

Full Citizenship Rights for All Immigrants!

Racist Furor Over Chinese Refugees

The arrival of several boatloads of Chinese refugees off the British Columbia coast this summer has fueled a racist backlash aimed at further tightening Ottawa's anti-immigrant laws. On 21 July, 123 migrants from Fujian province were rounded up by RCMP and immigration officials from a ship off the coast of Vancouver Island. The refugees were detained for two weeks at the Esquimalt armed forces base near Victoria, and more than 30 of them remain imprisoned in Vancouver. Three weeks later, another 131 Chinese migrants were seized after leaving a ship just off the Queen Charlotte Islands. A third ship with some 190 refugees arrived at the end of August, while at least three other boatloads of Chinese migrants were stopped by the U.S. Coast Guard before they could reach North America.

In their first taste of "democratic" Canada, the refugees were strip-searched and penned in behind barbed wire fences. Allowed outside only once a day, they were kept under constant surveillance by armed guards and police dogs, including while showering. Girls as young as 11 years old were paraded off to immigration hearings wearing handcuffs. The media fanned the flames of anti-immigrant reaction, reporting that some of the refugees were armed with weapons. These consisted of a comb, pens, a tin-foil plate and safety pins!

"Go Home," blared the front-page headline of Victoria's daily paper, the *Times-Colonist* (15 August). Reform Party "justice" critic John Reynolds ranted: "These people are criminals. They should be sent back home" (*Globe and Mail*, 27 July). B.C.'s ruling provincial New Democratic Party, local enforcers of the racist capitalist order, quickly joined the anti-immigrant hysteria. Claiming to speak on behalf of his constituents, NDP cabinet spokesman Moe Sihota wailed, "they're sick of unscrupulous people taking advantage of Canada's compassion" (*Province* [Vancouver], 15 August). Already, immigration authorities have ordered at least 57 of the Chinese migrants to be deported. As Marxists who protest all forms of racist, capitalist oppression and injustice we say: **Free all the Chinese refugees! They made**



Peter Blashill/Globe and Mail

Handcuffed Chinese girls exiting British Columbia immigration hearing in August.

it here, let them stay! Stop the deportations! Full citizenship rights for all immigrants!

The arrivals of Chinese off the B.C. coast are part of a large-scale exodus from Fujian province which began in the early 1990s. These migrants, most of whom had been farmers, have to pay smugglers up to \$40,000 (U.S.)—the equivalent of a
(continued on page 11)

Pogroms Drive Out Serbs, Gypsies

Imperialist Troops Out of Kosovo!

The U.S. imperialists and their NATO allies including Canada succeeded in bringing Serbia, a small, dependent country, to its knees. Under the imperialist "peace" diktat, Kosovo has been turned into a NATO protectorate with 50,000 occupation troops for an indefinite period. This was NATO's goal from the beginning, not its cynical talk of protecting the Kosovo Albanians. As proletarian internationalists who called forthrightly for the defeat of the NATO imperialist forces and for the military defense of Serbia, the International Communist League denounces this predatory "peace" dictated by the world's bloodiest mass murderers.

Again giving the lie to the imperialist pretext that the war was a mission to defend "human rights," from the moment NATO troops began rolling into Kosovo, the Serb and Gypsy (Roma) populations have been subjected to brutal "ethnic cleansing," including the massacres of whole families. Today only a small fraction of the Serbian population remains, driven out of Kosovo through murderous terror. While the terms of oppression have been reversed for the peoples inhabiting Kosovo, the imperialists—who are hostile to an independent Kosovo and any talk of a Greater Albania—have made it clear that they will be calling the shots. We demand the immediate, unconditional withdrawal of all imperialist troops from Kosovo!

While virtually every pseudo-socialist group in the West placed itself at the service of the NATO rulers by pleading for "poor little Kosovo," the ICL called for the proletariat to oppose the war in word and deed. We stressed the need for socialist revolution to defeat the imperialist bourgeoisies. ICL sections joined in a campaign initiated by Italian workers organized in the COBAS (Rank-and-File Committee) to raise funds to aid workers at the Zastava car plant and other factories in Yugoslavia bombed by NATO warplanes. This gave workers internationally a concrete way to show their class solidarity with Yugoslav workers targeted by imperialist war. Despite our political differences with the syndicalist-influenced COBAS and others in the campaign, we participated in the spirit of the united front—march separately, strike together!

As we said in an April 28 Trotskyist League/Ligue trot-



Sagolj/Reuters

Canadian military in Sarajevo, Bosnia. All imperialist troops out of the Balkans!

skyste statement: "This war is *not* being fought for the Albanians of Kosovo. Like the U.S.-led 1990-91 blitzkrieg against Iraq, the assault on Serbia is an assertion of global domination by Washington, seconded by its junior ally in Ottawa. The U.S. rulers mean to underline their role as the world's gendarme" (SC No. 121, Summer 1999). In particular, we called for proletarian revolutionary opposition to our "own" bourgeois rulers in this imperialist slaughter, and to the social democrats of the NDP who gave the bombing their full support.

NATO leaders celebrated the unity of the Western powers in the war against Serbia. But behind this façade, the war also brought to the surface and accentuated deepgoing tensions among the major capitalist powers which have been intensifying since the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union in 1991-92. While using Yeltsin's Russia as a diplomatic cat's paw to push through a diktat against Serbia, the U.S. has adamantly opposed any Russian military presence in Serbia except under strict NATO command. Also occupying Kosovo are troops of the German state—the direct continuator of the Third Reich which murdered hundreds of thousands of Serbs, Roma and Jews during the Nazi occupation in World War II. This, the first deployment of German troops in combat since their defeat at the hands of the Soviet Red Army, marks a significant shift in the global political situation. Now Germany and the other West European states are intent on building up a military force independent of the U.S. to match their increasing economic rivalry.

Most of the capitalist governments which prosecuted the war in Europe are headed by Labour or social-democratic parties. In general, these governments had little success in

(continued on page 10)

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Young Spartacus

Students, Workers Protest IMF Austerity Attacks on Education

Mass Student Strike in Mexico

SEPTEMBER 3—Students at Mexico City's National Autonomous University (UNAM) have been on strike for over four months. Sparked by a government plan to impose tuition fees that would eliminate even the limited access poor and working-class students currently have to public higher education, the strike at the 270,000-student university is the longest in UNAM's history.

The widespread support the strikers have won among working people, who face a related assault on their livelihoods under the IMF plan to privatize state-owned industries, has been crucial. From the beginning, workers from the STUNAM campus workers union and the Union of Electrical Workers (SME) have been key, joining students on the strike barricades. On August 28, hundreds of thousands of trade unionists joined in a protest against privatization in Mexico City, overflowing the mammoth Zócalo square.

The government has made escalating attempts to break the student strike. On August 4, Mexico City mayor Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas unleashed riot cops in a vicious attack on students picketing in front of a strikebreaking registration center. More than 100 student strikers were severely beaten and arrested. An August 13 march of 50,000, including a contingent of hundreds of STUNAM workers, protested the repression.

Our comrades of the Grupo Espartaquista de México (GEM) and the Juventud Espartaquista (JE) youth group responded to the August 4 cop attack with a leaflet the next day headlined "Cárdenas' Police Attack the UNAM Strike—Drop All Charges Against Student Strikers! For Strike Action by the Unions Against Privatization and to Defend Public Education!" The leaflet warned against illusions in Cárdenas' "left" bourgeois-nationalist Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD), a capitalist party no less committed than Mexican president Zedillo's Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) and the right-wing Party of National Action (PAN) to imposing the IMF's austerity plans, including through bloody state repression. Our comrades concluded with the demands: "Free, quality education for all! For open admissions and no tuition! Stop the union-busting privatization schemes!"

At the same time, the International Communist League elicited statements of solidarity from unions, student organizations and others as part of an international effort to defend the UNAM strikers and the workers supporting them. Particularly noteworthy were statements from the powerful Transport and General Workers' Union and National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) in South Africa. The NUM statement headlined, "Education Is a Right and Not a Privilege!" The Vancouver local of the Canadian Union of Postal Workers wrote that "The student-worker alliance, in their quest for control of their destiny, is wholly just." Other statements have come from Australia, Europe and the U.S.

In calling for support to the UNAM strikers, the Spartacus Youth Clubs emphasize our opposition to the imperialist "free trade" rape of Mexico by the U.S. and its Canadian junior partner under the North American Free Trade Agree-



José Núñez

July 26 march in solidarity with UNAM students.

ment (NAFTA). As Marxists, we combat the economic nationalism which seeks to pit workers in this country against their class brothers internationally, and we fight for common class struggle by Canadian, U.S. and Mexican workers against the North American imperialists and their PRI, PRD and PAN lackeys in Mexico.

As it attacks and threatens the student protesters at UNAM, the Mexican government is massively escalating its bloody repression in Chiapas, which has been under military occupation since the New Years' 1994 Zapatista (EZLN) uprising launched at the time NAFTA was imposed. The indigenous inhabitants have lived in terror, subjected to beatings, "disappearances" and outright massacres. Now, under the pretext of the construction of a new freeway through the Montes Azules region, Zedillo has shipped in over 10,000 new troops. While defending the Zapatistas from state repression, the GEM has argued against the petty-bourgeois EZLN's program of pressuring the bourgeois state (via the PRD) for concessions through negotiations.

Throughout the strike, the GEM/JE has warned against illusions in the current misleadership of the student movement and of both the official trade unions tied to the ruling PRI and the "independent" unions, which are no less subordinated to bourgeois nationalism, if often via the more "leftist" coloration of the PRD. In promoting a "compromise" proposal by some emeritus professors aimed at breaking the strike and handing power back to the rectory (administration), the pro-capitalist STUNAM and SME union bureaucrats showed how their outlook is counterposed to that of the many workers who have mobilized to defend the UNAM strike.

The GEM's Trotskyist politics drive some centrist groups crazy. In a demagogic article in a 3 August *El Internacionalista* (continued on page 9)

Down With Repression of Student Demonstrators!

Iran: Mass Protests Shake Islamic Regime

Shouting "death to dictatorship," tens of thousands of students across Iran took to the streets for six days in early July in the largest protests since the blood-drenched mullahs

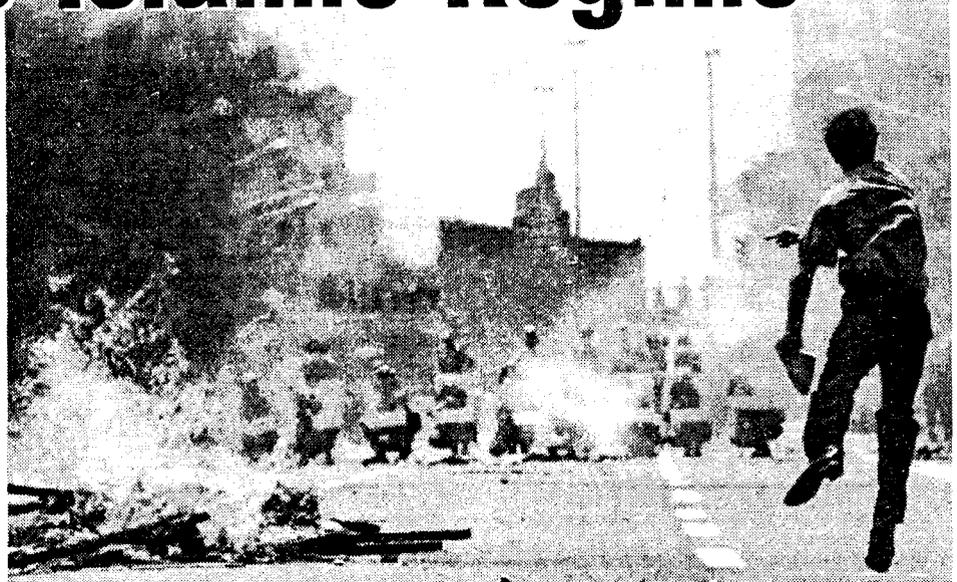
For Workers Revolution!

came to power in 1979. In Teheran, as many as 25,000 students faced the iron bars, chains, clubs and tear gas volleys of the cops and the truncheons and automatic gunfire of Islamic fundamentalist militias. Dozens of student activists were injured in the nationwide protests, some 1,400 arrested and many others forced into hiding. Hundreds remain behind bars, some threatened with charges punishable by death. The international workers movement must urgently demand: **Free all student protesters now!**

The recent turmoil began with open skirmishing within the theocratic regime between the hardline wing under Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and the "moderate" wing under President Mohammad Khatami. Hours after a July 8 protest by 200 Teheran University students against increased press censorship and the banning of the pro-Khatami newspaper *Salam*, police and fundamentalist Hezbollah thugs stormed a dormitory. As students were beaten in their sleep or thrown from windows, as many as eight were killed. The next day, 10,000 students demonstrated in Teheran to demand the ouster of the national police chief and to appeal for support from Khatami, who was elected in 1997 largely thanks to the votes of youth and women. But the students' growing disillusionment soon became evident when they chanted, "Khatami, where are you? Your students have been killed."

Dissatisfied with the token dismissal of two senior police officials responsible for the raid on the university, protesters tried to storm the interior ministry building on July 13. The following day, the mullahs brought out tens of thousands of soldiers, government workers and bazaaris (the small merchants who are the clerics' traditional base) in a countermobilization against the students. Faced with a threat to the Islamic regime, Khatami quickly closed ranks with his hardline rivals, denouncing the students as rioters with "devilish aims" who "intended to attack the foundations of the system and lead the country into anarchy" (*New York Times*, 14 July).

The student demonstrations have tapped into widespread



AP
Police and fundamentalist thugs rioted against Teheran students in July, killing at least eight, while dozens were injured and 1,400 arrested.

popular opposition to the theocracy. A bystander at the July 13 protest said, "I just want to get rid of the filthy regime. Anything would be better than these clerics, even the worst criminals." Fed up with the dictates of the reactionary *ulema* (clergy), many students want the all-pervasive morals police to butt out of their lives and are demanding that draconian restrictions on sexual freedom and freedom of expression be lifted. After riding to power on a wave of protests against the hated tyranny of the Shah in 1979, the Islamic hierarchy instituted an equally tyrannical regime which dealt out bloody repression against workers and leftists, enslaved women in the stifling head-to-toe *chador* and perpetuated the murderous subjugation of Kurds, Arabs and other national and religious minorities. The Islamic regime used the squalid, nationalist war with Iraq—which lasted from 1980 to 1988 and bled an entire generation of young men—to consolidate its hold on society and strengthen poisonous Persian chauvinism.

The current generation of Iranian youth—fully two-thirds of the population is younger than 25 years old—did not live through the 1979 upheaval. The recent student demonstrations crystallized a broad sense that this is the beginning of the end for the ayatollahs' regime. While the powerful Iranian proletariat did not bring its social might to bear during the July demonstrations, there have been numerous strikes in recent years against mounting unemployment and nonpayment of wages. As revenue from the export of oil has been cut by more than half since 1976, provoking a deep economic crisis, the average annual income has plunged from \$2,600 to \$1,800. The strategically powerful oil workers have carried

out repeated strikes in the past decade. Among more recent labor actions reported on the Fedayeen (Minority) Web site was a May 1 strike at the Mobarakeh steel works.

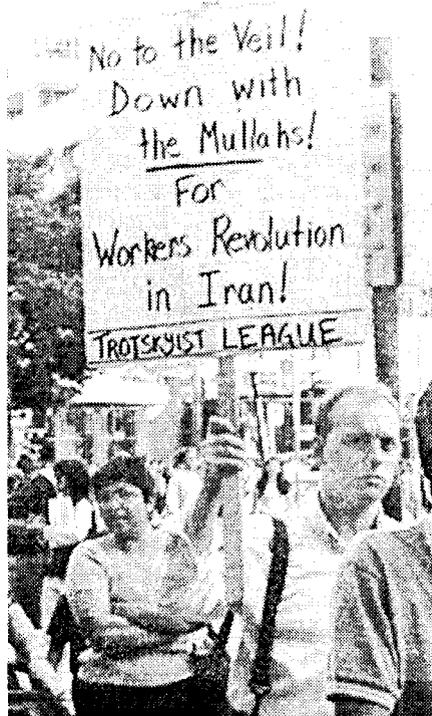
The burgeoning crisis in Iran cries out for a revolutionary vanguard party to lead the proletariat, standing at the head of all the oppressed, in a socialist revolution which sweeps away the theocratic regime and capitalist class rule. Such a party must be steeled in the lessons of the bloody defeat of 1979, lessons which the contemporary Iranian left has refused to learn. In 1979, the Iranian left—centrally the Stalinist Tudeh party with its substantial proletarian base—worked to subordinate the working class, whose strikes and protests were instrumental in the downfall of the Shah monarchy, to the reactionary clericalist movement led by Ayatollah Khomeini. What was necessary was the independent mobilization of the proletariat in a struggle for its own state power. The International Communist League's predecessor, the international Spartacist tendency, raised the call: "Down with the Shah! No support to the mullahs! For workers revolution in Iran!"

Today again, what is posed is the independent mobilization of the proletariat against all wings of the Islamic theocracy and the Iranian bourgeoisie. In a backward, dependent country like Iran, the historic achievements of the classic bourgeois-democratic revolutions in West Europe and North America remain on the agenda. Only under the dictatorship of the proletariat can there be agrarian revolution, the separation of church and state, the liberation of women and the emancipation of national, ethnic and religious minorities from the Persian-chauvinist prison house of peoples. Proletarian power in Iran must necessarily be linked to a perspective of international socialist revolution, particularly in the imperialist centers, if it is to survive and develop on the road to socialism. This is the Trotskyist program of permanent revolution. As we wrote earlier this year in "Iran: 20 Years of Islamic Dictatorship" (*Workers Vanguard* No. 708, 5 March):

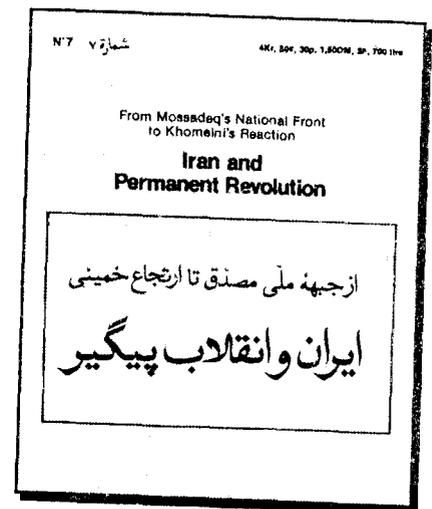
"No fundamental social liberation will be accomplished short of a revolution shattering the entire power structure of capitalist and pre-capitalist social relations. A Marxist intervention in this fluid situation would seek to crystalize revolutionary proletarian opposition to mullah rule and combat illusions that liberal reformers, not to mention clerics like Khatami, will satisfy the masses' desire to throw off the yoke of an oppressive dictatorship."

Pro-Imperialist Democrats in "Socialist" Garb

Khatami's reputation in the West as a "reformer" is due in no small part to the fact that he is a vocal advocate of reopening Iran to U.S. imperialist penetration. While Washington was more than willing to work with Teheran in sponsoring anti-Soviet *mujahedin* cutthroats in Afghanistan in the 1980s, the U.S. has maintained punitive sanctions against the Islamic regime since the 1979 takeover of the U.S. embassy in Teheran. With the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union in 1991-92 and the renewed imperialist scramble to stake out oil and natural gas fields in



SC photo



TL (left) at July 13 Vancouver demo. ICL advanced revolutionary-proletarian program internationally at protests in defense of Iranian students. To order ICL Farsi-language pamphlet, send \$.50 to SCPA, Box 6867, Stn. A, Toronto, ON M5W 1X6.

the Persian Gulf region, a significant section of the American ruling class has become increasingly exasperated at losing out on investment opportunities in Iran. Washington sent out unmistakable signals of support to Khatami against the hardliners.

Illusions in the "democratic" pretensions of the imperialist rulers were evident at protests in solidarity with Iranian students held in various cities in the U.S., Canada and West Europe. A prominent slogan at a July 15 demonstration in Los Angeles was "United Nations Pay More Attention," appealing to the agency which has served as a fig leaf for imperialist slaughter from Korea to Iraq to the Balkans. Avowed socialists joined in promoting "humanitarian" imperialism. At a July 17 protest in Toronto, Joe Flexer, a leader of Socialist Action, a group linked to the fake-Trotskyist United Secretariat (USec), called on the Canadian government to close the Iranian embassy and stop all trade with Iran.

Imbibing the bourgeoisie's "death of communism" lie, the fake lefts internationally are today little more than garden variety liberals. Having tailed behind Khomeini in 1978-79 and cheered when his regime carted other leftists off to prison, today the Tudeh in a July 10 statement applauds the Iranian student leaders' demand that "the government of Khatami honour its promise for democracy." Protest demonstrations in the West bringing together exiled Iranian leftists, liberals and nationalists were likewise limited to appeals for (bourgeois) democracy. Even supporters of the former monarchy were welcomed at these "democracy" rallies!

Thus a July 18 protest in Hamburg, Germany initially included a contingent of monarchists. Our comrades of the Spartakist Workers Party (SpAD) denounced the presence of the Shah supporters and argued with the protest organizers that they be driven away, to no avail. It was only after the monarchists decided themselves to leave midway through the demonstration and after a SpAD speaker had raised our revolutionary program for Iran that Persian leaflets bearing the hammer and sickle began to materialize at the protest. Today, Iranian leftists bloc with monarchists against the

(continued on page 6)

Iran...

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mullahs; 20 years ago, they blocked with the mullahs against the monarchy.

Virtually the whole of the left internationally likewise supported Khomeini's "Iranian Revolution." Then USec spokesman Ernest Mandel promoted the mullahs' accession to power in 1979 as an expression of "partial bourgeois democracy" and "the beginning of a process of permanent revolution" (see *Workers Vanguard* No. 237, 3 August 1979). *Socialist Challenge* (15 February 1979), the newspaper of the British USec group, waxed poetic about "liberated Tehran" and exulted in a front-page headline, "Iran: A New Power is Born." British USec leader Brian Grogan even boasted that he had joined in chants of "Allah akbar" ("god is great") during a demonstration in Teheran.

Tony Cliff's British Socialist Workers Party (SWP), represented in Canada by the International Socialists (I.S.), continues to genuflect before Islamic reaction to this day. In 1979, the I.S. hailed the Khomeiniite "revolution," headlining one article: "The form—religion, The spirit—revolution" (*Workers Action*, February 1979). Last year the I.S. defended propagandists for the Iranian theocratic dictatorship at an International Women's Day fair in Toronto, and outrageously denounced a protest led by leftist Iranian women which drove the ayatollahs' agents from the fair as a "racist assault."

More recently, the SWP's "Marxism '99" confab in London in July featured presentations on "Iran 1979" and "Islamic Fundamentalism" which lauded the virtues of

Islamic reaction. The speaker on 1979 rehashed the left's "anti-imperialist" whitewash of the mullahs with the line that the "Iranian Revolution" had removed from power Washington's key ally in the region, the Shah. But the "anti-imperialist" mullahs then proceeded to bloc with U.S. imperialism against Soviet troops in Afghanistan—as did the anti-Communist Cliffites themselves. At the second workshop, the speaker went on about how Islamic fundamentalists mobilize people against the state. This grotesque statement came even as government-sponsored fundamentalist thugs in Teheran were throwing student protesters out of windows! In fact, in 1979 the Khomeiniites took over the same capitalist state previously administered by the Shah—including its secret police, torture chambers, etc.—and wield it to this day against the working class, the left and national minorities.

"Two-Stage Revolution" —Policy of Bloody Defeat

The Worker-communist Party of Iran (WPI), which has organized a number of protests internationally in solidarity with the Iranian students, has sought to strike a "left" stance, raising the call for a "Socialist Republic in Iran!" and speaking of the need for a "workers state." But this socialist rhetoric is belied by the WPI's own appeals to the imperialist bourgeoisie. A July 14 leaflet on Iran by the WPI in Los Angeles declares that "the entire regime should be put on trial for crimes against humanity." And a WPI leaflet titled "Against the Terrorist Islamic Regime in Iran!" distributed in Canada last January called for an international tribunal to try the leaders of the Islamic Republic and the closure of the Iranian embassy in Canada. These are thinly disguised calls for the sort of imperialist "war crimes tribunal" which the



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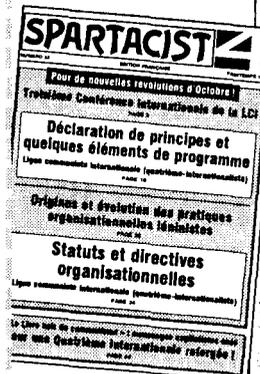
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IRAN: A NEW POWER IS BORN



Socialist Challenge
15 February 1979

The form – religion
The spirit – revolution

Workers Action
February 1979

British USec (top left) and Canadian International Socialists hailed Khomeini's 1979 "Islamic revolution." Spartacists warned that mullah rule would mean bloody repression against workers, women, religious and national minorities.

WORKERS VANGUARD

25¢
No. 221
18 December 1978

For Workers Revolution in Iran!

Down with the Shah! Don't Bow to Khomeini!

—15 December 1978

United Nations has set up for the Balkans. Indeed, some years ago an article "In Defense of the Demand for Independence for Iraqi Kurdistan" by WPI leader Mansoor Hekmat in the Farsi-language *International* (June 1995) explicitly looked to the UN to oversee a referendum on Kurdish independence.

Seeking to tail pro-imperialist liberals, the WPI has been particularly sensitive to our revolutionary criticism. Thus, after a Trotskyist League comrade speaking at a WPI-initiated protest in Vancouver on July 24 polemicized against their appeals to the imperialists, some WPI supporters threatened to exclude our speakers at future rallies. Now more than ever, it is crucial to pursue a clash of opinions on which way forward in Iran.

The WPI's appeals to "democratic" imperialism are in line with its stagist politics. Although the WPI claims to oppose the Menshevik/Stalinist scheme of two-stage revolution—which postpones the socialist revolution to an indefinite future while subordinating the proletariat to the bourgeoisie in the struggle for a "first stage" limited to capitalist democracy—in practice it operates firmly within that framework. A July 13 WPI statement in Farsi to Iranian workers declaims: "It was your strikes that brought the Shah's military regime to its knees." Workers strikes were indeed instrumental in bringing down the Shah, but what the WPI obscures is that the proletariat did not play an independent class role; it was *politically subordinated by the Tudeh and other reformists to the Khomeinists*. And a 1990 pamphlet titled "A Brief Look at the Situation of the Working Class in Iran," which was written by the WPI's predecessors of the Communist Party of Iran and is still distributed by the WPI, not only says that the "working class was the backbone of the revolutionary movement" in 1979 but maintains that there was a "revolutionary period" right up to 1981, two years after the mullahs had consolidated power over the corpses of militant workers, leftists and Kurds.

The WPI's view that democracy can be achieved under capitalism in Iran is also clear in its programmatic statement, "A Better World" (1994). While claiming not to strive for a reformed capitalism, this program contains a massive laundry list of reformist demands addressed to the Iranian ruling class and asserts: "Our aim is to force the existing system to recognise and abide by the unquestionable rights of the working people." While the WPI stands out among Iranian left groups for prominently raising the key question of women's emancipation and calls for legalization of abortion, it capitulates to religious backwardness by denouncing "the

act of abortion," arguing that it displays "the inherent contempt for human life in the present system."

Under the impact of the crisis gripping Iran today, the WPI recently underwent a substantial split. However, from the documents which we have been able to read and from discussions with members from both sides, there do not appear to be fundamental differences on key questions of strategy. The minority claims to stand on "A Better World" and also apparently adheres to the WPI's position that the Soviet Union became "state capitalist" in the late 1920s, a theoretical justification for its refusal to call for unconditional military defense of the Soviet degenerated workers state when it existed. This was a decisive question of proletarian class strategy, particularly in a country bordering on the former Soviet Union.

The only road to genuine social and economic modernization, to freeing Iranian women from enslavement, to winning the right of national self-determination for the Kurds and the myriad other oppressed nationalities lies through the smashing of capitalist class rule in Iran. As Leon Trotsky explained in *The Permanent Revolution* (1930):

"With regard to countries with a belated bourgeois development, especially the colonial and semi-colonial countries, the theory of the permanent revolution signifies that the complete and genuine solution of their tasks of achieving *democracy and national emancipation* is conceivable only through the dictatorship of the proletariat as the leader of the subjugated nation, above all of its peasant masses....

"The dictatorship of the proletariat which has risen to power as the leader of the democratic revolution is inevitably and very quickly confronted with tasks, the fulfillment of which is bound up with deep inroads into the rights of bourgeois property. The democratic revolution grows over directly into the socialist revolution and thereby becomes a *permanent* revolution."

This revolutionary perspective was summed up by a Spartacist League/U.S. spokesman at a July 17 Los Angeles protest in support of the Iranian students: "Above all, what is needed in Iran today is an internationalist Leninist-Trotskyist party that stands on the heroic traditions of the Bolshevik Party of Lenin and Trotsky and the 1917 Russian Revolution. Such a party would imprint upon its banner the liberating program of permanent revolution and mobilize the multiethnic Iranian proletariat in struggle to smash the bloody Islamic dictatorship. Hands off the student protesters! For workers revolution in Iran!"

—Adapted from Workers Vanguard No. 717, 6 August

Cops Riot Against Toronto Homeless

At 5:40 a.m. on August 10, close to 100 cops stormed a tent city for the homeless in Toronto's Allan Gardens, driving out some 70 homeless people and arresting 27 others. Among those arrested were supporters of the Ontario Coalition Against Poverty (OCAP), which had set up the "safe park" three days earlier to protest police repression. The protesters face charges ranging from trespassing and mischief to assaulting police. Drop all the charges!

Unemployment, homelessness and starvation are endemic to the capitalist system. The capitalists' drive for ever greater profits requires maintaining a layer of unemployed as a drag on wages for the entire working class, while at the same time cutting social services for those thrown on the scrapheap. With the slashing of welfare payments by over 20 percent, an end to subsidized housing and the elimination of rent controls homelessness in Toronto has skyrocketed. Today the city has an estimated 26,000 homeless people, including more than 5,000 children.

Vowing to "clean up the city," Toronto mayor Mel Lastman has unleashed the cops to arrest panhandlers and squeegee kids, and evict homeless people from the parks. Early this summer, Lastman launched a "Community Action Policing" program, doling out to the police nearly \$2 million in extra overtime pay to "fight crime" in supposed "hot spots" around the city—i.e., poor working-class and minority districts. As well as attacking the homeless, over 35 percent of whom are Native, armies of cops have descended on heavily black and Asian neighborhoods like Jane-Finch and Regent Park.

The police are a core component of the repressive capitalist state, which maintains a monopoly of armed violence. Their purpose is to protect private property and bourgeois order against workers and the oppressed. Even as the city bosses shell out millions for the cops, they have cut hundreds of municipal jobs while freezing workers' wages for the last eight years. The vast increase in spending on the cops (as well as private security guards) in recent years is a measure of the bourgeois rulers' fear of the social tinder building at the base of society in the face of a vastly widened gap between rich and poor.

A class-struggle fight for *jobs and decent housing for all*, led by organized labor, could galvanize a counteroffensive against capitalist exploitation and oppression. More than 7,000 outside city workers in Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) Local 416 are threatening to strike for a contract with a substantial pay increase in mid-September. A powerful strike by CUPE's sanitation, sewage, water treatment and other workers could strike a blow for all the victims of capitalist austerity. But for the CUPE union tops, who for years have sat back and allowed the capitalists to get away with their offensive, mobilizing labor's power on behalf of all workers and the poor is anathema.

Instead, the union bureaucrats shackle the workers to their class enemy via the NDP. Far from defending the poor, NDP city councilors Olivia Chow and Jack Layton voted *in favor* of Lastman's policing crackdown. And Bob Rae's 1990-95 Ontario NDP provincial government slashed wages, cut social programs, jailed striking workers and threatened to eliminate medicare for refugees and foreign students. All this paved the way for today's attacks under Harris' Tories.



Bull/Toronto Star

Racist cops terrorize homeless in Allan Gardens.

For its "direct actions" which have drawn wide attention to the plight of the poor, OCAP has been subjected to police surveillance and repression under both NDP and Tory regimes. After the mass arrests at Allan Gardens, OCAP complained of "the City's obvious lack of political will to end the suffering on the streets" and vowed to continue protesting "until the Mayor and Council begin conducting themselves with some honour" ("Notice to Mayor and City Council," 18 August). But this perspective of forcing the capitalist rulers to change their priorities through militant pressure tactics can lead nowhere.

The capitalist state cannot be reformed to serve the interests of the working class and oppressed; it must be swept away through workers revolution. As Vladimir Lenin, leader of the 1917 Russian workers revolution, explained in "The State" (1919):

"History shows that the state as a special apparatus for coercing people arose only wherever and whenever there appeared a division of society into classes, that is, a division into groups of people some of which were permanently in a position to appropriate the labour of others, where some people exploited others."

Homelessness and police repression are necessary products of the system of capitalist wage slavery. The creation of a society devoid of poverty and racism requires seizing industry and commerce from the capitalist class and establishing a planned socialist economy. Only the working class, which has its hands on the levers that make profits flow in this profit-driven society, has the social power and self-interest to lead such a struggle.

There is a burning need to forge a multiracial *revolutionary party* that can imbue the working class with the consciousness of the need to put an end to capitalist poverty and oppression through socialist revolution. When capitalism is swept into the dustbin of history there will be no more "homeless problem," no more racist cops rampaging in the parks and the inner cities, and no more filthy rich bankers lording it over us all. ■

Mexico...

(continued from page 3)

supplement, the Internationalist Group (IG) declares that the GEM/JE's exposure of the role of bourgeois nationalism as the chief obstacle to Mexican workers' class consciousness "is nothing else but beautifying the mechanism of white terror with which the semi-bonapartist regime of the PRI-government has propped up its power for more than 70 years." It is telling that the only examples of violent state repression listed in the IG's article are those perpetrated by the PRI! Indeed, the very day after this article was published, Cárdenas unleashed his riot cops against the student strikers.

As the GEM noted about the IG in a July 26 leaflet, "At the core of their politics is a mythical 'popular front' around the bourgeois PRD. The popular front is a specific form of class collaboration, in which the reformist parties of the working class make an alliance with the bourgeoisie in order to impede workers' unrest and the potential for a socialist revolution. But there is no mass workers party in Mexico, and the Mexican proletariat has been tied historically to the bourgeoisie by means of bourgeois nationalism, pure and simple.... Thus, by means of its 'popular front,' the IG tries to obscure the class nature of the bourgeois PRD, dressing it in red." And with the PRD desperately seeking an alliance with the rightist PAN, the IG's camouflaging of this bourgeois-nationalist party as a "popular front" looks even more obviously fake.

During this strike, the GEM/JE have become known as the Trotskyists who advance a revolutionary internationalist program to defend public education and defeat the bourgeoisie's attacks on the working class. A GEM spokesman addressed the Zócalo rally at the end of the huge August 13 march. As he rose to speak, our comrade was greeted with cries of "Go, Espartaco, go!" We reprint his speech below in full.

* * *

The Grupo Espartaquista de México, section of the International Communist League, greets the thousands of people who gathered today at this Zócalo in defense of free education.

This student strike has gone beyond the boundaries of the university and found sympathy and active support among key sections of the working class, such as SME, STUNAM, SITUAM [campus workers union at Metropolitan University] and others.

The strike is now at a crucial moment. The fight in defense of public education, which is part of a broader struggle against the privatizing schemes directed against the working class, can only go forward if the unions also go on strike. By themselves, students lack any social power. What is needed is that labor flex its muscles through strike actions to stop production and services. That the student strike has lasted so long is due to the support received from university workers, reinforced by brigades of workers from other powerful unions. The rectory's plan to undermine the strike by carrying out "extramuro" classes must be stopped with workers strike picket lines in all the facilities. A strike means: "Everyone stops! Nobody works!"

This attack shows a fundamental point we Marxists have made from the first day of the strike: cops are not "workers in uniform" but the attack dogs of the bourgeois state. The presence of cops in the university, affiliated to STUNAM, is an immediate danger for the union itself and for the student strike, as well as for any action the STUNAM may be involved in.

"Auxilio UNAM" cops out of the university and STUNAM!

No illusions in the PRD, a bosses' party! The attack against the strike has been a calculated move by Cárdenas and the PRD, using the cops in the name of law students who were trying to break the strike by registering for the new semester. Breaking the students' heads is the way in which Cárdenas wants to show the Mexican bourgeoisie, its imperialist masters and the rightist PAN that it is the best candidate to represent the interests of the capitalist class in the coming presidential elections through an alliance between the PRD and the PAN. The current situation shows that to achieve even a basic democratic right such as access to education requires a revolutionary struggle against capitalism.

Pushing utopian plans for building a "university at the service of the people," as the Partido Obrero Socialista and En Lucha do at the university, only serves to sow more illusions in the bourgeoisie. Spartacists say: No to the dialogue with the rectory! No to the servile proposal of the "emeritus"! It is necessary to continue the strike until victory is achieved, and that requires allying with the social power of labor. For joint strike actions by workers and students in defense of free education and against privatizations! Free, quality education for all, in the city and the countryside!

What is needed is the building of a Leninist-Trotskyist party to lead the working class to state power. The greatest obstacle to this is the ideology of bourgeois nationalism, which aims at portraying everyone as simply "Mexicans." In counterposition, we Spartacists advance proletarian internationalism. As a sample, we bring today greetings to the university strike from powerful unions from South Africa to Canada and the U.S., especially the powerful unions of miners and transport workers of South Africa. The proletariat has no fatherland! Our anthem is not the bourgeoisie's national anthem but the proletariat's *Internationale*!

As American Trotskyist James Cannon said: "Our party is a party of the proletarian revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat. The proletarian revolution is the only solution to the problem of the working class, and all our work must lead to that goal." Such is the basis of Spartacist politics. Break with the bourgeoisie! No illusions in the bourgeois PRD! Forge an international Leninist-Trotskyist party! For new October Revolutions around the world! ■

SPARTACUS YOUTH CLUB EVENTS

SYC Forum

Mass Student Strike in Mexico

7:00 p.m., Thursday, September 16
Riddell Room, International Student Centre, U of T
33 St. George St. (North of College St.)

Class Series

Smash the Capitalist System of Racism and War

7:00 p.m., alternate Wednesdays beginning September 22
First three classes at International Student Centre, U of T
33 St. George St. (just north of College).
Phone (416) 593-4138 for readings and other class locations.

Class Series

Marxism and World Revolution

7:00 p.m., alternate Tuesdays beginning September 14
Room 212, Student Union Building, UBC
Phone (604) 687-0353 for information and readings.

Toronto

Vancouver

Balkans...

(continued from page 2)

whipping up patriotic war fever, and in Italy and also Greece there was substantial active opposition to the war among the working class. Here in Canada, where the NDP backed the war to the hilt, antiwar protests were generally small and dominated by Serbian nationalists. But there was also little evident enthusiasm for the war among the working class. Indeed, among the most virulent expressions of chauvinist sentiment came from self-styled "revolutionary socialists" who took a vanguard position only in promoting imperialist war propaganda.

After the war, the International Socialists (I.S.) headlined an article in *Socialist Worker* (23 June) "Ethnic Cleansing, NATO Style." But while NATO was perpetrating its bloody slaughter, the I.S. sought to build an "antiwar movement" with forces who *supported* imperialist intervention in the Balkans, generally in the guise of Canadian "peacekeeping" troops under United Nations auspices. Sowing the most treacherous illusions in the "democratic" pretensions of Canadian imperialism, the I.S. hailed a Canadian Federation of Students resolution which demanded that Ottawa "take a leadership role in finding a peaceful political resolution." Worse yet, they uncritically sang the praises of Canadian Auto Workers (CAW) leader Buzz Hargrove, waxing about the "anti-war position of his union, which passed a resolution against the bombing within days of its start" (*Socialist Worker*, 12 May). Not once did *Socialist Worker* mention that this CAW resolution called for ground troops to invade Kosovo "with the proper air support" and demanded that Ottawa "commit Canadian troops as peacekeepers"!

The I.S.'s call to "end the bombing" was an appeal to the imperialist powers to adopt a more "humane" policy, leaving the door open for some other form of imperialist intervention. And indeed, the I.S.'s British patrons of the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) called for just that: leading SWP member Alex Callinicos signed a letter along with bourgeois liberals like Noam Chomsky blatantly appealing for an "alternative" imperialist intervention in the Balkans. This letter, published in the June issue of the British SWP's *Socialist Review*, contains the following call:

"Nato is not the only or above all the best fulcrum for an agreement. One could find the elements of a multinational police force (embracing notably Serbs and Albanians) in the ranks of the OSCE [Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe] to enforce a transitional agreement."

This is an open call for military intervention under the auspices of the OSCE, an agency which reflects the particular interests of the West European imperialist powers.

For its part, Socialist Action (SA), which supports a wing of the fake-Trotskyist "United Secretariat of the Fourth International," acted as publicity agents for NATO's pawns in the Albanian-nationalist Kosovo Liberation Front (UCK). Until they were thrown out for their lip-service opposition to the bombing, SA leaders attended a *pro-war* demonstration in Toronto organized by ethnic Albanians whose signs and speeches said "Thanks for your support, NATO!"

While giving no political support to the UCK, we have



SC photo

Trotskyist League calls for proletarian revolutionary opposition to Canadian imperialism at June 5 Toronto demonstration.

historically defended the right of self-determination for the Kosovo Albanians against the Serb-chauvinist regime in Belgrade. But this question became subordinated to military defense of Serbia against the NATO imperialists when they geared up for war against Serbia earlier this year with the UCK as their pawns. With the end of the war, we wrote: "The question of military defense of the Kosovo separatists against U.S./NATO forces might well be posed in the event of armed clashes if the imperialist occupation troops move to disarm the UCK" (*Workers Vanguard* No. 715, 11 June).

Serbian strongman Milosevic and his counterparts in Croatia, Slovenia and Bosnia led the capitalist counterrevolution—instigated by the imperialists in the early 1990s—which ripped apart the multinational albeit bureaucratically deformed Yugoslav workers state created by Tito's Communist Partisans at the end of World War II. We fight to forge Trotskyist parties in the Balkans to revive the proletarian internationalism which animated the revolutionary Serbian Social Democrats under the extremely difficult conditions of World War I. We fight for a *socialist federation of the Balkans* through proletarian revolutions to overthrow Milosevic, Tudjman and the other capitalist regimes of the region.

Imperialism is not a "policy" which can be "reformed" by pressuring a wing of the ruling class. The fight against war is the fight for socialist revolution to overthrow the imperialist system which necessarily breeds war. It was the October Revolution of 1917, led by the Bolshevik Party of Lenin and Trotsky, which took Russia out of World War I and created the world's first workers state, a beacon of revolutionary internationalism for the proletariat everywhere. We seek to forge a revolutionary workers party in this country to link the struggles of the working class in defense of jobs and social programs and the fight against chauvinist and racist oppression to the proletariat's battle for state power. If imperialist carnage is not to be the continuing fate of humanity, capitalism must be swept away through proletarian revolution. The International Communist League fights to reforge Trotsky's Fourth International, world party of socialist revolution, to lead the fight for new October Revolutions around the world. ■

Chinese Refugees...

(continued from page 1)

lifetime's wages for workers in China—for the harrowing voyage across the Pacific in squalid conditions with little food or water. The ultimate destination of most is the United States, where it is estimated that up to 500,000 Fujians now live in New York City's huge Chinese community, for the most part in dire poverty. Others settle in the Chinatowns of Toronto or Vancouver, eking out a meager existence at sub-minimum wage jobs while they pay off the debts from their voyage.

Behind the wave of migration from China is the dismantling of the planned economy at the hands of the corrupt ruling Stalinist bureaucracy. The "iron rice bowl"—which meant people were guaranteed employment, housing, food and the other basic necessities of life—has been shattered by the Stalinists' "market reforms," leading to massive poverty. Every year, several million workers are being thrown out of work. In rural areas, the return of private farming has led to upwards of 100 million people from the countryside flocking to the cities in search of jobs.

The 1949 Chinese Revolution brought tremendous gains for the worker and peasant masses, yet from the outset the revolution was deformed under the rule of a nationalist bureaucratic caste. Today the Beijing bureaucrats are driving headlong toward the restoration of capitalism. But to carry this through to completion they will have to break the resistance of the working class, which has engaged in unprecedented levels of strike action over the past several years. We Trotskyists call for the unconditional military defense of the Chinese deformed workers state against imperialist attack and internal counterrevolution. A Leninist-Trotskyist vanguard party is urgently needed to lead the workers in a political revolution to overthrow the sellout Stalinists and stop the restoration of capitalism.

The counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union and the East European deformed workers states in the early 1990s produced a tidal wave of refugees seeking to flee the terrors of nationalist fratricide, ethnic pogroms or dire poverty, all of which have increased exponentially with the return of capitalist exploitation. From Ottawa and Washington to Berlin and Paris, the capitalist rulers have whipped up an anti-immigrant frenzy in order to keep out or expel these poor refugees. Now the imperialists are salivating over prospects of breaking working-class resistance in China and reconquering markets there for imperialist exploitation. At the same time, they are determined to bar the door to Chinese workers and peasants who seek to flee the growing immiseration and support their families by working in the West.

The racist attacks on immigrants and refugees are at the cutting edge of the capitalist rulers' assault on the living standards and union organizations of the entire working class. By whipping up racist demagoguery against working people in other countries and immigrants and other minorities at home, the capitalists are able to "divide and rule" over the working class and carry through their savage attacks.

Even as they lock up and expel desperate refugees, the bourgeois rulers dress themselves up as defenders of "human rights." This is the most grotesque hypocrisy. "Human rights" has become the imperialists' code phrase for wars of terror and annihilation against the peoples of neocolonial and other poor countries. Years of bombings and economic

sanctions have killed more than a million Iraqis, including hundreds of thousands of children. The bombing of Serbia by the NATO powers including Canada earlier this year killed many hundreds of civilians and destroyed much of the infrastructure of that country. We fight to build revolutionary workers parties in Canada and other imperialist centers in order to sweep away the entire capitalist system of racism, oppression and war.

Anti-Asian Racism: Made in Canada

Anti-Asian racism has a long, ugly history in Canada, not least in B.C. Between 1880 and 1885, tens of thousands of Chinese laborers were used to build the western leg of the Canadian Pacific Railway. They paid for it dearly—over 2,000 died. After the railway was completed, Ottawa introduced a head tax aimed at preventing further Chinese immigration. In 1923, after the railway and mining bosses no longer needed cheap, expendable Chinese labor, the Chinese Exclusion Act was passed, completely sealing the borders to Chinese immigration.

Immigrants from elsewhere in Asia were similarly barred. In 1914, nearly 400 Sikhs on the *Komagata Maru* tried to break the Canadian government's color bar. They were kept on board ship in Vancouver harbor for weeks without food and water and were finally forced to return to India when the Royal Canadian Navy threatened to sink the ship. More recently, in 1986 and 1987, South Asian refugees—chiefly Tamils and Sikhs—who arrived by boat on the East Coast seeking asylum had the doors of Canadian imperialist "democracy" slammed in their face, as the government tightened the already openly racist immigration and refugee laws.

The fundamental purpose of capitalist immigration laws is to control the supply of labor. Imperialism's economic power lies on the ruinous exploitation of the former colonial world. When there is a need for labor, the capitalists import it from these poor countries. When the demand for labor shrinks, the rulers deliberately incite anti-immigrant racism to divide the working class, stop the flow of immigrants and expel those already in the country.

Immigrants and refugees are being made scapegoats for the economic disaster that Canadian capitalism has created. While the NDP calls to expel "illegal" Asian immigrants, the union bureaucrats foster anti-immigrant racism among the working class by spreading the poison of nationalist protectionism

(continued on page 12)

Trotskyist League Forums

U.S., Canada, NATO, UN: Out of the Balkans Now!

The Fraud of "Human Rights" Imperialism

Toronto

Saturday, October 16, 7:30 p.m.
Trinity-St. Paul's Centre, 427 Bloor St. W.
(one block west of Spadina subway)

For more information, contact the TL at (416) 593-4138

Vancouver

Saturday, October 2, 7:00 p.m.
Britannia Community Centre, Room L4
1661 Napier Street (off Commercial Drive)
For more information, contact the TL at (604) 687-0353

Chinese Refugees...

(continued from page 11)

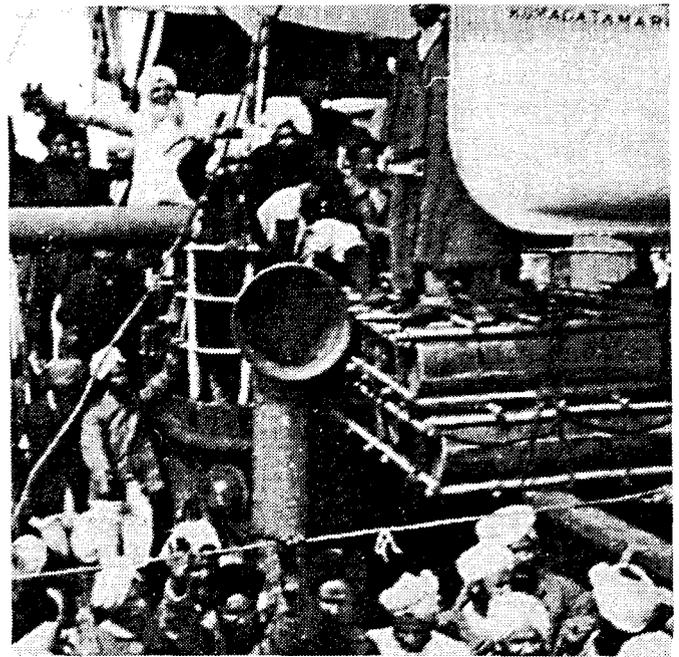
with their cry of "Canadian jobs for Canadian workers." This tells the workers, to look to their own exploiters and oppressors as allies, rather than mortal enemies. In blaming workers in Asia and elsewhere abroad for closures and other job losses here in Canada, the pro-capitalist misleaders cripple the possibility of united working-class struggle across national boundaries, as well as directly undercutting resistance to capitalist attacks at home. As we wrote in the "Declaration of Principles and Some Elements of Program" of the International Communist League (*Spartacist* [English edition] No. 54, Spring 1998):

"Modern capitalism, i.e., imperialism, reaching into all areas of the planet, in the course of the class struggle and as economic need demands, brings into the proletariat at its bottom new sources of cheaper labor, principally immigrants from poorer and less-developed regions of the world—workers with few rights who are deemed more disposable in times of economic contraction. Thus capitalism in ongoing fashion creates different strata among the workers, while simultaneously amalgamating the workers of many different lands. Everywhere, the capitalists, abetted by aristocracy-of-labor opportunists, try to poison class consciousness and solidarity among the workers by fomenting religious, national and ethnic divisions. The struggle for the unity and integrity of the working class against chauvinism and racism is thus a vital task for the proletarian vanguard."

The racist furor being whipped up around the Chinese migrants is part of a global war against immigrants by the ruling classes of the capitalist West. The counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet degenerated workers state in 1991-92 has sharply heightened this anti-immigrant frenzy. The very existence of the Soviet Union compelled the various imperialist powers to suppress some of their mutual rivalries and introduce certain reforms (the "welfare state") to ward off the spectre of workers revolution at home. This included liberalizing aspects of immigration policy. In Canada, this intersected the need to import labor during the industrial expansion in the decades after World War II, which led to the formal dropping of the racist "color bar" to non-white immigration in the 1960s.

Today, the Chrétien Liberal regime is mooting yet another round of legal restrictions on immigrants and asylum seekers. Its Bill C-63 will require either English or French language proficiency for citizenship and give the authorities power to strip citizenship for up to five years from anyone they deem a threat to "national security." At the same time, the government holds the threat of deportation over thousands of refugees from right-wing dictatorships. Upwards of 3,000 men and women who escaped from the deeply repressive Islamic regime in Iran—which Ottawa claims is now a "safe country"—face possible removal from Canada. While slamming the door on refugees, the government has welcomed with open arms rich foreign investors, including from Asia. Faced with an aging population over the coming decades, Ottawa is also considering upping the legal immigration quotas to as much as 500,000 a year in order to attract new sources of skilled labor.

However, what awaits most working-class and poor immigrants who do make it into Canada is a lifetime of poverty and oppression. According to a *Province* (20 January) report, more than half of all immigrants who arrived in B.C. from 1991-96 have incomes below the poverty line. Immi-



Vancouver Public Library

Canadian state starved and then deported 400 Sikhs on Komagata Maru in 1914.

grants from China, in particular, often end up slaving for substandard wages in garment and electronics sweatshops or restaurants, or as unskilled day laborers with no job security or benefits. Contrary to the picture of the West being a "golden mountain" of untold wealth, a woman garment worker interviewed in the *Globe and Mail* (21 June) longed for the better conditions in her homeland: "At least in China we had regular hours and we could go home to take a break. Here you work day and night." Other women toil as indentured domestic workers or are forced into prostitution to pay off the debts from their voyage.

NDP Enforcers for Racist Capitalism

The NDP's solution to the "immigrant problem" is to strengthen the repressive apparatus of the bourgeois state. When the second boatload of Chinese migrants arrived in August, B.C.'s then NDP premier, Glen Clark, demanded that Ottawa increase military patrolling of the coast. Clark complained that with the cutbacks in the military and Coast Guard, "there is no surveillance really to speak of on the coast of British Columbia" (*Vancouver Sun*, 12 August).

The NDP echoes the federal Liberals in pushing the lie that capitalist Canada is a "compassionate" and "multicultural" country which welcomes immigrants from all over the world. Yet B.C. NDP attorney-general Ujjal Dosanjh has outdone the government in Ottawa by calling to temporarily detain all refugee claimants upon their arrival in order to determine their "credibility." Saying "I'm a tough guy on some issues," Dosanjh has also demanded the rapid deportation of claimants found guilty of drug offenses (*Globe and Mail*, 24 February). The "war on drugs" is a code word for stepped-up state repression against minorities all over the capitalist world. In Vancouver, the cops stage near-daily "drug sweeps" targeting Latino and Asian youth in the Downtown Eastside.

The record of the New Democrats in power is living proof that they are no "friends of working people." The NDP is what Marxists call a bourgeois workers party: linked to the

Quebec...

(continued from page 16)

means, among other things, keeping Quebec in its place within a "united" country dominated by Anglo chauvinism. The New Democratic Party, the labor bureaucracy's political arm, is front and center in all of Ottawa's reactionary campaigns for "Canadian unity."

This Anglo bigotry has helped push Québécois workers straight into the arms of their "own" bourgeois-nationalist masters, through the vehicle of the Quebec union misleaders. And the nationalist PQ, in turn, runs roughshod over working people and the poor. Bouchard's "zero deficit" austerity drive is aimed at showing the bourgeoisie in Quebec and abroad—centrally in the U.S.—that the PQ would continue to act as "responsible" overseers of capitalist exploitation in an independent Quebec. This has led to a frontal assault on jobs and working conditions throughout the public sector, opening a rift between the PQ and the organized working class which the labor bureaucrats now aim to close.

As we wrote in the Trotskyist League/Ligue trotskyste *Programmatic Theses*, "Who We Are, and What We Fight For" (August 1998):

"Nationalism and chauvinism are the key strands in the ropes which bind English-speaking and French-speaking workers to their capitalist enemies. The existence of two separate and increasingly divergent nations, one oppressing the other, defines the political landscape in this country, and has terribly undermined working-class struggle. We advocate *independence for Quebec* to help clear the way for united struggle by the working class against capitalist oppression."

In the 1960s and early '70s, as Quebec society emerged from two centuries of priest-ridden backwardness enforced by the arrogant Anglo overlords, the Québécois working class engaged in the most explosive proletarian struggles in Canadian history. This culminated in the semi-insurrectionary general strike of May 1972, in which the workers shut down Quebec and seized entire towns in protest at the jailing of labor leaders by the provincial Liberal government.

The Quebec workers' struggle was met with a wall of hostility from the leaders of English Canadian labor. The NDP

social democrats denounced the general strike and publicly supported the imprisonment of the Quebec union leaders. The Canadian Labour Congress bureaucrats used the occasion to rail against forces "which advocate the destruction of Confederation...as a means of pursuing selfish regional aims" (*Globe and Mail*, 15 May 1972). This chauvinist bigotry helped to isolate and derail the strike, which was eventually sold out by the Quebec union tops themselves. In the aftermath, it served to drive the militant Quebec proletariat into the clutches of the PQ, through the medium of their own union misleaders.

The Quebec union tops had been adept at mouthing socialist rhetoric, the better to contain a restive working class. But following the defeat of the general strike, they rapidly dropped all talk of revolution in order to embrace the PQ nationalists, who were elected for the first time in 1976. René Lévesque's PQ government soon proved that it was every bit as anti-working-class as its federalist Liberal rival.

In 1983, the PQ enacted the most draconian strikebreaking legislation in Quebec history against the public sector unions, tearing up contracts, banning strikes and slashing wages up to 20 percent. The union Common Front announced a general strike against the PQ assault. Fifty thousand angry workers demonstrated in front of the National Assembly in Quebec City with placards reading "Lévesque, Pinochet" and "Lévesque, Fascist." But the nationalist labor tops quickly derailed the strikes and allowed the PQ to carry through its sweeping attacks. This was a crushing defeat for the working class, ushering in a decade and a half of cutbacks and austerity under both Liberal and PQ regimes. As we wrote at the time:

"Lévesque's labor lieutenants in the Quebec trade-union bureaucracy have aided and abetted the PQ in cutting at the heart of the independence of the working class from the capitalist state. And the arrogant refusal of their counterparts in the Canadian Labour Congress and the NDP to recognize Quebec's right to self-determination has fueled the reactionary nationalism that has shackled the Quebec proletariat....

"The elementary defense of trade-union independence from the capitalist state requires the ousting of the pro-PQ labor bureaucrats and the chauvinist leaders of English-Canadian

(continued on page 14)

proletariat through the trade-union bureaucracy but seeking only to administer capitalism on behalf of the bourgeois rulers. In B.C., NDP rule has meant severe austerity measures for the working class and poor. Thousands of health-care workers have been laid off, while spending on education—notably ESL and other programs geared to immigrants—is being slashed. Unemployment continues to rise, with another 53,000 jobs lost since February of this year. Especially hard hit have been the single-industry resource towns of the Interior and Vancouver Island, where the profit-bloated forestry and mining bosses have thrown tens of thousands out of work following the collapse of Asian export markets.

The tremendous potential social power of the proletariat to defeat these attacks is crippled by the labor bureaucracy, which pushes reactionary nationalism and support to the New Democrats rather than leading the necessary struggle against the enemy class. Today B.C. labor is increasingly integrated, with tens of thousands of immigrant workers from Asia and elsewhere. The labor movement must take up

the fight for the rights of immigrants and refugees as an integral part of its struggle against capitalist immiseration. The Trotskyist League calls for full citizenship rights for all immigrants, regardless of whether they are in this country legally or "illegally." Democratic rights such as these can only be won and secured by a proletariat fighting to take state power away from the bourgeoisie and establish a socialist economy in a society free from exploitation and all oppression. As we wrote a decade ago in "Racist Anti-Asian Hysteria in B.C." (SC No. 74, Spring 1989):

"As proletarian internationalists we greet the infusion of immigrant workers into North America, who can be a living link to common class struggle across the Pacific Basin, south to Latin America and beyond. The B.C. labor movement, with its increasingly integrated pulp and paper, wood, longshore, postal and hospital unions must take the lead in the fight against all aspects of racial oppression. But that requires a direct struggle against the nationalist union and NDP misleaders. The Trotskyist League is dedicated to building a multiracial revolutionary workers party which can lead the working class in the struggle to smash racist North American capitalism." ■

Quebec...

(continued from page 13)

labor, forging a class-struggle leadership of labor with the will to fight and the program to win."

—"Quebec Labor Under the Gun," SC No. 58, June 1983

The Bouchard government is only continuing the PQ's union-busting tradition, while today's crop of Quebec labor misleaders unashamedly ties the workers to these anti-labor bourgeois nationalists. Preaching *concertation* (collaboration) with the government, the union tops openly *endorsed* Bouchard's goal of wiping out the deficit by the year 2000. This has now been accomplished, ahead of schedule, through savage cuts in public services, especially health care, while the labor misleaders raised barely a peep in protest.

Nurses Strike: Solidarity and Betrayal

On the picket lines, the nurses, who are overwhelmingly women, showed courage and determination in defying the government. Asked by *Spartacist Canada* what would be the impact of the PQ's strikebreaking legislation, one nurse on the picket line outside Montreal's Jewish General Hospital replied defiantly, "Let them put me in jail!" The strike was hugely popular. Polls showed public support for the nurses within Quebec at up to 90 percent. Passing motorists set up a constant din by honking in support of the picket lines. Doctors, ambulance drivers and other health care workers, even patients, joined strike rallies. However, the refusal by the FTQ/CSN/CEQ labor tops to spread the strike into the broader public sector—which would have meant a direct confrontation with "their" bourgeois-nationalist PQ government—meant that the nurses were left to fight alone, leading to the eventual sellout.

At the same time, the strike itself had important weaknesses. While nurses heroically defied anti-strike legislation by the capitalist state, their leaders simultaneously portrayed the police—a central component of that same capitalist state—as supposed supporters of the strike. FIIQ leaders even bragged how the head of the Montreal cop "union" joined a strike rally outside Notre-Dame hospital. But the cops are not "allies," they are the armed fist of the capitalist rulers and deadly enemies of workers' struggle! The police are regularly unleashed to enforce the government's strike-breaking laws. This includes dragging unionists off to jail, as they recently did to leaders of the Montreal municipal blue-collar union.

The Montreal cops are also notoriously racist, having shot down numerous black youth and other minorities in recent years, from Anthony Griffin to Marcellus François. A significant number of nurses in Montreal are first- or second-generation immigrants from countries in Asia, Haiti or else-

where in the Caribbean. In order to win its battles, organized labor must take up the fight against racist oppression and actively oppose the police terror meted out to black and Asian minorities.

The FIIQ leaders' portrayal of strikebreaking cops as some kind of "workers in uniform" is no isolated instance. The FTQ organizes a number of police "unions," who are also negotiating with the government over wages and working conditions this fall. These hired thugs of the ruling class are a deadly poison within the workers movement. It is testimony to the slavish commitment to capitalism of the FTQ and other Common Front union leaders that they would even think of organizing such forces. The 1972 general strike started precisely after the leaders of that year's Common Front were hauled off to jail by the police. Cops out of the unions!

The nurses strike was also weakened by bowing to the bosses' laws. It was carried out under government-imposed "essential services" rules, whereby nurses were ordered to report to work as usual to maintain emergency staffing, only later joining their colleagues on the picket lines. Yet for a strike to be deemed "legal" under the law, there has to be a 90 percent staffing level—and thanks to the government's own budget-slashing most hospitals now *normally* operate at 70 to 80 percent capacity! One nurse at Montreal's St-Luc hospital told *SC* that the maternity ward where she works was better staffed during the strike than before, when they were chronically short four to five nurses each shift.

Other public sector workers, like at Hydro-Québec, have already been denied the right to strike under "essential services" rules. This is an attack on the workers' social power: their ability to shut down a worksite and withhold their labor. A militant leadership of the nurses union would have organized to defy the anti-labor "essential services" rules and bring other health care workers out on strike by maintaining solid picket lines. The union itself could then decide when and how to provide emergency medical services.

The Fight for Revolutionary Leadership

The current breach between the PQ government, backed by the union bureaucracy, and whole layers of Quebec workers poses point blank the question of working-class leadership. But the reformist left organizations who claim to provide some sort of alternative to the PQ are mired in either the worst Anglo chauvinism or in Quebec nationalism, or both.

In one of a number of articles on the nurses strike they published over the summer, the International Socialists (I.S.) say: "For Quebec labour to move forward it needs to establish its independence from the PQ" (*Socialist Worker*, 18 August). Indeed, Quebec workers must be broken from the bourgeois-nationalist PQ. But Marxist revolutionaries understand that breaking the workers from the nationalism which ties them to the PQ requires confronting head-on the national oppression of Quebec at the hands of the Anglo-chauvinist Canadian bourgeoisie. Yet amid columns of economist reportage on the strike, the I.S. does not once so much as *mention* the national question or raise a for-the-record call for Quebec's right to independence!

In fact, marching in step with the NDP and the chauvinist English Canadian union tops, the I.S. *opposes* Quebec independence, calling instead for a form of revamped federalism, a more "humane" recipe for the national oppression of Quebec. They went as far as endorsing the 1992 Charlottetown Accord pushed by the then federal Tory government with the support of the New Democrats. While saying No to Quebec

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January 1983: 50,000 workers demonstrate in support of striking public sector workers. Nationalist union tops scuttled general strike.

Phillips/Tribune

independence, the I.S. said Yes to this accord, which sought to rally the population to endorse a stabilized, unitary Canada by giving Quebec the meaningless title of "distinct society."

For its part, the Communist Party of Canada (CPC), recently reconstituted in Quebec through a fusion with the ex-Maoist Groupe Ouvrier Révolutionnaire, has a long and despicable history of English Canadian chauvinism. For decades it refused even to countenance the idea of Quebec's right to self-determination. Today it offers up the reformist soup of a "new, made-in-Canada constitution," while openly waving the flag of Maple Leaf nationalism. See, for example, the front-page headline of its July-August *People's Voice*, which reads: "Stop the Chrétien Liberals' Sellout!—Canada Is Not for Sale."

On the flip side of the coin is the Gauche Socialiste (GS) group, affiliated to the pseudo-Trotskyist United Secretariat (USec). Inveterate opportunists, USec sections around the world have a long history of liquidating into social-democratic and even bourgeois nationalist formations, from the thoroughly pro-capitalist British Labour Party to the bourgeois Party of the Democratic Revolution in Mexico. In this country, the USec followers have for decades capitulated to both the bourgeois nationalists in Quebec and to Anglo-chauvinist social democracy in English Canada. In the latest episode, GS in Quebec has immersed itself in the Parti de la Démocratie Socialiste (PDS), a social-democratic nationalist split from the Quebec NDP.

While acting as uncritical press agents for the PDS, GS raises some mild criticisms of the Rassemblement pour l'Alternative Politique (RAP), another left-nationalist outfit formed last year by intellectuals and lower-level union bureaucrats fed up with the PQ's austerity attacks. The RAP's main campaign is for a "citizenship income," i.e., a higher welfare pittance for the poor. Saying this is insufficient, GS calls for a "cut in interest payments on the public debt," and claims that this, together with higher taxes on profits and the rich, "is a concrete way to disarm finance capital" ("Un manifeste social-démocrate qui ne confronte pas le pouvoir de la haute-finance et des monopoles!" 13 December 1998).

GS's call to "tax the rich" promotes the deadly reformist illusion that the capitalist government can be turned into an agency that serves the interests of the workers and poor at the expense of the wealthy owners of the means of production. Marxists naturally defend whatever social assistance can be wrested for the poor under capitalism. However, our point of departure is the understanding that the capitalist state cannot be reformed—by "taxing the rich" or otherwise—to meet the interests of the working class and

oppressed. Capital cannot be "disarmed" by penny-ante reforms. It must be swept away by workers revolution.

GS supports some of the most reactionary aspects of Québécois nationalism—notably on the language question, where it backs the PQ's Law 101 with its restrictions on languages other than French. Marxists, in contrast, oppose such chauvinist legislation and call for equal language rights for all. More broadly, GS peddles the myth that Quebec would inherently be more "progressive" if it was independent. Commenting on the formation of the RAP last year, GS's *La Gauche* (May 1998) claimed that "Quebec independence gives us the occasion to redefine society, it harbors projects of profound social transformations: a Quebec of full employment, a Quebec without an army, a Quebec without social exclusion...". Indeed, according to *La Gauche*, "Independence will be socialist or it will not be!" (April 1998).

This is absurd. Independence is being pursued today by the PQ, a thoroughly capitalist party which represents the Québécois bourgeoisie that emerged through the Quiet Revolution of the 1960s. The frontal assault on social programs and union rights in Quebec today precisely prefigures the PQ's plans for an independent Quebec, in which these anti-working class bourgeois nationalists would truly be "masters in their own house." GS's pipedreams of "socialist independence" are a cover for bourgeois nationalism, pure and simple. For genuine Marxists, the call for Quebec independence is designed to get the national question *off the agenda*, thereby clearing the road for common class struggle by the workers of both nations against the capitalist rulers.

The crucial instrument for a workers' victory is an internationalist, multiracial revolutionary party which champions the cause of all the oppressed—women, Native people, immigrants and other minorities. In fighting to construct such a party, the Trotskyist League/Ligue trotskyste rejects the reactionary ideology of nationalism in all its forms. We call for Quebec independence first and foremost to cut against the dominant Anglo chauvinism among English Canadian workers, but also to break the grip of nationalism which has led to defeat after defeat for the Québécois proletariat.

The real alternative to the bourgeois PQ is not social-democratic reformism wrapped up in the *fleurdelysé* but the fight for workers revolution throughout North America and beyond, which will sweep away class exploitation and its concomitant oppression of women and ethnic minorities. Health care, education and other social services can fully serve the population only when the profit-driven capitalist system has been uprooted. Join us in the fight for a reformed Trotskyist Fourth International, the crucial instrument for the emancipation of working people and the oppressed! ■

Labor Upsurge in Quebec

For more than three weeks in June and July, 47,000 nurses organized in the Federation of Quebec Nurses (FIIQ) set up picket lines outside hospitals in every corner of Quebec. Fed up with their miserably low wages and working conditions, the nurses continued their strike in defiance of strikebreaking legislation by the Parti Québécois government. This was the first major confrontation between the labor movement and Lucien Bouchard's bourgeois-nationalist PQ regime, and indeed the most significant strike action in Quebec since the early 1980s.

The strike tapped into deep popular resentment over years of cutbacks in health and other services by the federal and provincial governments, all carried out in the name of "rationalization" and "competitiveness." It came amid an upsurge of labor protest in Quebec centered on a threatened strike by 400,000 public sector workers in the pan-union Common Front this fall. Already 18,000 teachers and support staff have staged protests outside CEGEP junior colleges on the first day of classes. Hydro-Québec workers have been striking since May, and there have been protests and strikes by city workers, hotel employees, taxi drivers and more. Bouchard acknowledged that if the government gave in to the demands of the nurses, others would enter the fray: "This is very contagious.... Disorder is very contagious" (*Globe and Mail*, 3 July).

But the nationalist, pro-capitalist misleaders of the Quebec labor movement are doing everything possible to avoid a large-scale labor conflict with the PQ government, which they helped to elect in 1994 and again last year. Far from any contagion, the leaders of the Common Front unions—the FTQ (Quebec Federation of Labour), CSN (Confederation of National Trade Unions) and CEQ (Quebec Teachers Central)—made absolutely no effort to spread the strike to the other public sector workers who are under the gun. On the contrary, scandalously, they said not one word in support of the nurses until after the PQ had enacted its strikebreaking legislation, and even then only issued a tepid, pro-forma call for "solidarity." With the nurses left isolated, in the end the FIIQ leaders themselves scuttled the strike. Overriding protests from the union ranks, who had voted down a rotten tentative settlement, the FIIQ tops sent the nurses back to work under their old contract, while facing up to \$15 million



CP

June 30: Striking nurses protest outside National Assembly in Quebec City.

in fines under the PQ's strikebreaking law.

Chauvinism, Nationalism and Quebec Labor

The defeat of the nurses strike shows vividly how the nationalism of the Quebec union tops undermines labor's struggle by tying the workers to their capitalist class enemies. At the same time, central responsibility for this state of affairs lies with the chauvinist leadership of the labor movement in English Canada. Despite occasional, for-the-record calls for Quebec's right to self-determination, these union bureaucrats promote Canadian nationalism—which

(continued on page 13)

Independence For Quebec!
Break With Anti-Labor PQ—For a Revolutionary Workers Party!
