigrant workers, who are set up as scapegoats for the unemployment that is an inevitable consequence of capitalism's economic crises. The February 9 united-front mobilization in Oakland against the USA-Patriot Act and Maritime Security Act demonstrated to besieged immigrants and class-conscious militants in the U.S. and internationally both the necessity and possibility of implementing the perspective that the International Communist League fights for: mobilizing labor's power in defense of immigrants. This exemplary action in the U.S. was also a powerful refutation of the anti-Americanism that is pushed by a range of fake leftists in West Europe and elsewhere in order to amnesty their "own" capitalist ruling classes.

A statement of solidarity from the French SUD PTT postal union local at the Créteil parcel sorting facility testified to the international significance of the Oakland mobilization:

"After the recent slaughters in Iraq, Serbia and Afghanistan, imperialism is now trying to establish its hegemony, just as they want to crush the working class whose social power they fear.

"The aim of these vicious laws is to divide the working class by fomenting racist poison, and to weaken the working class by setting up as a target its already doubly oppressed component.

"We will popularize as much as we can, with our limited

means, your exemplary initiative, which shows us the way to follow, including in France where black and Maghreb workers are violently subjected to the reinforced Vigipirate plan, to police and army repression, at any time and everywhere. The reinforced Vigipirate plan was put into place by those lackeys of the French bourgeoisie, the social-democratic government, just after September 11 and with the complicity of the overwhelming majority of the French left and trade-union bureaucracy. Be assured, comrades, of our friendship and our solidarity.

**"DOWN WITH THE RACIST LAWS IN THE U.S., IN FRANCE AND EVERYWHERE ELSE! LONG LIVE THE INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY OF WORKERS!"**

The Créteil postal union was among more than 50 labor organizations and union officials to endorse the February 9 action. These ranged from International Longshore and Warehouse Union Local 10 in the Bay Area to the SITUAM campus workers in Mexico City and the Metro Toronto Region of the Canadian Union of Postal Workers. Also lending its support was the strategic National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa, where Thabo Mbeki's African National Congress government is waging a war on black immigrants from Mozambique and other neighboring countries. The protest was also endorsed by a score of immigrant and minority rights groups including the Canadian Arab Federation.

From New York to Paris, the mobilization struck a chord among Palestinians and others of Near Eastern descent, who have been particularly targeted for state harassment, detention

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## Down With IMF Austerity!

# Mass Protests Shake Argentina

*The following article, written in the immediate aftermath of the mass upsurge that overthrew successive governments in Argentina in late December, was originally published in Workers Vanguard (No. 772, 11 January), newspaper of the Spartacist League/U.S.*

\* \* \*

The collapse of the government of Radical Party president Fernando de la Rúa amid massive street protests on December 19-20 has ushered in a major social crisis in Argentina. As angry demonstrators in Buenos Aires fought off police assaults in the Plaza de Mayo below, de la Rúa staged a panicky escape by helicopter from the roof of his besieged presidential palace. In his wake, three more presidents came and went in less than two weeks, while the popular unrest continued.

Now Eduardo Duhalde of the Peronist party has been appointed to head a self-described "government of national salvation." The new regime aims to pacify the masses through rhetorical sops and by easing a small portion of the harsh austerity measures mandated by the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The attacks dictated by the imperialists, centrally the U.S., and implemented by the Argentine bourgeoisie have provoked deep anger throughout the population. The Duhalde government has now temporarily stopped payment on Argentina's \$155 billion debt to the international bankers—the largest such default in history. The government also announced a devaluation of the peso as well as measures supposedly aimed at allaying the plight of the poor. But no one pretends that this will put an end to the turmoil. Days before he took office, Duhalde himself warned that the country could spiral into civil war.

Argentina is at an impasse: the people will no longer accept being governed as before, while the rulers can no longer govern as before. Close to half the population ekes out an existence below the poverty line, official unemployment is nearly 20 percent, much of the working class is in desperate straits and the living standards of the petty-bourgeois middle class, once the most prosperous in Latin America, are plummeting. Both major bourgeois parties—the Radicals and the Justicialista Peronists, who themselves served as hardline enforcers for the IMF under the regime of Carlos Menem in the 1990s—are widely reviled among the toiling masses. And



Karmina Burana/Indymedia

**Mass protests in Buenos Aires, December 20. Millions of protesters have taken to the streets against rising unemployment and starvation wrought by IMF, bringing down successive governments.**

lurking in the shadows is the army, whose brutal dictatorship from 1976 to 1983 saw over 30,000 leftists and labor militants assassinated or "disappeared."

The wave of struggles that brought down the de la Rúa regime began in the provinces with road blockades by unemployed and semi-employed *piqueteros* (picketers). It then spread to the cities, where hungry masses looted grocery stores and striking workers stoned government offices, leading de la Rúa to proclaim a state of siege. It culminated with the eighth general strike in two years, quickly followed by mass protests of hundreds of thousands, from young workers, students and the unemployed to retired civil servants and housewives banging empty pots. While street bonfires burned throughout Buenos Aires and in other cities, demonstrators chanting "All of them out!" faced down riot police firing tear gas and live ammunition outside the presidential palace and the Peronist-controlled Houses of Congress. At least 30 protesters were killed, many hundreds wounded and thousands imprisoned before the hated president finally fled. Free all the arrested protesters!

The current situation in Argentina has many components of a prerevolutionary crisis. The bourgeoisie is at an impasse, there is sharp dissatisfaction among the petty bourgeoisie and

**Break with Peronism—For a Revolutionary Workers Party!**

the working class has demonstrated great combativity. Crucially missing, however, is a proletarian revolutionary leadership which can give voice to the aspirations of all the oppressed in a struggle to shatter the rule of the venal Argentine bourgeoisie and the domination of its imperialist masters. *The fight for a proletarian vanguard party is therefore the central question facing Argentina today.* Critical to this perspective is the struggle for the complete and absolute independence of the working class from all the parties and agencies of bourgeois rule.

The majority of Argentina's potentially powerful trade unions are directly linked to the bourgeois-nationalist Peronist party. Today, the nationalist trade-union bureaucrats are again working to channel popular discontent into the arms of the Peronists, whose occasional "anti-imperialist" rhetoric serves only to mask their fealty to capitalist imperialism. Living in deathly fear of the accumulated tinder at the base of society, the labor bureaucrats have found it necessary to call repeated general strikes over the past two years. At the same time, they have worked hand in hand with the Argentine rulers to contain discontent.

Only a few months ago, both wings of the Peronist CGT (General Confederation of Labor) signed a pact to control social unrest "in the interests of the country." Amid the mass protests and street battles of December 19-20, leaders of the mainstream CGT called for "guaranteeing the resolution of this most grave political crisis within the framework of the Constitution" (*La Nación*, 21 December 2001), while the dissident CGT-rebelde called on the regime to "adopt political solutions to control the social eruptions" (*La Nación*, 20 December 2001). When de la Rúa fell, they joined with the "independent" bureaucrats of the CTA (Argentine Labor Central) government workers and teachers union federation in calling off a threatened general strike against the state of siege and rushed to a private tête-à-tête with the new (and short-lived) Peronist president, Rodríguez Saá.

For their part, Argentina's various pseudo-Marxist organizations—including relatively sizable fake-Trotskyist groups, some with parliamentary deputies—have long been little more than left satellites of Peronism. Today, while raising various criticisms of Duhalde and his labor auxiliaries, these groups push deadly illusions that workers and the oppressed can eliminate their immiseration within the framework of bourgeois rule, seeking merely to give it more "democratic" trappings. There is a burning need to forge a genuine Trotskyist nucleus in Argentina that fights to link the present struggles to a program of socialist revolution as the only solution to the country's crisis. In the present conditions, even a relatively small revolutionary organization could grow explosively and sink roots among the proletariat, thereby opening the road to working-class power.

Such a party can only be forged on the basis of a program of proletarian revolutionary internationalism which seeks to extend the struggles of the Argentine proletariat throughout Latin America and into the imperialist heartlands of the United States and West Europe. In Europe, where many



Trade union demonstration in Buenos Aires, August 2001, demands unemployment benefits. Powerful Argentine proletariat is shackled to bourgeois state by Peronist labor tops. AP

workers are facing mass layoffs and factory closures, there is an identification with, and apprehension over, the plight of the largely European-derived Argentine masses. European newspapers and TVs are filled with images of people in what was once the wealthiest country in Latin America storming the banks, battling the police and looting stores for the basic necessities of daily survival. There is genuine fear that if hunger riots could erupt in Argentina, then a dramatic plunge in living standards could be the future for European workers too. Although the particular mechanisms of class collaboration are different (social-democratic labor reformism in Europe, bourgeois nationalism in Latin America), the fundamental question is the same: unshackling a powerful proletariat from a pro-capitalist leadership.

For their part, the U.S. imperialists have long seen Latin America as their own private preserve for exploitation. The wall-to-wall military dictatorships that dominated South America in the 1960s and '70s were the product of the "Alliance for Progress" instituted by Democratic Party president and liberal darling John F. Kennedy as part of the "war on Communism." Today, reflecting the heightened inter-imperialist rivalries that have come in the wake of the counter-revolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union, the U.S. has sought to extend its NAFTA "free trade" rape of Mexico throughout all of Latin America under the proposed Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA).

As proletarian revolutionaries in the belly of the U.S. imperialist beast, the Spartacist League/U.S. fights to mobilize the social power of the proletariat to shatter the rule of American imperialism from within. The pro-imperialist AFL-CIO trade-union bureaucrats who for decades have done the bidding of U.S. imperialism in its war on the workers and oppressed of Latin America now push the chauvinist poison of protectionism against these workers. Breaking the chains, forged by the labor tops, that shackle the proletariat in the U.S. to its "own" ruling class is central to a revolutionary

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## Argentina...

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perspective throughout the hemisphere. Down with NAFTA and the FTAA! For socialist revolution throughout the Americas!

### Argentine Capitalism at a Dead End

Argentina was long one of the most economically and socially advanced countries in the former colonial world. Having substantial natural resources and a highly educated workforce, and free of the leaden weight of pre-capitalist remnants such as a large peasantry, by 1930 it had far outdistanced the rest of Latin America in per capita income and wage levels. The urban working class enjoyed a living standard superior in some respects to that of most workers in continental Europe. By 1945, as it grew wealthy from selling food to the imperialist armies in World War II, Argentina had about the same per capita income as Canada. Now the average Argentinean earns *one sixth* as much as the average Canadian.

The country's current prostration provides a vivid illustration of one of the central premises of the theory of permanent revolution elaborated by revolutionary Marxist leader Leon Trotsky: that the bourgeoisies of the dependent capitalist countries are too weak and beholden to imperialism and too fearful of the power of the proletariat to be able to break the yoke of imperialist domination. The forms of bourgeois rule in Argentina have run the gamut: from laissez-faire liberalism (the age of the agrarian bourgeois *estancieros* and British-dominated export economy in the early 20th century), to bourgeois nationalism and state-sponsored industrial development behind protectionist barriers (Peronism in the 1940s and '50s), to unbridled imperialist domination under the recent neoliberal regimes. And this has been the case under both the trappings of bourgeois democracy and the jackboot of military rule.

With the destruction of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War configurations, the minimal autonomy that the Argentine ruling class thought it possessed—as displayed, for example, during the Malvinas/Falklands War with Britain—has evaporated. There is no way to break out of the cycle of crises, coups and state repression which has been the lot of Argentina since at least the 1930s short of a successful proletarian struggle for state power. The tasks of the proletariat in Argentina cannot be separated from those of the working class in the rest of Latin America. Elaborating on the perspective of permanent revolution in the region, Trotsky wrote:

“The theses of the Fourth International state:

“‘South and Central America will be able to tear themselves out of backwardness and enslavement only by uniting all their states in one powerful federation. But it is not the belated South American bourgeoisie, a thoroughly venal agency of foreign imperialism, who will be called upon to solve this task, but the young South American proletariat, the chosen leader of the oppressed masses. The slogan in the struggle against violence and intrigues of world imperialism and against the bloody work of native comprador cliques is therefore: the *Soviet United States of South and Central America*.’”

Trotsky continued:

“Only under its own revolutionary direction is the proletariat of the colonies and the semicolonies capable of achieving invincible collaboration with the proletariat of the metropolitan centers, and with the world working class as a whole. Only this collaboration can lead the oppressed peoples to complete and final emancipation, through the overthrow of imperialism the world over.”

—“Imperialist War and the Proletarian World Revolution,” May 1940

### IMF Starvation Austerity Enrages Argentine Masses

For more than a decade, Washington and the IMF touted Argentina as a prime example of a “fiscally responsible emerging economy.” In turn, Argentina has been a staunch ally of U.S. imperialism, most recently pledging to send 800 “peacekeeping” troops to aid the U.S. war in Afghanistan. But now the country is bankrupt and in turmoil (and the troops are staying home). In a 1 January *New York Times* op-ed piece titled “Crying With Argentina,” columnist Paul Krugman wrote:

“Argentina, more than any other developing country, bought into the promises of U.S.-promoted ‘neoliberalism’ (that’s liberal as in free markets, not as in Ted Kennedy). Tariffs were slashed, state enterprises were privatized, multinational corporations were welcomed, and the peso was pegged to the dollar. Wall Street cheered, and money poured in: for a while, free-market economics seemed vindicated, and its advocates weren’t shy about claiming credit. Then things began to fall apart....

“Now Argentina is in utter chaos—some observers are even likening it to the Weimar Republic. And Latin Americans do not regard the United States as an innocent bystander.”

So tightly tied to the fortunes of the American dollar, the Argentine economy was severely damaged by the U.S. financial/economic boom of the mid-late '90s. This saw capitalist investors worldwide flood into the Wall Street bull market, causing the value of the dollar to rise sharply in relation to nearly every other currency...except Argentina's. The Argentine peso—and thus the price of Argentine goods on the world market—also rose sharply compared to almost all

#### TROTSKYIST LEAGUE/LIGUE TROTSKYSTE FORUMS

For a Revolutionary Workers Party!

## Mass Protests Shake Argentina

IMF Starvation Austerity Means  
Misery for Workers, the Poor

For Socialist Revolution  
Throughout the Americas!

7:30 p.m., Saturday March 23  
Trinity-St. Paul's Centre

427 Bloor St. W. (just west of Spadina subway)  
More information: (416) 593-4138 or spartcan@on.aibn.com

7:00 p.m., Friday March 15  
Britannia Community Centre

Room L4, 1661 Napier St. (off Commercial Drive)  
More information: (604) 687-0353 or tlit@look.ca

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other countries, including its main trading partner, Brazil. This made Argentine goods uncompetitive and produced mounting balance-of-trade deficits. The normal capitalist market mechanism to redress this would be currency depreciation, which reduces the world market price of exports and increases the domestic price of imports. But in an attempt to stabilize the economy, the Argentine government and many large businesses had denominated most of their new bond issues in dollars, so any peso devaluation would have proportionately increased Argentina's debt.

Thus the country slid into a deep recession four years ago, well before the current worldwide slump. Layoffs and plant closures grew by the month. By July of last year, the economy was collapsing at an annual rate of 11 percent and the masses were desperate. But the U.S. made clear that it expected all the loans negotiated by the Menem and de la Rúa regimes to be repaid with interest. In August, Washington put together an "emergency rescue package" through the IMF—not to bail out Argentina, but to bail out the Wall Street banks that hold Argentine government (and private) bonds. As usual, this involved harsh austerity conditions, including a suspension of the social security system. But the workers and poor, together with an increasingly impoverished middle class, were not willing to take any more and took to the streets in protest. The IMF's response was to freeze \$1.3 billion in aid early last month, whereupon the government stole \$700 million from the government workers' pension funds to pay the interest on the debt. All this led to the yet broader protests that brought down the de la Rúa government.

The situation cries out for the *repudiation of the foreign debt*, which for decades has lined the imperialists' coffers at the expense of Argentina's workers. But no capitalist Argentine government would take such a step, since this would bring down unremitting hostility from its imperialist patrons and undermine the whole basis of its rule. IMF spokesmen now claim that whatever the government does, it will take a further cut of 30 percent in real wages, plus another five to ten years of recession, for Argentina to become internationally competitive!

From the bourgeoisie's class standpoint, it is hard to see *any* regime short of a military dictatorship being able to enforce such gouging austerity against an already enraged population. Yet any move toward a military coup would be met by immense opposition from a population which remembers vividly the last army dictatorship, whose brutal rule ended only after its ignominious defeat in the 1982 Malvinas/Falklands War.

Since 1977, protesting mothers have been meeting at the Plaza de Mayo every week to memorialize the thousands killed and "disappeared" by the military government, which worked closely with the CIA against leftist insurgencies throughout Latin America. The mothers were in the forefront of the huge December 19-20 anti-government protests, where demonstrators chanted, "*Madres de la Plaza, el pueblo las abraza!*" ("Mothers of the Plaza, the people embrace you!").

### Peronism: Deadly Trap for the Workers

To try to control the upsurge, the Argentine bourgeoisie has turned, for now, to the Peronists, specifically the wing under Duhalde which has chosen to put on national-populist trappings. This is a transparent attempt to utilize popular

nostalgia for the government of General Juan Perón during the late 1940s and early '50s, which has come to be seen as a golden era when wages were raised, social programs launched and unions organized. Following a 1943 military coup, Perón emerged as Argentina's strongman. He followed a nationalist-corporatist model of capitalism, in which key sectors of the economy were state-owned, domestic industry was protected by tariffs and import licenses and foreign-exchange transactions were subjected to an array of controls.

While occasionally utilizing anti-Yankee demagoguery, the Peronists in the post-World War II period functioned as the local political agents of Wall Street, keeping the proletariat in line through the labor bureaucracy. They periodically slashed wages and depressed living standards to repay Argentina's debt to U.S. and other foreign banks, usually through the mechanism of accelerated inflation rather than the deflationary measures now favored by the IMF. Workers' wages would rise, but the prices of food, fuel, clothing and other necessities rose even faster. Perón himself was an open admirer of Franco's Spain and Mussolini's Italy. During the "years of the fat cows," he outlawed the Communist Party, smashed every manifestation of working-class independence and subordinated labor to the state in corporatist fashion.



Keystone

### Argentine strongman Juan Perón, 1952.

With the massive rise of industrialization, there was a corresponding explosive growth of the trade unions. Perón proved quite successful both in co-opting dissident union leaders and in organizing corporatist unions directly dependent on the government for their existence. Only those unions which swore allegiance to the Peronist agenda were declared legal, and only legal unions qualified for dues checkoff, subsidies for union buildings and access to social security programs, pension funds, etc. The Peronist regime used nationalist "anti-imperialist" rhetoric in order to further tie the working masses to the Argentine capitalist state.

New president Duhalde, a former vice president under the IMF's man Menem, now peppers his speeches with paeans to Perón and his wife Eva and cynically blames the plight of

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# Argentina...

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the Argentine people on a U.S.-backed "free-market model," which he calls "immoral." But this shift to the national-populist rhetoric of yesteryear is simply designed to strengthen the forces of capitalism in Latin America by recentering the ties of the working class to its "own" national bourgeoisie. Huge sections of the population will continue to suffer grinding immiseration under the Duhalde Peronists as the latter attempt to "reconstruct" the country on the backs of the working class and sections of the petty bourgeoisie.

The imperialist chains that bind the Argentine proletariat can only be broken through a struggle for socialist revolution in Argentina, throughout Latin America and beyond. A workers revolution in a country like France or Spain would have profound effects on the struggles of the Argentine working class. Conversely, nothing would be more heartening to the proletariat in South Africa and workers and the oppressed throughout the Third World than a socialist revolution in a country like Argentina. Crucial to this perspective is intransigent opposition to Peronist bourgeois nationalism, which has time and again led the Argentine workers and oppressed to disaster.

## Argentine Left Pushes National Reformism

Opposition to bourgeois nationalism is the last thing being offered by the fake-Trotskyist groups that populate the Argentine left. Far from having an independent class perspective against the bourgeoisie, they are mired in national reformism, particularly tailing the Peronists. The main trend of ostensible Trotskyism in Argentina is that of the late Nahuel Moreno, today represented by the Movimiento

Socialista de los Trabajadores (MST) and its split-off, the Partido de los Trabajadores por el Socialismo (PTS). In the 1950s, Moreno passed himself off as a "left" Peronist; his newspaper at the time was published as an "Organ of Revolutionary Workers Peronism—Under the Discipline of Gen. Perón and the Peronist High Council"! (See our 1980 *Moreno Truth Kit* pamphlet for the history of this tendency.)

During the Malvinas/Falklands War, the reformist left in Argentina openly backed the genocidal ruling military in the name of "anti-imperialism." The Moreno tendency boasted that it stood squarely "in the military camp of the Argentine dictatorship" (*Correo Internacional*, April 1982). With the backing of the fake left, the generals used the war to head off a general strike, part of burgeoning proletarian struggle against the military regime. In sharp contrast, we fought for proletarian revolutionary opposition to both British imperialism, then ruled by "Iron Lady" Margaret Thatcher, and the Argentine generals, declaring: "Sink Thatcher! Sink the Junta! The Main Enemy Is at Home!"

In 1989, the Morenoites gave backhanded support for the installation of a new Peronist government under Menem. Declaring that "Menem received the majority of votes of the working people," they asked why he didn't use that support "to impose the solutions he says he has" (*El Cronista Comercial*, 31 May 1989). And Menem did just that.

Today, with the Peronists widely discredited, the Argentine left is trying to cloak its nationalist reformism in slightly different rhetoric. The Morenoite MST and the Stalinist Communist Party are the main components of the United Left (Izquierda Unida—IU), an electoralist bloc whose program raises as its maximum demand a call for "an independent political alternative of the workers and people." In the wake of the mass upsurge which overthrew de la Rúa, the IU joined with another fake-Trotskyist outfit, the Partido Obrero

(PO) of Jorge Altamira, and some smaller groups in a December 22 declaration which prominently features the call "For a People's and Workers Government." And the more left-posturing PTS pushes the same perspective in its leaflets and statements, writing that "the revolutionaries of the PTS struggle for a workers' and people's government" (leaflet of 31 December 2001).

This purposefully confusionist call, which dissolves the proletariat into the mass of the "people," is the classic facade for a class-collaborationist alliance with a wing of the national bourgeoisie (who are, after all, part of the "people"). All of these groups uphold the disastrous, anti-revolutionary perspective of the "anti-imperialist united front," which is but a code word for the subordination of the working class to its "own" bourgeoisie. The social turmoil in Argentina today involves many layers of society, from the middle class to students to the unemployed and rural poor. If the proletariat is to emerge as the leading force of the oppressed, fighting for the overthrow of the capitalist order and imperialist domination, it is crucial to draw a clear class line. The MST, PO, PTS et al., in contrast, mix everything together in a "popular" reformist stew.

This is shown as well in the perennial call

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British marines collect captured arms following Argentina's surrender in Malvinas/Falklands War, 1982. Argentina's defeat led to fall of military regime.

*Socialista*, 30 March 1990).

This treachery was repeated when the Morenoites and Altamira's PO hailed Boris Yeltsin's pro-imperialist counter-coup in Moscow in August, 1991. In a 28 August 1991 statement, the Morenoites called it a "Great Revolutionary Victory in the USSR," while PO proclaimed that "the people's victory over the coup has a revolutionary scope" (*Prensa Obrera*, 29 August 1991). These groups bear their own small measure of responsibility for the post-counterrevolutionary devastation that swept the former USSR and East Europe and redounded so negatively against the working people of Latin America. In contrast, the International Communist League fought to the bitter end in defense of the working-class gains that were

embodied in these states, despite their Stalinist misrulers. While the rest of the left embraced imperialist "democracy" against Stalinist "totalitarianism," we fought for proletarian political revolution to oust the Stalinist bureaucrats and restore the program of revolutionary internationalism that animated Lenin and Trotsky's Bolshevik Party.

raised by PO and the PTS for a "constituent assembly" which would, in the words of a 31 December PO leaflet, express "the sovereign will of the workers and unemployed." The PTS adds its own twist to this demand in a statement calling for *both* a "national assembly of employed and unemployed workers" *and* "a sovereign Constituent Assembly, so that the people can discuss democratically and in freedom the way out of the crisis" ("Revolutionary Days," 22 December 2001). And how is this to be accomplished? "Even to open the road to this kind of democracy," the PTS writes, "it is necessary to sweep away the current power with a general strike and with a great national uprising that finishes the task initiated during the revolutionary days of December 19 and 20."

The call for a constituent assembly is, at best, a democratic slogan which at particular times can be used against dictatorial capitalist regimes as a subordinate element in a program for workers revolution. But Argentina currently *has* a bourgeois-democratic form of capitalist class rule with periodic elections, and this has been the case for nearly two decades now. Under these circumstances, the call for a constituent assembly serves only to foster, not break, bourgeois-democratic illusions among the workers and oppressed. In situations of pre-revolutionary turmoil, genuine Trotskyists would fight to forge *organs of dual power*—soviets (workers councils), factory committees, etc.—as organizing centers in the fight for proletarian revolution. But for the centrist PTS, the call for a "workers assembly" is just window-dressing for its perspective of a "great national uprising" to win... another bourgeois parliamentary body!

For all their "anti-imperialist" rhetoric, the Argentine reformist and centrist left were as one with the U.S. imperialist rulers in backing the forces of counterrevolution that destroyed the Soviet Union and the deformed workers states of East Europe. As the West German imperialists pushed for the counterrevolutionary annexation of the East German deformed workers state in 1989-90, the Morenoites came out with a program "whose guiding slogan is: German reunification now" (*Correo Internacional*, January 1990). For its part, the PTS called for "the defense of the right of the German masses to unite however they wish, even if they decide to do so in the framework of capitalism" (*Avanzada*

embodied in these states, despite their Stalinist misrulers. While the rest of the left embraced imperialist "democracy" against Stalinist "totalitarianism," we fought for proletarian political revolution to oust the Stalinist bureaucrats and restore the program of revolutionary internationalism that animated Lenin and Trotsky's Bolshevik Party.

### For a Genuine Trotskyist Party!

The burning need in Argentina today is the forging of an authentic Leninist-Trotskyist party. Such a party would call for the full independence of the trade unions from the bourgeois state. It would act, in Lenin's words, as a "tribune of the people," rallying all those suffering under the capitalist yoke, from the unemployed and impoverished pensioners to the rural poor and small shopkeepers who are being ruined by the austerity crisis. It would emblazon on its banner the fight for women's liberation, combatting *machismo* and backward Catholic attitudes and raising demands for the full integration of women in the workforce at equal pay. It would fight for free abortion on demand as part of free, quality health care for all, and for full democratic rights for homosexuals.

Argentine society is saturated with the chauvinism of a ruling class which revels in its supposed "European" superiority over the rest of Latin America and which is riddled with former Nazis. Crucial to any revolutionary perspective is unmitigated opposition to all manifestations of racism, anti-Semitism and hostility to indigenous minorities and immigrants.

Only a program of revolutionary internationalism can offer a road forward for the Argentine working class. Following the 1917 Russian workers revolution, Lenin's Bolshevik Party canceled the debt amassed by the tsar and the Russian bourgeoisie by simply refusing to pay it. Recognizing that imperialism could not be appeased, they fought to extend the October Revolution worldwide. Today, to liberate themselves from Wall Street debt peonage, the workers and oppressed masses of Argentina and throughout Latin America must be won to the principles and program of proletarian internationalism as represented by Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky. This is the perspective of the ICL: to reforge the Fourth International in order to lead the struggle for new October Revolutions across the planet. ■

## ICL Sections...

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and worse. In Germany, a racist dragnet first aimed at Arab students has been extended to Turkish and Kurdish immigrants as well as black people. In France, even second- and third-generation residents of North African (Maghrebin) origin are deemed "immigrants" and subjected to vicious police rampages. As the government intensifies its longstanding "Vigipirate" campaign, plainclothes and uniformed cops routinely stop people on the streets in working-class and minority neighborhoods and check their papers, and *sans-papiers* (undocumented immigrants) are increasingly being deported.

In Ireland, where the bourgeoisie fell over itself to support the U.S. bombing of Afghanistan despite its professed "neutrality," the "war on terrorism" has likewise meant increased racist terror. As the Dublin Spartacist Group, section of the ICL, stated in its greetings to the February 9 demonstration, "The subsequent upsurge of anti-immigrant racism resulted two weeks ago in the murder of a Chinese student by a racist gang. Hundreds of Irish and Chinese people took to the streets to protest this murder. We distributed a leaflet which told who was really responsible: 'Capitalist State's Anti-Immigrant Crusade Fuels Racist Murder of Chinese Student.'... We have told workers, youth and others about this Bay Area demonstration as an example of what is necessary in response to racist terror: mobilisations of the social power of the integrated working class."

### For Class Unity with Mexican Workers!

Any fight to defend immigrant rights must address the plight of workers from Mexico and elsewhere in Latin America who make up a large proportion of immigrant workers in the U.S. We fight for full citizenship rights for all immigrants, "legal" and "illegal," and oppose NAFTA (and its extension to the rest of the hemisphere under the FTAA), which has meant the "free trade" rape of Mexico by U.S. imperialism and its Canadian junior partner. But the pro-imperialist labor leadership in North America condemns NAFTA from the standpoint of chauvinist protectionism, targeting Mexican workers for rabid denunciation.

Breaking the chains forged by the labor tops that shackle the workers to their "own" rulers in the U.S. and Canada is central to a revolutionary perspective throughout the hemisphere. To the south, our comrades of the Grupo Esparquista de México (GEM) fight to break the proletariat there from the nationalism that binds it to the Mexican bourgeoisie. In its greetings to the demonstration, the GEM stressed that "the fight of workers for a just society in Mexico cannot be completed without solidarity in struggle with their class brothers on the other side of the border."

Among the endorsements garnered for the protest by the GEM was that of some 600 striking chemical workers in Michoacán, members of the CTM union federation. It is a measure of the potential for joint class struggle that these striking workers reached across the border in solidarity with a demonstration in the U.S.

Elsewhere in Latin America, a team of ICL comrades publicized the labor-centered mobilization in Argentina, which has been shaken by mass protests against the harsh austerity measures dictated by the International Monetary Fund and enforced by the Argentine rulers, who are beholden to imperialist patronage. In his greetings to the



AFP

Paris, February 9: Undocumented Immigrants demonstrate to demand legal papers.

demonstration, the secretary of international relations of the CTA union federation declared:

"The social disciplinarians of today are basically two: unemployment on one side and judicial prosecution of social struggles on the other. The most illustrative case of the latter is that of Emilio Ali, a young man condemned to five and a half years in prison for pleading for food at a supermarket at the head of a line of unemployed people.

"From Argentina, the Central de los Trabajadores Argentinos sends out its solidarity and support to your struggle for civil rights and on the road toward constructing a world of greater justice and solidarity."

We say: **Down with NAFTA and the FTAA! For socialist revolution throughout the Americas!**

### Anti-Immigrant Terror in "Fortress Europe"

No less than in North America, the need for the organized workers movement to mobilize in defense of immigrant workers is posed pointblank throughout racist "Fortress Europe." From the Labour Party in Britain to the Socialist Party in France and the Social Democrats (SPD) in Germany, the social democrats currently administer capitalist states in much of West Europe, enforcing the racist repression that in turn feeds the growth of the far right and fascists.

The German city of Hamburg has been targeted as a hotbed of "Islamic terrorism"—a "city of sleepers"—by the SPD capitalist government and the media. On December 9, Achidi John was killed while in police custody, a victim of sadistic use of induced vomiting, a means of torture meted out to immigrants by the government in its "war on drugs." Some 140 mostly immigrant students have been subjected to computerized "racial profiling" (*Rasterfahndung*) and hauled in for police "interrogation." Among those victimized was Abdelwahab Osman K.-M., a German researcher of Sudanese origin, whose apartment was ransacked by police while he was on vacation and whose name was dragged through the mud for weeks in the bourgeois press. An international arrest warrant was issued against him only to be



Spartakist

### Hundreds protest racist cop killing of Achidi John in Hamburg, Germany.

lifted for lack of proof. Our comrades of the Hamburg Spartakist Youth organized a protest at his university, demanding "Hands Off Abdelwahab! Down with the *Rasterfahndung!*" and issued a leaflet raising the call, "For Student/Immigrant/Worker Mobilizations Against Racist State Terror."

Our comrades not only pointed to the role of the ruling Social Democrats in perpetrating anti-immigrant outrages but also exposed illusions in the Party of Democratic Socialism (PDS), which is peddled as an alternative to the SPD by much of the fake left. The PDS is the social-democratic heir of the Stalinist bureaucracy that sold out the East German deformed workers state to West German imperialism. The counterrevolutionary reunification of Germany in 1990 brought in its wake mass unemployment, rising fascist terror and the devastation of the East, while encouraging attacks on the living standards of the working class throughout Germany.

As the Spartakist Youth leaflet explained, the PDS' treachery "paved the way for 12 years of massive attacks on the workers and for the deployment of the Bundeswehr [German army] all over the world. Since then the PDS has been lusting to participate for German imperialism in the government." Now the PDS, which continues to have the support of many workers in the East, has joined the SPD in a coalition government in Berlin, the more effectively to administer anti-working-class austerity and to enforce it by unleashing more cops on the streets.

In a chilling demonstration that the "war on terror" is aimed against the workers movement as a whole, on February 2 the SPD government in Munich deployed hundreds of cops to surround the DGB trade-union hall as an anti-NATO meeting was taking place inside. It was only the mobilization of workers who came out to the meeting site upon hearing of this massive police provocation that persuaded the cops to stand down and let the anti-NATO protesters leave the building unmolested. One unionist remarked that not since Hitler had a union building been surrounded by cops.

But the force behind the police provocation was not Hitlerite Nazis but the SPD, whose base is in fact the unionized workers of Germany. Moreover, many of the cops who surrounded the hall are, grotesquely, members of the DGB union federation! The Spartakist Workers Party and Spartakist Youth demand: Cops out of the unions!

In the tow of the West European social-democratic governments is the bulk of the reformist and centrist left, who invariably call for a vote to these class traitors in the name of "fighting the right." In France, this means support to the Socialist-led popular-front government that presides over Vigipirate state terror. The reformist Lutte Ouvrière strikes a left posture by opposing a vote to the popular front in the upcoming presidential elections. But its deafening silence on Vigipirate amounts to a tacit embrace of this anti-immigrant state repression, which is a central mechanism for tying the working class to the capitalist rulers against a feared, loathed and invented "enemy within." The reformist and centrist groups who support the popular front likewise serve to bind workers in France to their "own" rulers by peddling anti-American nationalism.

In their greetings to the February 9 demonstration, our comrades of the Ligue Trotskyiste de France (LTF) noted:

"Your demonstration also gives us the chance to fight against anti-American chauvinism which is spread far and wide by the bourgeoisie here. Even parties which claim to be socialist push this chauvinism, pretending that all the world's problems come from the U.S. We seek to demonstrate to French workers that their best ally against capitalism is the international working class. Your mobilization in the United States allows us to introduce workers to internationalism in action."

In France, as throughout West Europe, a strong component of workers of immigrant origin are integrated in the working class in strategic sectors of industry. This underlines the critical importance of the defense of immigrants in advancing the cause of the revolutionary unity of the proletariat.

### For a Revolutionary Workers Party!

The Bay Area mobilization in defense of immigrants had particular resonance in Australia, where John Howard's right-wing Liberal government, backed by the Australian Labor Party (ALP) tops, is waging a barbaric campaign against refugees, many of them Afghans, Iraqis and Iranians. This has provoked desperate protests in refugee detention camps, with hundreds threatening suicide or going on hunger strikes, some even stitching their lips together with fence wire and torn blankets. It has also sharply polarized Australian society, as demonstrations erupt in cities around the country against the brutal incarceration of asylum-seekers and thousands announce their willingness to shelter escaped refugees. Our comrades of the Spartakist League/Australia have intervened in meetings and protests to fight for union/minority action to defend refugees and immigrants, arguing in a 10 February leaflet:

"The racist ruling class won't be swayed by the servile appeals to their 'morals' pushed by the Laborite left and liberals. The capitalists' only 'moral' calculus is their bottom line. To carry out huge job massacres and shredding of health care, education and welfare unopposed, the capitalists whip up racism to divide the working class, going after the most vulnerable first, so as to paralyse workers' ability to struggle. But the working class, with its strategic immigrant component, makes the wheels of profit turn. A political strike combining defence of immigrants with opposition to union-busting attacks would be a

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## ICL Sections...

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major step in the fight to push back the bosses' union-busting and divisive racist schemes. Asylum now and full citizenship rights for refugees and all immigrants! Close the concentration camps! No deportations!"

When Labor competed with the Liberals in racist tirades against desperate refugees during last November's election campaign, it provoked outrage among immigrant workers, who make up a large part of the membership of many unions. Reflecting such anger at the base, the Laborite trade-union tops have set up "Labor for Refugees," which avows opposition to mandatory detention. This is a significant break in the climate of racist reaction. But the union tops, and reformist groups like the International Socialist Organization (ISO), seek to steer opposition to the government's attacks right back into support to the ALP, which bears direct responsibility for the anti-immigrant and anti-union policies. Hailing Labor leader Simon Crean's call for detained children to be released to foster care as a "massive boost to every refugee," the ISO simply enthuses over Labor for Refugees, whose aim is to pressure the ALP into a more "compassionate" policy, as a "terrific breakthrough" (*Australian Socialist Worker*, 1 February).

With refugees drowning on the high seas or thrown into concentration camps while striking workers are baited as "terrorists," immigrant and also white Australian-born workers are looking for a position from which to fight in defense of the

oppressed and the labor movement as a whole. Our aim is to direct the evident anger and discontent at the base, including through actions like the Bay Area mobilization, to show that working people and oppressed minorities need a revolutionary workers party, not a "Labor" party that supports capitalist rule.

In contrast to the reformists and centrists whose program is defined by pressuring the social democrats for reforms of the existing system, our purpose is to win workers to the understanding that they must sweep away the entire capitalist system, to forge through education and struggle the vanguard party of the proletariat needed to achieve that goal. Our defense of immigrant rights is a vital part of our revolutionary internationalist program. This was underlined in the LTF greetings to the Oakland mobilization:

"While the bourgeoisie attacks immigrants, we must remember the key role immigrant workers have played in the class struggle, such as during the Paris Commune of 1871. It was a Hungarian worker, Leo Frankel, minister of labor and trade, who wrote the decree for the expropriation of the factories during the Commune. The Commune also declared:

"'Loudly proclaiming its internationalist aspirations—because the cause of the producers is the same everywhere and because the enemy is the same everywhere, regardless of one's nationality (regardless of one's national dress)—Paris has proclaimed the principle of admitting foreigners to the Commune; Paris has even elected a foreign worker (a member of the International) to its Executive committee....'

"We celebrate the memory of the Paris Commune and we fight for new October Revolutions. Your demonstration in Oakland, modest but exemplary, shows the way forward for all workers." ■

## Mumia Abu-Jamal...

(continued from page 2)

exploitation of the many by the few, which in America is rooted in the forcible subjugation of the black population at the bottom of society.

As ever more death row and other prisoners are exonerated of false convictions through DNA evidence, popular support for the death penalty has waned and America's imperialist rulers have faced growing diplomatic embarrassment around the world. And Jamal's case shows what the racist, barbaric death penalty in the U.S. is all about. On December 2, the Paris city council voted to make Mumia an honorary citizen of the city, an indication of the breadth of support for his cause around the world. This new court ruling comes even as the right-wing Bush administration, invoking the need for "war measures" as it bombs the people of Afghanistan, is gearing up a new COINTELPRO-style campaign of terror and provocation. Targeting people of Near Eastern descent in the first instance, the government's "war on terror" is aimed at all immigrants, minorities, labor, leftists and all perceived opponents of the government.

What is needed is a massive struggle centered on the social power of the multiracial working class to fight for Jamal's freedom! Based on the only significant integration in racist America—the workplace and the factory floor—the trade unions have the social power and the potential to become battalions in the struggle against capitalist exploitation and racial oppression, to shake the foundations of this decaying capitalist system and ultimately topple it. If undertaken with a mobilization of the union movement at the fore-

front, the fight to free Mumia and to abolish the racist death penalty would be a first, giant step in that direction and would strike a significant blow against the draconian new repressive measures being implemented by the Bush administration with bipartisan support. To that end, labor must break the chains with which the trade-union misleaders have shackled the unions to the political parties—centrally the Democrats—and the state agencies of the enemy class. **No illusions in the capitalist courts! Free Mumia now! Abolish the racist death penalty!** ■

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## Oakland Mobilization...

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the working class—class collaboration vs. class independence from the capitalists and their state.

Thomas upheld as a model the “legacy of Harry Bridges,” under which in the 1930s “longshoremen refused to load and unload cargo in the form of scrap iron that was destined for Japan.” Far from an act of international working-class solidarity, this boycott was rather very much in line with U.S. imperialism’s battle with their Japanese capitalist competitors over which of these gangs of robbers would dominate the Pacific. The pre-World War II longshore action is an example of the same poison promoted today by the labor tops that pits workers of different countries against each other. This protectionism, premised on defending American capitalism, is part and parcel of the union bureaucracy’s support for the capitalist Democratic Party.

In contrast was the powerful example of Japanese dock workers described in greetings read to the rally from the Spartacist Group of Japan: “To protest Japanese imperialism’s cooperation in the U.S.-led war in Afghanistan, dock workers near Nagasaki showed some of their potential power by refusing to load Japanese warships bound for the Indian Ocean.” ILWU members also greatly appreciated meeting a young German worker who read greetings to the rally from the Spartakist-Jugend, youth group of the Spartakist Workers Party of Germany, section of the International Communist League.

This joint action by immigrant, black and white workers in the U.S. against the bloodthirsty U.S. imperialist rulers struck a chord internationally. Reflecting the international character of the world market and common interests of the working class of all nations, greetings to the rally brought attention to the struggles of immigrant workers from Zimbabweans, Mozambicans and Basothans in South Africa to North Africans, Turks and Kurds in Europe, from Koreans in Japan to Asian and Middle Eastern immigrants in Australia.

Other messages of support came from the National Federation of Undocumented Workers of France (Coordination Nationale des Sans-Papiers de France), Australia Asia Worker Links and the Brescia branch of the Italian FIOM (Federation of Metal Workers and Employees), which has been very actively involved in defense of Pakistani, North African and Senegalese immigrants in Italy. Statements were sent by sections of the ICL not only in Japan but Mexico, South Africa, France, Britain, Ireland, Germany, Italy, Canada and Australia.

The Oakland demonstration repudiated in action the equation of the working class in the U.S. with the racist, imperialist U.S. state—an equation pushed both by the U.S. ruling class and those who killed thousands of working people in the attack on the World Trade Center, as well as nationalists of all stripes, and widely believed by people throughout the world. The statement by the Grupo Espartaquista de México in particular had a strong impact when read out near the end of the demonstration. Noting that Mexican immigrant workers in the U.S. create “a broad human bridge between the working class of the two countries,” it went on:

“It is of great importance for workers and the oppressed in



Workers Vanguard

Bay Area longshoremen were at core of Oakland mobilization.

Mexico to see American workers, blacks, immigrants and youth fighting against the repressive and racist measures of the U.S. imperialist rulers. Down with the lie of national unity!

“A fundamental part of our fight to forge a revolutionary and internationalist workers party in Mexico is to expose the lie of nationalism, an ideology that seeks to deceive the workers, tying them to their own exploiters.... The true allies of the Mexican workers are not their brutal exploiters. Their true allies are you: the American workers fighting for their rights and those of all the oppressed. For joint class struggle against capitalist rulers in Mexico and the U.S.!”

While the demonstration helped workers to concretely see the need for and be part of joint struggle with immigrant workers, radical-minded students who came from as far away as Santa Cruz and Los Angeles were impressed to see the presence of workers who represent the only force that can defeat the imperialist rulers of the U.S. and put an end to racism, exploitation and war.

In contrast to other recent protest demonstrations, this rally was a mobilization of the working class and the oppressed *independent of the capitalists*, their parties and their state. It was built despite the boycott by most of the rest of the left, who claim to fight for an end to war and for solidarity with immigrants but who will not breach the bourgeoisie’s “national unity” campaign, instead placing their hopes in allying with the liberal Democratic wing of the class enemy. The International Socialist Organization flatly refused to endorse the protest, falsely counterposing a rally at the San Francisco Marriott for largely immigrant hotel workers. The Bolshevik Tendency attended but would not endorse the demonstration; the Socialist Workers Organization and Freedom Socialist Party endorsed but did not attend.

This demonstration illustrated on a small scale what a revolutionary workers party would do. The task ahead of us is to forge such a party, in political struggle against the pro-capitalist misleaders of the working class, which will mobilize all the oppressed in a united struggle for workers power. Those who labor must rule. Join us! ■

## Immigrants...

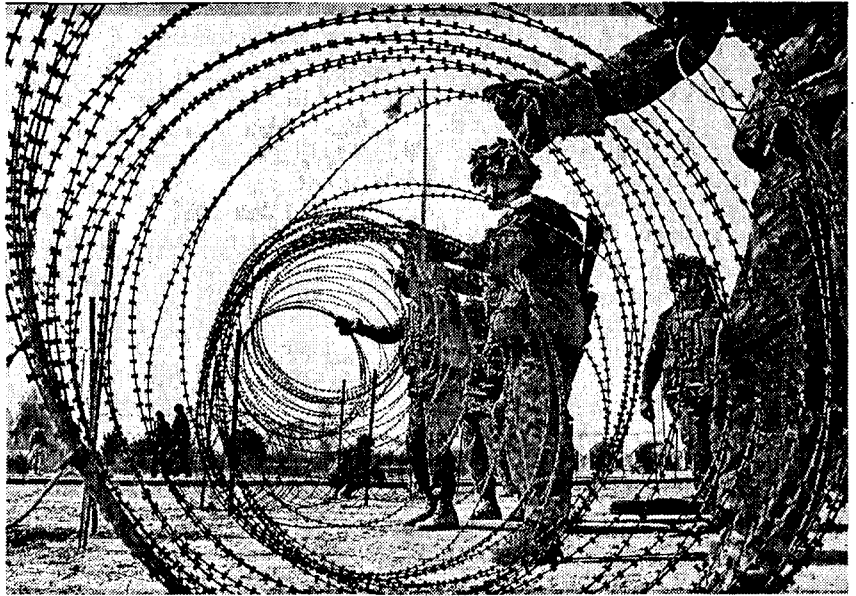
(continued from page 1)

world. Hundreds of foreign students have been hauled in for "questioning" based on nationality alone, and anyone of Near Eastern descent who has studied information technologies or engineering sciences is considered suspect.

The rulers aim to shred the democratic rights of the whole population, starting with those who have the fewest rights to begin with—immigrants and refugees. Make no mistake: this campaign is aimed at regimenting and repressing everybody through fear, not least through fear of the state itself—and working people and their organizations are right in the gunights. Profits were plunging into the red long before September 11, and the bosses want to slash jobs to protect their bottom line. That means union busting. Racism based on the terror scare is a wedge the capitalists intend to use to split and wreck any effective working-class resistance to their austerity plans.

In the U.S., hundreds of foreign-born workers were fired at the Salt Lake City airport as a "security measure" immediately before the Olympics. The sinister Maritime Security Act sets up members of the powerful U.S. longshore unions for harassment and firings, and a similar law is being mooted in Canada. Such attacks represent a gun at the head of the organized labor movement, which in Canada as in other imperialist countries is decisively multiracial.

The rulers' "war on terror" seeks to breed paranoid distrust of the foreign-born among their native-born class brothers and sisters. Working people in this country must come to understand—as their enemy, the Canadian capitalist class, understands perfectly well—that labor will never forge unity in struggle unless it champions the rights of immigrants and refugees against the Canadian government's racist campaign. Hundreds of thousands of immigrant workers are integrated into the unions in this country, and many



Bernard Weil/Toronto Star

**Canadian troops in Afghanistan. Imperialist war abroad goes hand in hand with racism at home—All U.S./Canadian troops out of Central Asia!**

bring priceless experience of the class war from workers' struggles in their homelands. Defense of immigrants and defense of the unions are therefore inseparably linked.

What stands in the way of this understanding is the social-democratic labor bureaucracy that currently runs the union movement. When they are not openly spitting on immigrant workers, such misleaders are working overtime to blame workers in other countries for the ills of Canadian capitalism. Their protectionist schemes, their Maple Leaf chauvinism and "national unionism" are poisonous to workers' unity. The necessary fight to defend immigrant rights poses point blank the need for a new internationalist, class-struggle leadership of labor.

### Canadian Capitalism: Hell for Immigrants

In Parliament, Jean Chrétien declares that the Canadian ruling class's "war on terror" is a war of freedom and civilized values against fanatical barbarism. His hypocrisy, as usual, is shameless. Consider the case of 19-year-old Palestinian construction worker Mohammed Almuttan, arrested at Pearson airport in Toronto and held 59 days without charges—55 of them in solitary confinement. An airport immigration official told him "As far as I'm concerned, you're a terrorist and you have to prove to me you're not." While in detention, he fell ill and was refused medication. When he tried to speak Arabic to other detainees, whom he couldn't even see, a guard threatened: "The next time you speak Arabic, I will come in here and break your head" (*Toronto Star*, 24 November 2001).

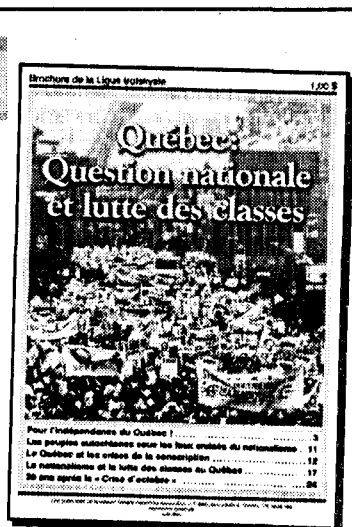
Chrétien's loyal parliamentary "opposition," including the NDP, have politely limited their questions to the treatment of prisoners by...*American* forces in Guantánamo Bay, Cuba. Yet so blatantly vicious and arbitrary is the jackboot treatment meted out to "terror suspects" here that even some agents of the state have bridled. The judge who ordered the release of Ribhi Jamel Sheikh—like Almuttan, a Palestinian held for weeks without charges simply because he was an Arab—called his arrest "deplorable." When Sheikh rose in court to thank the Canadian justice system, the judge

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audibly remarked, "Such as it is."

The capitalist justice system "such as it is"—wrought up these days to fever pitch by the "war on terror"—is the same system that jails trade union militants for defending their picket lines, that unleashes the cops who daily terrorize black and other minority neighborhoods. Bourgeois law codifies the day-to-day working of the capitalist state—cops, courts, prisons, army—whose sole purpose is to maintain the system of wage slavery through its monopoly of armed violence. The law and the state will remain "such as they are" until they are dismantled and replaced by the working people through socialist revolution.

Since September 11, many others have undergone the same treatment as Almuttan and Sheikha. Nobody knows for sure how many, because the state isn't saying. In the weeks after the criminal attack on the World Trade Center, hundreds were picked up and interrogated by the RCMP, at least 32 have been held without charges as possible "threats to national security," and some have been quietly turned over to U.S. authorities. Mohamed Elmasry, president of the Canadian Islamic Congress, reports that "sermons at mosques are being taped and many homes are wire-tapped" (*Maclean's*, 10 December 2001). Meanwhile, CSIS agents turn up at workplaces, homes and businesses, spreading fear and suspicion through whole communities.

The state manhunt intensifies what has always been the reality of life for many immigrants in this country, condemned to unemployment and relentless police violence. Despite the fact they are twice as likely to have university degrees as people born here, recent immigrants earn only two-thirds of what non-immigrants do. In Toronto, over half live below the poverty line. Among Somalis the figure is 62 percent, Ethiopians 70 percent and Ghanaians 87 percent. This is the real face of "multicultural" Canada.

Well before September 11, deportations of refugees were sharply on the rise. The Liberals' anti-immigrant Bill C-11, which makes deportations even easier and entry harder, was drafted more than a year ago, then rushed through Parliament after the World Trade Center attack. Every day, hundreds of refugee claimants and other "suspect" immigrants languish in hellholes like the Toronto West Detention Centre. Now the Supreme Court has upheld the deportation of refugees to face torture and death in their homelands.

The liberal and social-democratic notion of Canada as a "welcoming" nation of immigrants is a self-serving myth. Under capitalism, immigration policy is about controlling the supply of labor. When there is a need for labor, the capitalists import it from abroad. When the demand for labor shrinks, the rulers deliberately incite anti-immigrant racism in order to weaken working-class solidarity, cut off the flow of immigrants and expel foreign-born workers already in the country.

It was not until 1967, when the post-WWII demand for labor outstripped its traditional supply from Britain and other European countries, that the Canadian ruling class lifted its official color bar to immigration. In the three decades since, the Canadian working class has developed a strategic immigrant and second-generation core. Immigrant workers—three-quarters of whom are now non-white—



SC photo

**February 2 hospital workers rally in Vancouver. Immigrant workers represent crucial component of labor movement.**

accounted for 70 percent of the growth of the labor force a decade ago, and are expected to account for all the growth within ten years. In its own interests and those of all the oppressed, the labor movement must defend immigrant rights!

The Trotskyist League/Ligue trotskyste fights for full citizenship rights for everyone who has made it here. We demand an end to the detentions and the deportations of refugees fleeing poverty and right-wing terror. A massive organizing drive is needed to bring the heavily immigrant workforces in low-wage, largely unorganized sectors like electronics assembly into the trade unions.

### **Anti-Immigrant Racism and the Labor Bureaucracy**

Standing in the way of this perspective are the pro-capitalist trade union bureaucrats and their parliamentary NDP allies. Bought off by Canadian imperialism with small change from its superprofits, these social democrats view the world through the same lens as their capitalist masters. They are opposed to anti-capitalist class struggle, striving to suppress it at every turn and to divert it into safe parliamentary channels that reinforce the system.

The labor tops feed working people the chauvinist lie that their interests are tied to the "success" of Canadian capitalism, and that working people elsewhere in the world are, at best, competitors and even potential enemies. A particularly crude example of this can be found in the January 2002 newsletter of Toronto IBEW (electrical workers) Local 353, which denounces "the Labourers Union, who want to bring cheap labor from Brazil and Portugal. Once these workers arrive here, the Labourers intend to train them and they will then become competition for our existing trades."

In contrast to such blatant chauvinism, the CAW auto workers union and the Canadian Union of Public Employees are on record opposing the government's wholesale assault

(continued on page 18)

## Immigrants...

(continued from page 17)

on civil rights. A CAW contingent also joined a Toronto protest against Bill C-36 and in defense of immigrant rights last December. On one level, this reflects the fact that there are far more immigrant workers in manufacturing and parts of the public sector than in the construction trades. These labor tops are also aware that provisions of Bill C-36 and other recent Liberal legislation could be used directly against the unions.

But far from preparing a struggle against racist Canadian capitalism, the "left" union bureaucrats evoke mythical traditions of Canadian "fairness" and "justice" and breed illusions that the system can be fundamentally restrained or reformed. The CAW leadership in particular is positioning itself to co-opt militancy back into parliamentary channels. CAW contingents have been prominent on youthful anti-globalization protests, and the top union bureaucracy has distanced itself from the deeply discredited and right-wing NDP leadership. Instead, they are working alongside the New Politics Initiative, a stalking horse for a "renewed" social-democratic party.

In fact, the social activism of this wing of the labor bureaucracy is premised on a thoroughly pro-capitalist, national-chauvinist outlook. Far from championing internationalist unity of the working class, the CAW leadership is all too ready to point the finger of blame at "foreigners" as the cause of unemployment and poverty in this country. While effusively praising the "commitment" of the North American Big Three auto companies to Canadian workers, union president Buzz Hargrove demands that the government in Ottawa take "some very aggressive action to defend our market and our industry" against imports from Japan (*National Post*, 23 February). Except it's not "our" industry: it's owned and run by the capitalist profiteers, and that will be the case until socialist revolution rips it from their hands and reorganizes society in the interests of the vast majority.

The capitalists' only "commitment" is to their bottom line. While the CAW bureaucrats denounce the Japanese and alibi the profit-gouging North American auto bosses, Ford and General Motors are shutting plants in Oakville, Ontario and Ste-Thérèse, Quebec, throwing thousands of union workers onto the street. According to Hargrove, "What we need is a Canadian government that stands up for Canada's interests." But the only interests the capitalist government in Ottawa will stand up for are the bosses' interests.

Trade protectionism—the labor tops' "answer" to the unemployment and job-slashing which are endemic to the capitalist system—is poison to class struggle. It serves only to line up the working people behind their own national exploiters and government. And by targeting "foreigners" as the enemy, it harmonizes perfectly with the bourgeoisie's war against immigrants and refugees.

### For Workers' Unity in Struggle— For Socialist Revolution!

Flag-waving Canadian nationalism is not only used as a cudgel against immigrants and workers abroad: the Canadian rulers have long used it to divide workers along national lines by fomenting chauvinism against the Québécois. Thus it was no slip of the tongue when Chrétien denounced the sovereignist Bloc Québécois as "defenders of the terrorists" after Bloc leader Gilles Duceppe asked about Canadian soldiers handing prisoners in Afghanistan over to the Americans.

This is the same Jean Chrétien whose Clarity Act, supported by the NDP, makes the exercise of Quebec's democratic right to self-determination effectively illegal. Following the prime minister's "defenders of the terrorists" slur, a spokesman for Quebec's ruling bourgeois-nationalist Parti Québécois noted how as a federal cabinet minister in the 1970s, Chrétien had encouraged RCMP "dirty tricks" against the PQ and other Quebec nationalist organizations.

Indeed, the last time this country saw as sweeping a crackdown on civil liberties as we see today was in October 1970, when the federal government invoked the War Measures Act, sending the army into Montreal and imprisoning

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SC photo

Protest against racist detention of immigrants and refugees at Toronto's Celebrity Inn, February 16.

without charges hundreds of Quebec nationalists, leftists and union leaders. Like today, the excuse was a fight against "terrorism"—the kidnapping of a British diplomat and a Quebec cabinet minister by the left-nationalist Front de Libération du Québec. But the real purpose was to suppress growing social and national discontent within Quebec.

Anti-Quebec chauvinism has long served as a block to working-class consciousness and struggle against capitalism. In English Canada the labor misleaders and, especially, the NDP foment "national unity" patriotism among the working class. This in turn has driven the historically more militant Québécois workers into the arms of their "own" bourgeois-nationalist exploiters, represented by the Bloc and PQ. We Trotskyists advocate independence for Quebec—both to

fight against the dominant Anglo chauvinism and to lay a basis for breaking Quebec workers from the grip of bourgeois nationalism, thus allowing the decisive class questions to come to the fore.

To go forward in its struggles, the working class of this country must consciously champion the cause of all the oppressed: immigrants, refugees, the Québécois, women, gays and lesbians, Native people. That requires a new leadership of labor—a revolutionary workers party grounded in the program and principles of Marxism; a party which, in the words of V.I. Lenin, leader of the October 1917 Russian workers revolution, would "react to every manifestation of tyranny and oppression, no matter where it takes place."

On February 16, a coalition of anti-racist groups organized a protest in defense of immigrant rights outside Toronto's Celebrity Inn, a rundown motel converted into a refugee detention center. As internees held up signs to the sealed windows, a Trotskyist League spokesman

told the demonstrators, "We have to fight now for our rights and those of our immigrant brothers and sisters." Our comrade noted that the "war on terrorism" is "exposing the democratic imperialist state as nothing other than the bourgeoisie's repressive weapon against workers and the poor," and emphasized:

"We can't fight with the NDP. They voted to send Canadian troops to Afghanistan, they embraced the bourgeoisie's 'war on terrorism,' only asking that a 'sunset clause' be inserted [into Bill C-36]. In or out of power, the NDP serves to chain the workers to their oppressors. With the assistance of much of the fake-left, they channel militancy and struggle back into dead-end parliamentarism. We need a party that will stop at nothing but workers revolution, serving as a tribune of all the oppressed." ■

## B.C. Labor...

(continued from page 24)

To go forward, the labor movement must consciously combat every effort by the bosses to wreck working-class unity. In particular, the rulers' "war on terror" is a knife at the throat of organized labor. As in the U.S., the Canadian capitalists have seized on the killing of thousands of innocent people in New York City on September 11 to reinforce their class rule, including through new repressive laws like Bill C-36. Their immediate targets are immigrants and refugees, hundreds of whom have been detained without charges. Entire immigrant communities—Muslim, Sikh, Tamil, Filipino—are being witchhunted as harboring potential "terrorists."

Immigrant workers are a core component of the organized labor movement, and many bring valuable experiences of struggle from their homelands. The rulers' intention is to terrorize such workers and make them "suspect" in the eyes of their native-born brothers and sisters. In B.C., Filipino hospital workers, Sikh woodworkers and thousands more are right in the cross hairs. In its own defense, labor must defend the rights of immigrants and refugees. At the same time, workers' unity in struggle against capitalist austerity and repression would shake the rulers' reactionary post-

September 11 onslaught on civil liberties and the rights of all working people. The labor-centered mobilization in Oakland, California on February 9 against U.S. anti-terrorist legislation gives a taste of what is needed (see page 3).

### NDP Paved Campbell's Way

Any fight between labor and the bosses' government is a political fight from the opening bell. Militancy alone won't be enough to defeat the Liberal offensive, nor will a political perspective based on bringing the NDP back to power. Look at the Ontario Days of Action of the mid-1990s, which mobilized hundreds of thousands of unionists and their allies against the savage attacks of Mike Harris's Conservatives. City after city was shut down by one-day general strikes, yet Harris remained in power and continued his onslaught.

The Ontario labor bureaucrats sought to channel widespread anger among the workers not into a challenge to the exploitative capitalist profit system but into reviving the fortunes of the NDP, whose 1990-95 government paved the way for Harris through its many attacks on workers and minorities. Now the same scenario threatens to play out in B.C. Addressing a cheering strike rally in Vancouver, teachers union president David Chudnovsky called the Campbell

(continued on page 20)

## B.C. Labor...

(continued from page 19)

government “out of control,” while union placards declared “Next election, Liberal rejection.” For the labor misleaders, another NDP government—a capitalist government they think they can “control”—is the promised land.

The idea that an NDP government would defend workers and the oppressed is false to the core. Many public sector workers undoubtedly see the New Democrats as a lesser evil, especially since they were to some extent sheltered from the austerity “restructuring” that devastated workers in the private sector under NDP rule in the 1990s. Falling commodity prices savaged resource industries. Mines and mills closed throughout the province. Unemployment for young men is now over 14 percent. And where were the union leaders who now talk “struggle” while all this was happening? They were keeping the lid on working-class anger on behalf of “their” government.

The Harcourt, Clark and Dosanjh regimes set the stage for the Liberal avalanche with strikebreaking attacks of their own, laced with a heavy dose of poisonous racism and chauvinism. Who was it that sent the RCMP and the army against Native protesters at Gustafsen Lake? Who demanded the internment of “illegal” immigrants to defend B.C. against a supposed “invasion” of Asian migrants? Who led the “national unity” crusade in B.C. against Quebec’s right to independence? The NDP did all this and more. In pushing the hot buttons of social reaction, the New Democrats served their capitalist masters, working overtime to divide Canadian-born workers from their class brothers and sisters at home and abroad.

The NDP is a *bourgeois* workers party, based in part on the trade unions but thoroughly pro-capitalist in its leadership and program. Like the bureaucracy atop the unions—a privileged layer bought off by capitalist superprofits—its role is to protect the rule of the exploiting class, using its authority among workers and the oppressed to blind them to their own, counterposed class interests. Social democracy leads workers into a blind alley because, like the rulers themselves, it views capitalism—exploitation of the many by the few—as natural and permanent.



Arlen Redekop/Province

**Anti-immigrant racism under NDP rule: Cops unleashed in 1998 to round up Central American immigrants in Vancouver’s Downtown Eastside under guise of “war on drugs.”**

When in power, the New Democrats are more than ready to unleash the forces of the capitalist state—the cops, courts, prisons, etc., whose sole purpose is to defend capitalist property and “legality” against workers and the oppressed. And their allies in the labor bureaucracy actually organize some of these repressive forces into the unions, like the prison guards who are a constituent part of the B.C. Government Employees Union. The inclusion of these agents of the capitalist state in a workers’ organization is a grotesque affront to the victims of capitalist state terror and a threat to all workers and the oppressed. Cops and prison guards out of the unions!

To open the road to a future free of injustice, poverty and oppression, working people must be broken from the NDP to forge a *revolutionary* workers party. Such a party would actively champion the cause of all the oppressed, upholding full citizenship rights for all immigrants, fighting for Native rights, combating Anglo-chauvinist bigotry and advocating independence for Quebec. It would emblazon on its banner the need for a socialist revolution to smash the capitalist state and replace it with a workers state and a socialist planned economy, which alone can serve the interests of all the oppressed. The Trotskyist League/Ligue trotskyste, together with our youth group the Spartacus Youth Club, fights to build the nucleus of such a party.

### Dead End of “Left” Reformism

Thanks to its flagrant attacks on workers and the poor, the NDP has earned the disdain of many young activists, including in the unions. In response, “left” New Democrat MPs like Vancouver’s Svend Robinson and Libby Davies want to change the party’s image by giving it a more activist face. Their New Politics Initiative (NPI) wants the NDP to reinvent itself as a new party drawing in anti-globalization and environmental activists. But the NPI’s explicit goal is merely to channel the aspirations of would-be anti-capitalist militants back into the dead end of bourgeois parliamentary politics.

Assisting the NPI in this regard are reformist left groups

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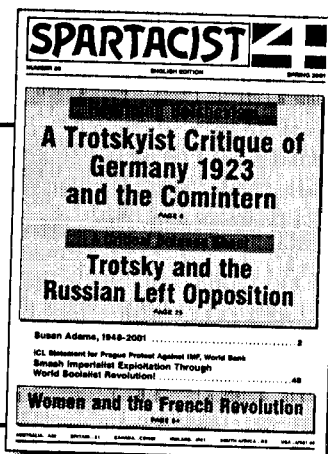
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like the International Socialists (I.S.), *L'Humanité* and Socialist Action. While criticizing this or that position of the NDP leadership, in practice these groups work to reinforce the hold of social democracy over embattled working people. In numerous articles on the labor ferment in B.C. today, the I.S.'s *Socialist Worker* makes precisely one reference to the New Democrats, commenting in the February 6 issue that "the NDP has been almost silent until this devastating round of job cuts." The I.S. itself is almost silent on the attacks of the NDP governments of the 1990s because it bears its own small measure of responsibility for these governments. Having called on working people to elect the New Democrats in 1991, they then campaigned for their re-election, even after years of NDP attacks on workers and the poor.

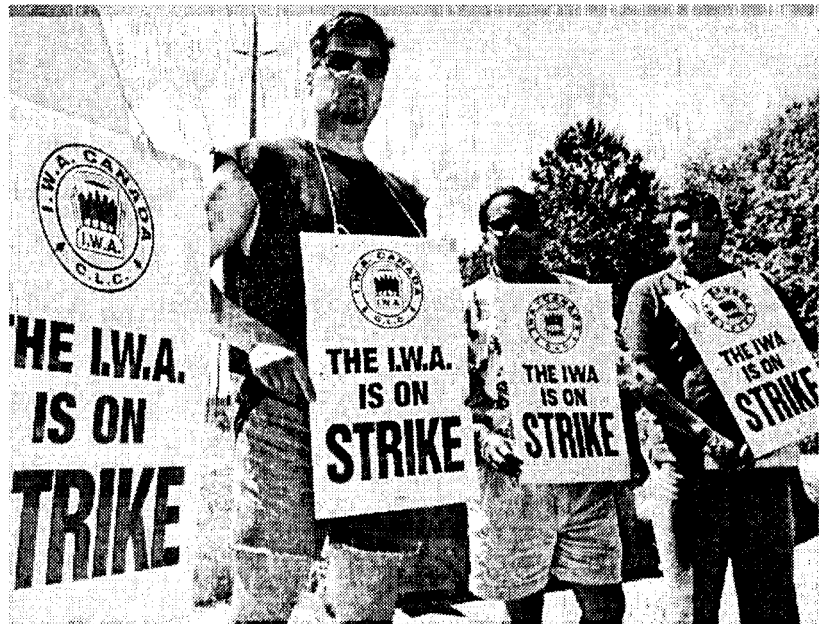
During the U.S.-led war on Afghanistan, the I.S. openly endorsed the fake "antiwar" credentials of the federal NDP leadership, running lying headlines in *Socialist Worker* (24 October 2001) claiming "NDP Says 'No' to War." But the NDP *didn't* oppose the war, arguing only against "unilateral" U.S. action while campaigning to send Canadian troops to the region as "peacekeepers." We Trotskyists called to defend Afghanistan against imperialist attack, while giving absolutely no support to the reactionary anti-woman Taliban regime. We coupled this with the call for class struggle against the capitalists at home, and exposed the NDP's lying assertion that Canada could play a "progressive" role through the United Nations.

Following the devastating U.S.-led bombardment which killed thousands of Afghan men, women and children, nearly 1,000 Canadian ground troops have joined their American counterparts on the ground in Kandahar. Iraq and Iran are now in Washington's gunsights, and the inclusion of North Korea in Bush's "axis of evil" is a direct threat to the North Korean deformed workers state and, by extension, to the remaining gains of the 1949 Chinese Revolution. To defeat the capitalist exploiters at home, working people must oppose their counterrevolutionary schemes and military adventures, all of which are aimed at keeping the world's oppressed masses under imperialism's iron heel. Hands off Iraq, Iran! Defend North Korea, China against imperialist attack and counterrevolution! All U.S., Canadian, UN and other imperialist troops get out of Central Asia and the Persian Gulf!

### For a Revolutionary Workers Party!

Trying to cover for their pro-NDP reformism, the I.S. and others today call for more militant action, including for the B.C. Federation of Labour bureaucrats to organize a general strike. But all that the pretend socialists have in mind is a pressure tactic aimed toward a new NDP government. The *L'Humanité* group makes this explicit, as the front page of its Spring 2002 issue couples the call for a one-day general strike with the demand "NDP to power on a socialist program." For its part, Socialist Action wants an NDP government "committed to a workers' agenda." The idea that the NDP would ever uphold a workers' agenda or implement a socialist program is the purest hot air fantasy, designed to lead the unwary right back into the trap of social democracy.

Militant class struggle is certainly needed, but the key to



Nick Proccaylo/Province  
IWA woodworkers strike picket in Vancouver, summer 2000. Multiracial B.C. labor movement needs revolutionary leadership.

victory for the working class and oppressed is a clear anti-capitalist political program and perspective. B.C.'s working class has long been among the most militant in all North America. Yet for decades the pro-capitalist labor tops and social democrats have channeled and squandered this combativity in the service of bourgeois parliamentarism. V.I. Lenin, the leader of the October 1917 workers revolution in Russia, put it well in his pamphlet *The State and Revolution*: "To decide once every few years which member of the ruling class is to repress and crush the people through parliament—this is the real essence of bourgeois parliamentarism." It's high time to break the cycle of right-wing Sacred or Liberal regimes followed by NDP governments, brought into power by the working people, which turn around and wage their own attacks on the working class and poor.

Today's Liberal onslaught targets the vast majority of B.C.'s population, from the elderly and the ill to the unemployed and students. Many young people are being impelled into struggle by the removal of any restrictions on tuition increases, which will make post-secondary education impossible for many working-class and minority youth. This amounts to a class-based and racist purge of the colleges and universities. We say: For open admissions and free tuition! By themselves, students do not have the social power to beat back these attacks. The Spartacus Youth Club fights to win students to the side of the working class as part of our struggle to sweep away the entire bankrupt system.

To win things like decent affordable housing, free quality medical care and decent-paying jobs for all requires breaking the power of the capitalist class. That can only be accomplished by building a genuine workers party on the model of Lenin's Bolsheviks—a party that doesn't "respect" the property rights of the bourgeoisie, a party that says to the exploited and oppressed: We want more, we want all of it, it ought to be ours, so let's take it! Working people who want to put an end to poverty and degradation must combine their struggles with their class brothers and sisters across Canada, throughout the United States and beyond, in the fight for socialist revolution. ■

# Young Spartacus

## 40,000 Workers, Youth Protest in Victoria

Gordon Campbell's right-wing Liberal government in British Columbia is swinging an ax against working people and youth. On the chopping block are social programs and tens of thousands of public service jobs. The government is also deregulating tuition, which would mean increases of up to 100 percent, thus denying access to higher education to thousands more immigrant and working-class youth. On February 6 students rallied against the threatened increase to tuition, while high school students have staged walkouts and demonstrations in solidarity with job actions by the teachers' union.

The Spartacus Youth Club has intervened, alongside the Trotskyist League, into the upsurge of protests, fighting to win youth to the understanding that it is the working class that has the material interest and potential social power to sweep away the capitalist system. We print below an edited report by a Vancouver comrade on the mass February 23 protest in Victoria.

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Approximately 40,000 workers, Natives and students demonstrated in the B.C. capital of Victoria against the provincial Liberals' austerity program. This included 150 buses and hundreds of cars/vans that came from the Lower Mainland on three packed ferries early the morning of the demo. Those sectors of the working class most directly in the line of fire, with up to 40,000 facing layoff, had the largest presence: the B.C. Government Employees Union (BCGEU), the Health Employees Union (HEU), the B.C. Nurses Union and the Teachers Federation each had thousands of members. In addition to other public sector unions, municipal workers, woodworkers (who have been devastated by tens of thousands of layoffs in the past six months), longshore, steel and postal workers all sent contingents. There were also students from various campuses, including the Vancouver campus of the University of British Columbia.

After a decade of the old NDP government keeping the lid on labor, this posed an important opportunity for us to intervene in workers' struggle. Our team sold 634 pieces of literature, 11 subscriptions and distributed 900 copies of our *Spartacist Canada* supplement, "B.C. Labor Confronts Capitalist Austerity." Most of us started out on the 7:00 a.m. ferry and, in the course of walking around the decks, had sold 25 papers and a subscription by the time we had docked.

Because the demonstrators came largely from outlying areas, the rally tended to be middle aged, and pretty white—i.e., not reflective of the composition of the proletariat of Vancouver, which is qualitatively more integrated. Nonetheless, there were lots of first, second and third generation immigrant workers and, not surprisingly, it was amongst these layers that we generally found the most receptivity to our arguments for struggle against the post-9/11 attacks on workers and minori-



SC photo

**Multiracial hospital workers contingent protests Campbell government's anti-working class attacks.**

ties; the dead end of social democracy; and combating chauvinism in the workers movement. Several comrades noted that throughout the day *Workers Vanguard*, with "Defend Immigrants! Defend the Unions!" on the front page, practically sold itself. At one point a comrade was mobbed by an integrated crowd demanding the paper. Another sold over 100 pieces of literature based almost entirely on our Oakland mobilization in defense of immigrant rights.

Though we sometimes encountered the notion that it is just "those Americans" targeting immigrants, that view was, not surprisingly, far less prevalent amongst minority workers. In general, people were really struck by the fact that there were actually workers out there struggling against these attacks. This made a straightforward contrast with their own leadership, who, for all the occasional mutterings against the new laws in Canada, have done exactly nothing.

And if, as we say in our supplement, many immigrants bring valuable experiences of struggle from their homelands, it's also the case that, in general, political discussions took place on a higher level with immigrant workers. For example, when told that *SC* fights to construct a revolutionary party, one wanted to know, "Yes, yes, it's obvious—but does your paper have a *strategy* to do this?" before buying. As at other demos, the HEU had the most integrated presence. This included a contingent of about 30 Chinese-speaking workers with signs in Chinese and English. We sold several copies of our Chinese-language pamphlets to these workers.

At the same time, there was evidence of the real backwardness amongst other layers of the working class. This was seen most clearly in the case of the IWA-Canada woodworkers

union, the leadership of which is pushing the most parochial Canadian nationalism, as only a B.C. bureaucrat can: "Jobs for B.C. loggers" and "Stop giving up control of B.C. forests to foreign interests." This flag-waving protectionism obscures who the real enemy is, the capitalist class at home. At the same time, blaming "foreigners" fosters racism and chauvinism against immigrants and refugees in this country. This is all the more obscene coming from IWA-Canada bureaucrats, many of whose membership are Sikh workers.

The importance of taking on the question of the capitalist state was brought home by the presence at the rally of several uniformed prison guards who, disgustingly, are members of the BCGEU. And, for what was supposed to be a "peaceful, legal" labor rally, the cops obviously wanted to send a message. The 60-man riot squad, with three-foot batons, was on hand, as were SWAT teams. At one point 15 cops, two on horseback, provocatively marched through the rally.

More so than on any other labor demo I can recall, workers were open to our politics. Our sales were on a broad political basis, i.e., not confined to "narrow" trade union concerns. To give a sense, one of our salesmen reported that as he went around hawking our "red, revolutionary, communist newspaper," the response often was, "Yeah, right on, gimme one."

The most polarizing question was the NDP—a constant stream of people stopped and stared at our placard calling for a revolutionary workers party, against the NDP; sometimes buying a paper as a result, sometimes not. Though there's not much real hatred for the NDP, there was little enthusiasm for them either and making the point that they attacked workers and minorities was like kicking in an open door. But there is a real sense of, "what else is there?" with people saying things like "As bad as they were, nothing like these cuts happened."

From the rally podium itself one heard little of the NDP, which had a couple of banners in the crowd. One bureaucrat congratulated the two provincial NDP members of parliament for "all their hard work on our behalf." But, aside from trying to "shame" the Liberals, the central theme of speaker after speaker was captured by one who, in reference to the next scheduled election, said, "Gordon Campbell, we're going to kick your ass in 2005," i.e., a none too subtle call to elect the NDP (in three years!). But, while there are plenty of illusions in bourgeois democracy and sentiment for something, *anything*, other than the current government, nobody wants to wait until 2005.

At least in part reacting to the dull do-nothing message, barely halfway into the rally thousands of workers started streaming off the legislature grounds and, though the program was cut short, less than half remained by the end. As one protester put it, in response to the speeches, "we *already* know that we are being attacked." Workers are very pissed off and their leadership keeps saying "we won't let them do this"—but everyone's wondering, "What next?"

The tepid reformist politics of the rally were captured by the main placard being handed out, "Campbell's Cuts Are Too Deep." This slogan accepts the framework of exploitative capitalism but just pleads with the government that the cuts have gone too far. Post-rally, B.C. Federation of Labour president Jim Sinclair declared the strategy is to "put pressure on the government and the local MLAs." For most of the self-proclaimed socialist groups at the demo, this "strategy" presented a golden opportunity to pose "left" by calling for more militancy. The *L'Humanité* group and the International Socialists barely mentioned the NDP, concentrating

on arguing that the B.C. Federation of Labour should call a general strike (presumably followed by, as *L'Humanité* puts it in their paper, the "NDP to power on a socialist program"). Insofar as the reformist left is able to see past the mountains, they are using the mass protests in Argentina as a positive example of the "way forward," of course without pointing to the need to break the working class from their existing leadership, in either Canada or in Argentina.

At least on the question of social democracy, a step to the left of all of the ostensible "Marxists" is APOV (Anti-Poverty Coalition of Victoria), whose leaflet we got. Their statement notes that "over the last 10 years in BC, the NDP showed clearly they were on the 'rich' side of the global class war (although they were not vicious enough for business)." They go on to list the NDP betrayals, including instituting the three-month residency requirement for welfare; setting the stage for workfare; busting a school support workers strike; sending the RCMP after Natives at Gustafsen Lake. But their statement is entirely limited to B.C. and does not touch, for example, the NDP's anti-Quebec chauvinism or support to "peacekeepers" in Afghanistan. More fundamentally, APOV has nothing in the way of a strategy to offer: "APOV does not promote any particular ideology, but we do believe that ending poverty means ending capitalism and all forms of oppression."

Ending poverty does mean ending capitalism—but in order to do that you do need a program and strategy. Our purpose on the labor and student protests in B.C. today is to intervene with a proletarian revolutionary internationalist perspective, explaining that only the working class has the potential power and the class interest to create a society based on collectivized property and a rational, planned international economy. To realize this power, the proletariat must become conscious of its historic task. This can only be done through the agency of a revolutionary party founded on Marxist theory and dedicated to advancing the interests of the working class. Join us in this struggle! ■



SC photo

SYC distributing Marxist literature at Victoria protest.



## No Illusions in Pro-Capitalist NDP!

# B.C. Labor Confronts Capitalist Austerity

### Labor Must Defend Immigrants, All the Oppressed!

The provincial Liberal government of Gordon Campbell in British Columbia has declared war on workers and the poor. First he stripped teachers of the right to strike and imposed contracts on them and the nurses. Then came January 17—Black Thursday. Over 11,000 public sector jobs are to be eliminated, with nearly 5,000 government workers facing termination. There's more: hospitals are to be closed; post-secondary tuition fees may double overnight as the Liberals end a freeze on increases; and, after years of attacks on the poor by the previous NDP government, welfare payments will be slashed again, with cuts hitting single mothers especially hard.

In response to the government offensive, B.C. trade unions have staged a series of protests which have won wide support among working people and the poor. The largest to date saw 40,000 demonstrators gather outside the provincial legislature in Victoria on February 23. We reprint below a February 20 Spartacist Canada supplement which was distributed at this protest and other rallies.

A report on the Spartacus Youth Club's intervention into the Victoria demonstration appears on page 22.

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Gordon Campbell has wasted no time keeping his promise to load the costs of the capitalist economic crisis onto the backs of working people and the poor. But what Campbell can decree and what he can implement aren't necessarily the same thing. That will be decided by struggle—workers against their exploiters, class against class. The strike by 45,000 teachers on January 28, followed by thousands of social workers the next day, showed that plenty of working people are ready to fight for their union rights and livelihoods. And behind them, hundreds of thousands can be mobilized in defense of health care, education and other vital social services.

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Diana Nethercott/Vancouver Sun

Tens of thousands of workers, minorities and youth demonstrate in front of B.C. legislature in Victoria, February 23.