



# U.S. Imperialists Devastate Falluja



**U.S. Out of Iraq! Canada Out of Afghanistan!**

**Falluja.** Like "My Lai," the word "Falluja" must be seared into collective memory and consciousness as a monstrous U.S. war crime. Falluja: a city of 300,000, largely depopulated as American "liberators" rode into town in tanks bearing the inscription in schoolbook Arabic, "Keep away or you will be killed." Flattening Falluja was the first act of the second coming of George W. Bush. Mosques were bombed and then stormed by U.S. troops. NBC correspondent Kevin Sites videotaped Marines murdering a wounded, prostrate man in a mosque. This bit of grisly truth was sanitized by NBC (which blacked out the actual shooting) as too much reality about the Iraq occupation to beam into American living rooms.

In assaulting Falluja, the American troops' first act was to seize the city's main hospital to prevent "insurgent propaganda," i.e., word of massive civilian deaths and casualties, from reaching the world. The American military then barred relief workers with the Red Crescent from delivering food, water and medicine to the trapped civilians. Typhoid is up, as families left in the city are forced to drink water polluted with sewage. Water and power lines to the city were cut in advance of the U.S. blitzkrieg and have not been restored.

Children are dying. Charred bodies lie strewn among the twisted steel, shattered glass and rubble remnants of the city, and the smell of death is everywhere.

Hundreds of men fleeing Falluja were separated from their wives and children and ordered to march back to town. "There is nothing that distinguishes an insurgent from a civilian" was the explanation offered by a Cavalry officer. When forced back to Falluja, many males between the ages of 15 and 45 who didn't die in the siege were then arrested. As an Iraqi journalist stated in a firsthand account in the

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**The Spectre of Tiananmen  
and Working-Class Struggle  
in China Today**

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# TL Joins Protests Against Ontario's Sharia Courts

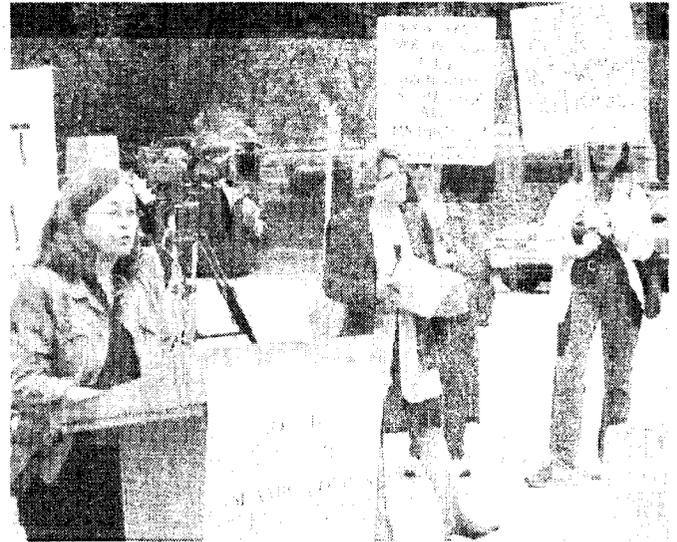
We print below, edited for publication, a speech given by a Trotskyist League supporter at a September 8 Toronto protest against the implementation of sharia courts in Ontario. The attempt to impose sharia law will only deepen the isolation and oppression of immigrant women (see SC No. 142, Fall 2004). In Toronto and Vancouver our comrades addressed the protests, initiated by the International Campaign Against Sharia Court in Canada (which is supported by the Worker-communist Party of Iran). In Toronto our comrades approached many left and gay/lesbian groups to join the protests, but this brought all too little response. From opposing the rise of Islamic reaction in Iran in 1979 to hailing the Soviet Red Army in Afghanistan later that year, we have fought and still combat all forms of religion, part of our struggle to replace capitalism with the rule of working people.

As revolutionary Marxists, fighters for women's liberation, atheists, we are deeply opposed to the plans for sharia courts in Ontario. This is an anti-woman outrage that will only deepen immigrant Muslim women's oppression and isolation. On the one hand, the government is going after Muslims in their deadly so-called "war on terror." On the other, with these sharia courts, they are nurturing and upholding all that is backward and reactionary in the Muslim community.

But there's no contradiction. Both are ways of reinforcing the grip of capitalism through scapegoating and regimenting immigrant communities. Working people must oppose this, while condemning the racist war on terror.

This is the same ruling class that has for decades fueled the growth of political Islam as a bulwark against godless communism. In Afghanistan, for example, the CIA poured billions into fighting the entirely just and progressive intervention of the Soviet Union against the woman-hating *mujahedin*—the fanatics who throw acid in women's faces.

Sharia is one way. But the Canadian government has another way of deepening the oppression of immigrant women and this is through their racist and deeply restrictive immigration laws. So that for a young girl or a young woman now in some Muslim communities her citizenship



SC photo

**TL supporter addresses rally against Islamic sharia courts outside Ontario Legislature in Toronto, September 8.**

may well be her dowry, bartered so that a man may get his landing papers. We're very much against that: we fight for full citizenship rights for all immigrants. This is a way to undercut such reactionary moves and also allow immigrants and people who come to this country to settle and to have the rights of everyone else. Anybody who comes here ought to be able to stay here and live and work.

Karl Marx was right: "*Man makes religion*, religion does not make man." All religions are oppressive—and I don't think Islam has a monopoly on religious reaction. It's Protestant and Catholic fanatics who have murdered abortion providers in Canada and the United States, not Muslims.

To wrap up. There have been different speakers putting different views forward here today. "Canadian law," Canadian so-called secularism, is not a paradise for workers, minorities and women. We oppose the kind of anti-Muslim views put out by groups like the Humanist Association—for example, Elka Enola's view that leftists who support "Palestinians against Israel" are somehow "siding with Political Islam." This is very wrong and must be defeated. Similarly, the racist campaign in France that bans young girls from wearing their headscarves will only *deepen* the hold of religion.

To see the ruling government of this country or any other capitalist country as a force for progress in the struggle against Islam is to foster terrible illusions in the capitalist governments and to lend credence to their democratic pretensions. In Canada, as in the historically Muslim countries of the Near East, the enemy of women's liberation and the enemy of all the struggles of the oppressed is this *system* of capitalist, imperialist subjugation.

The way to end it, the way to end the system of class exploitation and anti-woman barbarism, lies in sweeping away this entire capitalist system in a workers revolution. We're for imperialists getting out of Iraq and Canada getting out of Afghanistan and we're against the racist war on terror. Down with the sharia courts! For women's liberation through socialist revolution! ■

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## — Holiday Appeal for Class-War Prisoners —

# Free Mumia Abu-Jamal!

In Toronto on December 11, the Partisan Defense Committee is holding a Holiday Appeal for Class-War Prisoners, those who have been singled out for standing up to racist capitalist oppression. Together with the PDC in the U.S., we provide monthly stipends to 16 prisoners—union militants, fighters for black freedom, opponents of imperialism and capitalist militarism—as well as holiday gifts for them and their families. These gifts and solidarity messages are a necessary reminder to these brothers and sisters that they are not forgotten.

The PDC initiated this stipend program in the U.S. in 1986, reviving a tradition of the early International Labor Defense and upholding the Industrial Workers of the World principle, “an injury to one is an injury to all.” In Canada, the PDC has held annual appeals involving supporters in Toronto and Vancouver for over a decade.

This year’s broader event comes amid the “war on terror,” a brutal regime of harassment, imprisonment and deportation, chiefly against young men of Muslim backgrounds. Among the victims was Maher Arar, thrown into a Syrian torture chamber thanks to bogus RCMP allegations of “terrorism.” While his case made international headlines, dozens more have had their lives shattered by secret trials, jail and deportations. At present, there are five known cases of individuals held indefinitely and without charges under Ottawa’s ominous “security certificates.” We say: Free all the detainees!

Among other cases taken up by the PDC is that of Mohamed Cherfi, an Algerian refugee in Quebec who fought on behalf of more than a thousand Algerians facing deportation, only to be himself targeted for removal. Kidnapped by police from a Quebec City church in which he sought refuge, he was turned over to U.S. authorities and faces a threat of deportation to Algeria. We have also fought in defense of Ontario Coalition Against Poverty (OCAP) militants targeted by the cops and courts. Among the scheduled speakers at the Holiday Appeal is OCAP organizer John Clarke. Other speakers include Dave Bleakney of the Canadian Union of Postal Workers, CKLN radio host Norman (Otis) Richmond and spokesmen for the PDC and the Trotskyist League.

No case is more urgent today than that of U.S. death row political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal. A former Black Panther Party spokesman, MOVE supporter and award-winning journalist, Jamal was framed up on charges of killing a Philadelphia policeman in 1981 and sentenced to death. Despite the sworn confession of the real killer, recantation of prosecution witnesses, irrefutable proof of the trial judge’s racist bias, and the prosecution’s racist jury-rigging, coercion of witnesses, doctoring and concealing evidence, Jamal remains in the shadow of the death chamber. This could well be the last Holiday Appeal before a long-awaited decision in the federal appeals court, the last legal step before his case goes before the U.S. Supreme Court.

Jamal has been in the racist rulers’ sights since he was a 15-year-old Panther spokesman. A prominent and widely respected journalist known as the “voice of the voiceless,”

he became a supporter of the MOVE organization while covering the weeks-long siege and ultimate brutal cop assault on their Powelton Village home in 1978. Blaming the MOVE victims for the death of a cop in the police crossfire, Philadelphia mayor Rizzo promised to make the “new breed” of journalist pay, and three years later Jamal was gunned down on the street and hauled off to prison. With Jamal silenced

behind bars, the city’s besieged black population was without a prominent voice of protest when black Democratic mayor Wilson Goode ordered the police bombing of the MOVE home in 1985, killing eleven black people, five of them children.

Jamal’s case cuts to the core of black oppression in the U.S. A black man set up to be legally lynched through state-sanctioned murder, his case throws a spotlight on the barbaric, racist death penalty, a form of institutionalized state terror directly descended from the system of black chattel slavery.

We seek to mobilize the working people, minorities and all opponents of racist capitalist repression in protest actions centered on the social power of the labour movement. Our fight to free Jamal and abolish the racist death penalty in the U.S. is part of our perspective of winning workers to the understanding that the capitalist state, with its cops and courts, is not some “neutral” agency which serves society as a whole, but rather exists to defend the class rule and profits of the capitalists against those they exploit. Free Jamal! Free all the class-war prisoners! Build the Holiday Appeal—their fight is our fight! ■



COC Productions

Mumia Abu-Jamal.

## Holiday Appeal for Class-War Prisoners

— Toronto —



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## Defend Pro-Palestinian, Minority Student Groups at York University!

### ***Cops Off Campus!***

*The following letter, dated November 12, was submitted by the York Spartacus Youth Club to the Excalibur campus newspaper following massive financial cuts to the funding of several student organizations. Now, outrageously, the York administration is gunning for Jewish professor David Noble for his exposure of the influence of pro-Israeli lobbyists on the York University Foundation (YUF).*

We of the Spartacus Youth Club, a Marxist organization on campus, protest the York university administration's current campaign of intimidation against pro-Palestinian activists. In reaction to a vigil for victims of Israel's incursion in the Gaza Strip, the administration drew up a list of "usual suspects." Known activists were called in for meetings with the administration and security and some were issued warnings for the "crime" of issuing leaflets in defense of the Palestinians. This is blatant intimidation, an attempt to send a message to political activists.

In the context of the imperialist global "War on Terror," there has been a huge crackdown on radicalism on campuses all over North America, including York University. For example, the case of Dan Freeman-Maloy, a pro-Palestinian left-wing activist, who was expelled for his political activities on and off campus. Other examples are the complete ban of political discussion on the Middle East at Concordia after the protest against war criminal Netanyahu in September 2002 as well as the witchhunt on pro-Palestinian professors across the U.S. by Campus Watch.

We also write to speak out against the current call for increased security here at York, as well as the funding cuts to the York University Black Student Alliance, the Trans Bisexual Lesbian Gay at York and the Aboriginal Student Association. The current right-wing regime of the YFS [York Federation of Students] has cut down 90% of the funding of YUBSA, TBLGAY and the ASA. This is not about conservative fiscal policy but sending a message to minority groups to "stay in their place." The administration and the student government use funding as a bludgeon over the heads of student organizations to exercise political control through financial dependency—that's why we in the Spartacus Youth Club don't accept a penny from them.

Another point in the newly passed bylaws is that none of the university groups can in any way assist any charitable/volunteer organizations off the university campus. It is regarding this that another YFS representative commented: "There is no chance for student money to support terrorists in Chechnya or any bigoted and oppressive causes which might appear charitable to others." Now, the YFS is going after



YSp photo

**November 25: York students protest against administration crackdown on left-wing activists.**

OPIRG, openly calling it "extremely divisive." Waiting to take back the YFS at the next student elections is a big mistake. Leftist activists and all students who defend the right to free speech must protest now.

Meanwhile, throughout the semester, the *Excalibur* has been busy enlightening readers in sensational fashion that security guards are being "held back" by the current administration and are not allowed to interfere and protect the students when the need arises. The article comes with quotes from some disgruntled campus cowboys that are quite upset that they are not allowed to carry around sticks and pepper spray, like "real cops" do.

What is the real role of the security guards and cops on campus? They're not there to make sure that women get home safe at night, they're there to protect the property rights of corporate sponsors and interests who have turned the university into a shopping mall. An increase of campus security will also mean an increase in racist harassment.

The situation at York mirrors what is going on on a bigger scale. The increased security everywhere is a part of the racist "War on Terror," which targets current, as well as those that will be the future working class, especially immigrants and minorities. But everyone on campus is affected by the "chill effect" that the administration/YFS is implementing. Students interested in fighting the "War on Terror" on campus, as well as the broader attacks on immigrants and working people being waged by Canadian, American and other imperialists abroad, check out the Spartacus Youth Club. No Reprisals Against Student Activists! Cops Off Campus! For Student/Worker/Teacher Control of Universities! ■

# TL/LT Tenth National Conference **Communist Intervention and Radical Activism**

The Trotskyist League/Ligue trotskyste, Canadian section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist), held its Tenth National Conference in August. Members of the TL and the Spartacus Youth Clubs assessed our work since our last conference four years ago, examined developments in the left and labour movement over the same period, and discussed our future perspectives. In particular, comrades cast a critical eye on our work toward the activist youth milieu that grew rapidly in the wake of the November 1999 Seattle anti-WTO protests and the April 2001 Quebec City anti-FTAA demonstrations.

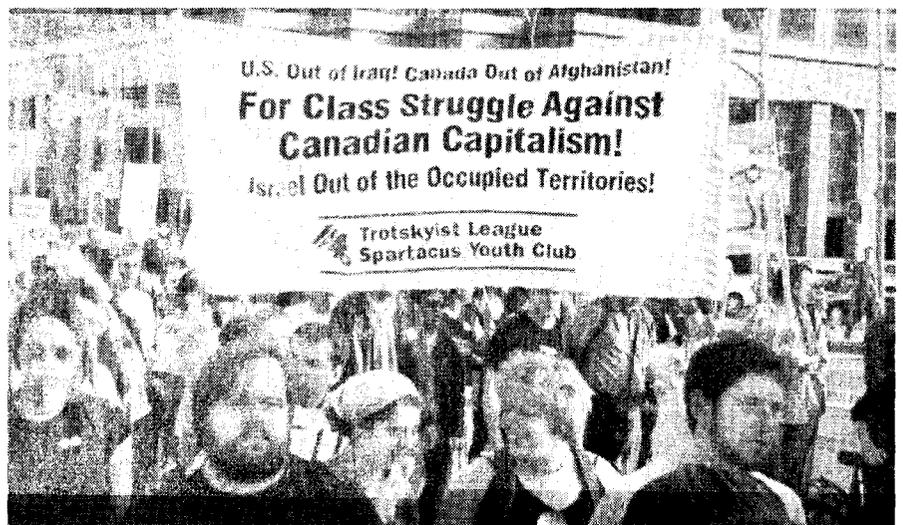
The conference registered modest but important growth: nearly 40 percent of TL and SYC members joined in the last three years, and we now have vibrant youth clubs in Toronto and Vancouver. Most were won to Trotskyism from anarchist or other “direct action” milieus, underlining both the opportunities to accrue new forces and the need to assess and improve our interventions in the various activist arenas.

A main resolution drafted by our outgoing Central Committee was adopted unanimously following extensive discussion and amendments. It situated our work in a “challenging international context, one still shaped by the collapse of the Soviet Union and the deformed workers states of East Europe.” The final undoing of the USSR—the world’s first workers state, product of the 1917 October Revolution—was a world historic defeat for the proletariat. This has produced an increasingly dangerous imperialist order, highlighted by the post-September 11 “war on terror,” the U.S. invasion and occupation of Iraq, and a global offensive against the working class and oppressed. At the same time, it has ushered in an ideological climate dominated by widespread belief in the “death of communism.”

At the crucial hour, in stark contrast to most of the left, the ICL stood at our post in defense of the gains of the October Revolution. We understood, in the words of the Bolshevik leader Leon Trotsky, that “Those who cannot defend old positions will never conquer new ones.” Where we could, notably amid the incipient proletarian political revolution in East Germany (the DDR) in 1989-90, we threw all our resources into this struggle, fighting for a “red Germany of workers councils.”

Today, we emphasize the urgent task of defending China, the most powerful of the remaining bureaucratically deformed workers states, against the threat of capitalist counterrevolution. The conference included a short report on China, which noted how the Stalinist rulers’ pro-market

policies have brought increased social inequality and vastly heightened the counterrevolutionary threat, and how this is meeting widespread resistance among the working class. The question of who will prevail—imperialist-backed capitalist restoration or a proletarian political revolution that topples the bankrupt Stalinist bureaucracy—hinges on the fight



Toronto, June 30: TL/SYC marches with anti-capitalist youth in demonstration against occupation of Iraq. Social-democratic left, liberals had split the demo, refusing to march against Canadian war profiteers.

SC photo

for an authentic communist party rooted among China’s working masses. The widespread, false belief among left-wing activists in this country that China is already capitalist further underscores the need to keep this question at the forefront of our work.

Another conference session addressed the U.S. occupation of Iraq. This built on ongoing discussions in the ICL aimed at refining our slogans against the occupation, a necessary part of making our interventions among antiwar activists more effective. The reporter explained that we stand for military defense of the Iraqi “resistance” forces insofar as they strike blows against the imperialist occupiers or their local puppets; such blows against the U.S. war machine are in the interests of workers and the oppressed in Iraq and internationally. At the same time, we sharply politically oppose the Islamic and Ba’athist forces who appear to be leading much of the current struggle against the occupation, and we denounce the attacks on innocent civilians and other religious and ethnic groups.

We fight for a *proletarian* perspective in the region and the imperialist centers, with particular stress on opposing our “own” bourgeois rulers. While feigning opposition to the “unilateral” U.S. war and occupation, the Canadian rulers

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## TL/LT Conference...

(continued from page 5)

have ably assisted their senior partners in Washington, notably by heading up the NATO occupation force in Afghanistan. The banner we have carried on anti-occupation protests in Toronto—"U.S. out of Iraq! Canada out of Afghanistan! For class struggle against Canadian capitalism!"—effectively captures the road forward, in counter-position to the pacifism and Canadian nationalism pushed by the reformist left.

### A Fighting Marxist Perspective in a Difficult Period

Our perspective is the fight for new October Revolutions worldwide: the understanding that authentic Marxism—not its nationalist-bureaucratic Stalinist perversion or the denatured social-democratic caricature pushed by the reformists—is the only road to human liberation. But, as the conference resolution underlined, there is a huge disproportion between this goal and both our small forces and the current level of consciousness among workers and radical youth, and we ourselves have not been immune to the negative effects of the post-Soviet period.

This point was highlighted in several of the greetings received from other ICL sections that opened the conference, and in the report by a representative of the ICL's International Secretariat (I.S.) that followed. The Spartacist League/U.S. greetings addressed the crisis that the ICL has undergone in the past period. They noted that an intensive re-examination of aspects of our work began after *Workers Vanguard*, the SL/U.S. central organ, printed a sanitized version of a letter by the "International Bolshevik Tendency" (BT), excising a vile "P.S." that slandered long-time ICL leader James Robertson—and by extension the party as a whole—as a "vulgar chauvinist." This represented an implicit acceptance of the BT's crude anti-ICL slanders, and thus an attack on our own revolutionary integrity.

The SL/U.S. greetings noted, "Given that the BT has its longest standing operation in Toronto, we recognize that the Canadian section of the ICL has a special duty in combating this organization," which is run by embittered ex-members whose overriding purpose appears to be our destruction. As comrades noted during the conference, the BT's own "vulgar chauvinism" is amply shown in its opposition to independence for Quebec, which included lining up with the Canadian bourgeoisie to call for a No vote in the 1995 sovereignty referendum.

Our conference deliberations were informed by the Fourth Conference of the ICL in late 2003 and an SL/U.S. conference several months later. The current *Spartacist* (No. 58, Spring 2004), the ICL's documentary and theoretical journal, includes an extensive report on the ICL conference. The main resolution adopted there succinctly captured the ICL's recent difficulties:

"Failure to recognize the period we are in and the necessary relationship of our small revolutionary vanguard to the proletariat, and the absence of the Soviet Union as an active and defining factor in politics, have led to disorientation. Frustration and impatience over the disparity between our small size



Spartacist

ICL joins 7 November 1991 Revolution Day demonstration in Moscow. Placard calls to "Return to the road of Lenin and Trotsky."

and slender roots in the working class and our proletarian internationalist purpose have led both to opportunist lunges and sectarian moralism."

The ICL conference noted that such errors were rooted in an increasingly abstract and sterile approach to politics, and that this was accompanied by a pattern of breaches of our Leninist organizational norms by leading cadre centered in the I.S. The TL conference continued a process of re-examining and rectifying aspects of our recent work, noting: "To chart a course forward, we must first look soberly back at our mistakes. The Canadian section was deeply scarred by the political drift of the ICL."

Both the main resolution and individual contributions to pre-conference discussion focused heavily on our work toward the new activist groupings that have proliferated in recent years. An increase in leftist activism is a good thing, however the worldview of even the most radical youth in struggle today is generally far removed from Marxist historical materialism and a working-class perspective. Anarchism and other forms of left-liberal idealism have gained significant currency among such activists, who broadly accept the idea, propounded by the bourgeoisie's ideologues, that Marxism is at best a "failed experiment," a relic of the past.

Thus we have the crucial task of *motivating*, not simply asserting, the fundamentals of a Marxist worldview. In some ways, we have done this effectively, e.g., with the wide distribution of our "Marxism vs. Anarchism" pamphlet and other relevant propaganda. At the same time, comrades felt strongly that our on-the-ground activities toward radical youth milieus have, until recently, been marred by a pattern of sectarian abstentionism.

For our political opponents, "sectarianism" is an all-purpose epithet aimed at denigrating the struggle to forge a revolutionary party that embodies and applies the lessons of past proletarian struggles. Marx, Lenin, Trotsky, Rosa Luxemburg—the foremost revolutionary leaders of their time—were reviled as sectarians by reformists and others who had

made peace with their own bourgeois rulers. Today as well, pro-NDP left groups like the International Socialists label as sectarian our fight to break the workers and oppressed from their pro-capitalist misleaders. Trotsky addressed this question in a 1935 article, "Sectarianism, Centrism and the Fourth International":

"Reformists and centrists readily seize upon every occasion to point a finger at our 'sectarianism.' Most of the time they have in mind not our weak but our strong side: our serious attitude toward theory; our effort to plumb every political situation to the bottom, and to advance clear-cut slogans; our hostility to 'easy' and 'comfortable' decisions which deliver from cares today, but prepare a catastrophe on the morrow. Coming from opportunists, the accusation of sectarianism is most often a compliment."

However, Trotsky continued, while "Marxism has built a *scientific program* upon the laws that govern the movement of capitalist society," abstract propaganda for socialist revolution is vastly insufficient: "It is not enough to create a correct program. It is necessary for the working class to accept it." The conference took note of instances where we have failed to intervene thoughtfully into living struggles with our Marxist program and perspective, retreating instead into abstract formulas and at times abstaining altogether, most egregiously around the 1999 WTO protests in Seattle.

**Correcting Our Errors Over Seattle**

A motion of the SL/U.S. Political Bureau mandated a boycott of the Seattle protests on the grounds that they would be "dominated by national chauvinism, racist protectionism and counterrevolutionary attacks on the Chinese deformed workers state" (see *WV* No. 725, 10 December 1999). It was correct to draw a sharp political line against the reformist left groups who cheered uncritically for the "battle of Seattle" and tailed after the China-bashing union bureaucracy. But the way to do this was by intervening with our communist propaganda addressed to those drawn to Seattle out of a desire to protest the worst excesses of capitalism—not to equate them with the chauvinist labour tops. Indeed, a generation of youth came to see Seattle as the inauguration of a new period of radical activism.

The decision to boycott the WTO protests had an especially negative impact on the TL's Vancouver local, which had been set to lead a sales intervention into Seattle. The local had earlier undertaken effective work toward the "anti-globalization" milieu, including an intervention at protests against the 1997 APEC (Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation) summit, as well as polemical combat with anarchists and others (see, for example, "TL Debates Vancouver Anarchists," *SC* No. 117, Summer 1998). Our Toronto local carried out similar useful work in this period, combining polemical exchanges with co-ordinated activity around issues of common concern to leftists—notably demonstrations in defense of black U.S. death row political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal that were co-initiated by the TL and activist groups including Anti-Racist Action and the Ontario Coalition Against Poverty (OCAP).

Instead of pursuing a clarifying discussion over different assessments of the anti-globalization and related milieus, then a relatively new phenomenon, our international leadership concocted an abstract, sterile reality on what Seattle represented—a reflection of disorientation in the post-Soviet world—and rammed through a line. Then, a historically valid concern about pervasive social-democratic pressures in NDP-dominated B.C. was wielded against comrades in Vancouver to paint their desire to intervene in Seattle as a capitulation to social democracy. Our recent conference decisively repudiated this, noting this false characterization was itself an expression of a broader political problem in the ICL and the TL: increasing withdrawal from struggle. Renouncing the idea that it is "unprincipled" to intervene in so-called "alien milieus," the conference resolution added:

"The decision where and how to intervene with sales, speakers or contingents must be overwhelmingly a *tactical* one, based on an assessment of our available forces and priorities, together with judgment about motion in society and how best to use our program as a lever on consciousness."

The resolution noted that the approach exemplified by the Seattle boycott "cut us off from whole layers of political youth" as well as handing a gift to our reformist opponents. The boycott line was corrected internally in the SL/U.S. by

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# The Spectre of Tiananmen and Working-Class Struggle in China Today



Peter Turnley

**Beijing, 1989: Workers and students fraternize with troops called in to suppress Tiananmen Square uprising.**

*The Trotskyist League and the Spartacist League/U.S. held public forums on China in early fall, including in Toronto and Vancouver on October 2. We print below, slightly edited for publication, the presentation by SL/U.S. spokesman Keith Markin in Oakland, California on October 9. It was first published in Workers Vanguard Nos. 836 and 837, 12 and 26 November.*

One of the most hotly debated subjects throughout the world, especially in China, is whether China is capitalist or socialist. The significance of the Tiananmen uprising in the spring of 1989 is another subject of debate in China. What is going to happen there? One thing is certain: it's not very sta-

## For Proletarian Political Revolution!

ble. There's a book, appropriately entitled *One China, Many Paths*, which has contributions from the intelligentsia within China, that deals with these questions. I'll refer to articles from this book.

China's economy continues to grow. It has emerged as the number one steel producer in the world. At the same time, there is an increasing gap of social inequality exceeded by only a few countries. While there are some people that can buy a \$30,000 car with cash, many more live in abject poverty,

especially in the countryside and in the west of China. The wealthy living on the east and southern coasts have access to the most modern comforts.

The lie of building "socialism with Chinese characteristics" has led to China losing 15 million manufacturing jobs in state-owned enterprises (SOEs) between 1995 and 2002. Prostitution is skyrocketing, and female infanticide is rampant in the countryside. There are over 100 million people living on less than \$106 per year. The United States has about 40 percent more acreage under cultivation than China, yet the Chinese agricultural labor force is 100 times larger than that of the U.S. And the U.S. has over six times as many tractors as China. These dire conditions have forced as many as 130 million rural Chinese to become migrant laborers in search of work on the eastern and southern coasts.

The workers no longer have their "iron rice bowl," which guaranteed a job and benefits for workers in SOEs. A journalist traveling in the northeast of China, where millions of workers have been laid off, explained that in the past an "average worker could—just based on a letter of introduction, something equivalent to current credit card or privileged position in these times—get excellent treatment at a hospital." He says, "This is something of a legend to young people [in China] who do not know their history."

After crushing the Tiananmen uprising in 1989, the Stalinist regime waited a few years before they began more

**Defend, Extend Gains of 1949 Revolution!**

aggressive market policies, such as the increase in free-trade zones, where a section of the Stalinist bureaucracy functions as labor contractors for the imperialists and offshore bourgeoisie. But the proletariat and peasantry have been far from silent. It is reported by the police that from 1993 to 1999 there was an increase of protests from approximately 8,500 per year to 32,000. According to unofficial Chinese reports, the number of public protests has probably risen each of the last three years.

In the spring of 2002, thousands of workers from the northeast provinces protested against the massive layoffs and the failure to receive back pay and pensions. This area used to be the industrial heartland of China; it has become a rust bowl. During the protests, banners proclaimed such slogans as "The army of industrial workers wants to live!" and "It is a crime to embezzle pensions!"

The spectre of the Tiananmen uprising looms large. This has led the ruling Hu Jintao-Wen Jiabao regime to adopt a more "populist" style than the technocratic Jiang Zemin regime which preceded it. The central government has since promised to invest in the northeast region to appease the workers. What happens in China is not a foregone conclusion. It will be determined through social struggle.

Peter Taaffe, leader of the Socialist Party, a left group centered in Britain, commented on the 16th Chinese Communist Party Congress two years ago: "China is on the road to complete capitalist restoration, but the ruling clique are attempting to do this gradually and by maintaining their repressive authoritarian grip" (*Socialist*, 22 November 2002). Maoists and neo-Maoists outside China—the Revolutionary Communist Party (RCP) is a good example—believe that China is capitalist, and has been for some time.

Neo-Maoists *within* the bureaucracy want to reform the bureaucracy by changing its policies. They are opposed to the "market socialist" economy, though they believe China is still "socialist." The Chinese "New Left" is heterogeneous. Most support the market economy, but they are critical of the ramifications of the market: corruption, the gap between rich and poor, etc. They consider themselves part of the anti-globalization movement. Wang Hui, a prominent spokesman of the Chinese "New Left," says that after Tiananmen China "has completely conformed to the dictates of capital and the activities of the market." We Trotskyists sharply disagree with all of these characterizations of China and the conclusions drawn by the Chinese "New Left."

I want to clarify three points today: first, in Marxist terminology, China is a bureaucratically deformed workers state because the core of the economy is based on collectivized property. This is the basis for the International Communist League's unconditional military defense of China against imperialism and internal counter-revolution. Second, there is a privileged bureaucratic caste that politically rules the workers state. The bureaucracy's policies of "market socialism" are paving the way for either capitalist restoration or for a

new revolutionary explosion. What happened during the Tiananmen uprising, as well as the current class struggle in China, shows the contradictions of the deformed workers state and the dual character of the bureaucracy. And third, the historical task of the Chinese proletariat is to build a revolutionary party—not its Stalinist or Maoist perversion. A revolutionary party is necessary to lead workers, peasants and the oppressed to defend the gains of the 1949 Revolution through a proletarian political revolution that establishes workers democracy. The key political question for such a party is to break the Chinese proletariat from the nationalist dogma of "socialism in one country" and win them to an internationalist, proletarian perspective. For those new to Marxism, I will explain just what all this means.

### What Is Marxism?

The International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist) is a proletarian, revolutionary and internationalist tendency. We are based on the politics of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky. The debates in China are framed by a false identity of Maoism with Marxism.

In order to understand what I'll be talking about and how we are different from the other political tendencies, I want to explain some basics about Marxism. First of all, Marxism is a science. The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines "physics" as a science that deals with matter and energy and their interactions. Marxism is the science of changing the world through international proletarian revolution. It deals with the relationship of class forces in the class struggle and the political consciousness of the international proletariat. The starting point for a Marxist is the understanding that the interests of the capitalists and of the proletariat are irreconcilable.

I've already jumped the gun. You're asking: What's a class? I want to quote Leon Trotsky. He, along with Lenin, led the Russian Revolution, which took proletarian revolution out of the realm of theory and gave it reality. In *The Class Nature of the Soviet State*, Trotsky explains just what a class is and why the Chinese bureaucracy is not a class (he was referring to the former Soviet Union):

"The *class* has an exceptionally important and, moreover, a scientifically restricted meaning to a Marxist. A class is defined not (continued on page 10)

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## China...

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by its participation in the distribution of the national income alone, but by its independent role in the general structure of the economy and by its independent roots in the economic foundation of society. Each class (the feudal nobility, the peasantry, the petty bourgeoisie, the capitalist bourgeoisie and the proletariat) works out its own special forms of property. The bureaucracy lacks all these social traits. It has no independent position in the process of production and distribution. It has no independent property roots. Its functions relate basically to the political technique of class rule. The existence of a bureaucracy, in all its variety of forms and differences in specific weight, characterizes every class regime. Its power is of a reflected character. The bureaucracy is indissolubly bound up with a ruling economic class, feeding itself upon the social roots of the latter, maintaining itself and falling together with it."

Another important Marxist term is the state. A state consists of armed people and institutions that defend particular types of property. A capitalist state defends private ownership over factories, natural resources and banks (called the means of production). Capitalist production is based on what is most profitable for the private capitalist. A workers state defends collectivized property in the means of production. Production is based on what is actually needed by society. Another name for a workers state is the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Through international proletarian revolution, the system of private ownership of the means of production is replaced by a system of collective ownership of the means of production. A socialist revolution must establish a workers state to defend collectivized property against both the indigenous capitalists and imperialism. It is a step toward the international revolution. In order to remove the social rule of the working class, a social counterrevolution is necessary to re-establish a capitalist state, the class dictatorship of the bourgeoisie.

Capitalist production played a very important role in human history. It led to the development of modern sciences and technology. Humanity has the means to feed the world, but the capitalists and their system of production, which breeds imperialist wars, are obstacles that must be gotten rid of. Marxism seeks to resolve the problem of scarcity concerning food, clothing and shelter in the world through international proletarian revolution. Socialism is a classless, egalitarian, international economic system based on material abundance. Under a socialist system the problem of scarcity in the world can be resolved.

Both the 1949 Chinese Revolution and the Russian Revolution established collectivized property in the means of production and workers states to defend this type of property. The collectivized economy in the Soviet Union and China laid the basis for a leap in social progress, in particular for women. In China, the barbaric practice of foot-binding, which symbolized women's miserable status, was banned. But there was a qualitative difference between the two revolutions. The Russian Revolution of October 1917 was carried out by a class-conscious proletariat led by Lenin and Trotsky's Bolshevik Party, which won the support of the poor peasants, and saw the seizure of state power as the first step toward world socialist revolution. The Chinese Revolution was the result of peasant guerrilla war led by Mao. The proletariat did not struggle in its own right for power in China.

The 1949 Revolution was deformed from its inception under the rule of Mao's Chinese Communist Party (CCP)

regime. Mao was a Chinese Stalin; the political regime of the Chinese workers state was modeled on that of Stalin, who represented the privileged bureaucracy in the Soviet Union that usurped political power from the proletariat in 1923-24.

The bureaucracy derives all its privileges by sitting on top of the collectivized economy, like a parasite. This is the basis of the contradictory character of what we describe as a bureaucratically deformed workers state. China, Cuba, Vietnam and North Korea are all deformed workers states. Because there was workers democracy in the Soviet Union before the Stalinist bureaucracy usurped political power in 1923-24, we characterized the Soviet Union as a "degenerated" rather than a "deformed" workers state. You see, the Bolshevik Party won a majority in the workers and soldiers soviets in 1917. There has never been workers democracy in China, Cuba, North Korea or Vietnam.

The bureaucracy rules in the name of the working class because all its privileges are derived from the collectivized property of the working class. It defends the workers state insofar as it can protect its privileged position atop the workers state. So it defends the workers state by its *own* methods.

The bureaucracy is opposed to the perspective of workers revolution internationally. The Stalinist bureaucrats adopted the nationalist dogma that socialism—an international, classless, egalitarian society based on material abundance—could be built in a single country. This means the bureaucracy prefers to accommodate world imperialism in the hope of maintaining the status quo, so that they can continue to feed off the workers state. In order to replace the political rule of the bureaucracy and change the political form of a workers state to workers democracy, a proletarian political revolution is necessary, not a social revolution. The economic foundations of the state remain the same.

Another significant difference between the Russian and Chinese Revolutions is that the Russian bourgeoisie was destroyed as a class; the Chinese bourgeoisie wasn't. The offshore bourgeoisie in Taiwan and Hong Kong, along with the imperialists, are the main forces for counterrevolution in China, and the Stalinist bureaucracy strengthens these forces.

In our article—"China: Defeat Imperialist Drive for Counterrevolution!" (*WV* Nos. 814 and 815, 21 November and 5 December 2003), which is now out in Chinese, we explain why China is a bureaucratically deformed workers state. It is the core collectivized elements of the economy that continue to be dominant, though not in a stable, coherent manner. The private (including foreign-owned) sector consists for the most part of factories producing light manufactures by labor-intensive methods. Heavy industry, the high-tech sectors and modern armaments production are overwhelmingly concentrated in state-owned enterprises. It is these enterprises that have enabled China to build an arsenal of nuclear weapons and long-range missiles to ward off the American imperialists' threat of a nuclear first strike. Also, all major banks in China are state owned. Government control of the financial system has been key to maintaining and expanding production in state-owned industry and to the overall expansion of the state sector. The Beijing bureaucracy's abandonment of the strict state monopoly of foreign trade serves to facilitate Wall Street's plans for counterrevolution. It is precisely these core collectivist elements of China's economy that the forces of world imperialism want to eliminate and dismantle.

The ICL fights for unconditional military defense of all the deformed workers states against imperialism and internal

capitalist counterrevolution because these states are based on collectivized property. That means we don't pose as a condition for defense that the Stalinist bureaucracy be overthrown before we will defend China. Why is this so important here in the U.S. and other capitalist countries in the world? If the proletariat of the U.S., Japan and Germany don't understand the historic significance of the gains of the Chinese Revolution, like the collectivized economy, then they will never understand the importance of making a revolution against their "own" bourgeoisie. We are for the revolutionary reunification of Taiwan with China: this means socialist revolution in Taiwan, expropriating the bourgeoisie in Hong Kong, and proletarian political revolution on the mainland.

### Tiananmen, Incipient Proletarian Political Revolution

First, the background—three key events in China shaped the Tiananmen uprising: the Cultural Revolution (1966-76), China's anti-Soviet alliance with U.S. imperialism, and the market reforms begun in 1978.

Mao's Cultural Revolution is important because it significantly shaped the political consciousness of Chinese workers, peasants, students and intellectuals through the 1980s. Essentially it was a fight between two wings of the Stalinist bureaucracy. The Maoists had to purge the conservative wing of the bureaucracy (led by Liu Shao-chi and Deng Xiaoping), who had led China during its recovery from the devastating results of Mao's Great Leap Forward in the late 1950s.

Millions of students were mobilized as Red Guards, supposedly to fight against bureaucratism, and, according to the CP, against the restoration of capitalism. It played out quite differently in the real world. In January 1967, when workers in Shanghai organized a general strike to defend their standard of living, along with a national railway strike, Mao sent his Red Guards and they smashed the strikes. The orders the Red Guards were given by Mao could be summed up as the "Two Whatever's": "Support whatever policy decisions Chairman Mao made and follow whatever instructions Chairman Mao gave."



Li Zhensheng

During Mao's "Cultural Revolution," regime's perceived enemies were humiliated, persecuted and often killed.

There is a prejudice derived from class society that the rulers would only work with their brains while the slaves would only work with their hands. The idea of resolving this class prejudice of the Chinese intelligentsia by sending students, intellectuals and professionals out to the countryside for a period of time to learn by toiling with the peasants has real merit. But, implemented by Mao's bureaucracy, this became brutal punishment for long periods of time for many of those who disagreed with Mao, especially intellectuals and professionals.

The Cultural Revolution polarized Chinese society along the wrong lines by pitting subjectively revolutionary student youth against workers defending their standard of living. There was no side for revolutionaries in this fight within the Stalinist bureaucracy. More people died in the Cultural Revolution than in the suppression of Tiananmen. Yet the RCP hails Mao's Cultural Revolution.

After Mao died, the Deng wing of the bureaucracy resumed control of the government. The market reforms, begun in 1978, spawned a new class of rich peasants in the countryside and petty entrepreneurs. This, along with increasing unemployment in the cities, has laid the basis for the huge disparities in wealth that exist in China today.

Students and the intelligentsia were fervent supporters of the market reforms. Deng denounced the Cultural Revolution, and this sparked a period of debate within the intelligentsia in the early 1980s. The mainstream outlook for Chinese intellectuals became what is called the "New Enlightenment," which was in large measure seen as emancipation from what they thought was orthodox Marxism. The intellectuals of the "New Enlightenment," which greatly influenced the students protesting at Tiananmen, knew very little about Chinese history. They had simply imported Western ideas into the reform process. In particular, the students and intellectuals had a lot of illusions that "democracy" would necessarily go together with a market economy.

For Marxists, democracy is one of the political forms of a state. As I said earlier, the class nature of the state is determined by what type of property ownership over the means of production is defended by the cops and army. When we Marxists refer to "democracy," we ask: For what class? Many students and intellectuals had illusions in the bourgeois democracy of the U.S. This was conditioned by China's alliance with U.S. imperialism.

Wang Hui of the Chinese "New Left" points out in "The New Criticism" that, while China has always been involved in foreign trade, "The Open Door policies of Deng Xiaoping demanded a much deeper insertion of China into the world market. How did that happen? A key step in the process was China's invasion of Vietnam in 1978 [sic—1979]—the first war of aggression by the PRC after 1949." When China invaded Vietnam, the Spartacist League/U.S. raised the slogan: "China: Don't Be a Cat's Paw of U.S. Imperialism!" But why did China invade Vietnam? In the first place, it was only four years after the Vietnamese workers and peasants drove U.S. imperialism out of their country. This was a historic military defeat for U.S. imperialism. China had volunteers fighting in Vietnam against U.S. imperialism, too.

During the Cultural Revolution, Mao's China became very hostile to the Soviet Union. Mao argued that the Soviet Union, not U.S. imperialism, was the greatest threat to the world. This led to Richard Nixon's visit to Beijing in 1972, where he embraced Mao at the very moment that U.S. warplanes were

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bombing Vietnam! Vietnam was a close ally of the Soviet Union. In addition to invading Vietnam in 1979 (by the way, they got whupped by seasoned Vietnamese troops), China aided the CIA-backed *mujahedin* in Afghanistan.

Both Mao and Deng shared great-power aspirations based on the nationalist and anti-Marxist dogma that socialism could be built in one country. China's criminal anti-Soviet alliance with the U.S. happened because the U.S. changed its policy toward China, not the other way around. "Socialism in one country" necessitates accommodating to imperialism. China's alliance with U.S. imperialism contributed to the downfall of the Soviet degenerated workers state. The fact is that without the Soviet nuclear shield the Chinese Revolution would have very likely faced nuclear destruction by U.S. imperialism.

The increase in wealth from the market reforms only affected a very small fraction of the Chinese population. Skyrocketing inflation exacerbated this economic disparity and corruption became rampant. The "New Enlightenment" began to diverge on this issue. The government, led by Zhao Ziyang, implemented anti-corruption campaigns, but students wanted a more effective campaign.

Within China, illusions in American "democracy" and the benevolence of U.S. imperialism began to take off in 1972. In mid-February 1989, Gorbachev withdrew the Red Army from Afghanistan. The Tiananmen protests began about two months later.

The occupation of Tiananmen began with a memorial gathering for former CCP secretary general Hu Yaobang, who had died on April 15. Hu had been widely respected for the simple fact that he was one of the few leading officials not personally tainted with corruption. Teams of youth took their demands to working-class neighborhoods to stress that they did "not oppose the government or the party."

By May 4, 300,000 people had flocked to Tiananmen. It was the 70th anniversary of the May 4th Movement of 1919, which began with anti-imperialist student demonstrations and led to the founding of the Chinese Communist Party two years later. At the 4 May 1989 protest students and workers were singing together the revolutionary workers' anthem, the "Internationale." Following the May 4 protest, student leaders—without any social power and fearful of mobilizing the working class—decided to launch a hunger strike to force concessions from the government.

Sympathy with the hunger strikers led to another huge demonstration on May 17. At this demonstration, there was massive participation of factory workers from around Beijing. The students, with very little social power, had sparked the seething economic discontent of the Chinese proletariat. The workers wanted to do something about the attacks on



Workers Vanguard



Der Spiegel

**1979: Spartacists demonstrate at Chinese Mission in New York City against Chinese government's invasion of Vietnam which was a shameful illustration of U.S.-China anti-Soviet axis.**

their "iron rice bowl" of previously guaranteed jobs and social benefits, and about rising inflation. They began organizing independently of the bureaucracy, like the Beijing Workers Autonomous Federation (BWAf). The BWAf demanded a wage increase, price stabilization, and opposed corruption within the CCP. They called to "make public the personal incomes and possessions of top party officials." The social power of the working class gave the protests their potentially revolutionary nature.

Li Peng, hatchet man for Deng Xiaoping and his regime went to Capital Iron and Steel to discourage and intimidate workers there sympathetic to the students' protest. It was the threat of a general strike that led Li and Deng to declare martial law on May 20. The 38th Army was ordered to put down the so-called "counterrevolutionary" uprising. However these troops were based in Beijing and refused to move on the crowds.

The fledgling Chinese workers organizations began to organize resistance to the declaration of martial law. They formed "workers picket corps" and "dare to die" teams to protect protesting students against repression. Students and workers fraternized with the troops. The streets of Beijing were crowded with ordinary people arguing about politics, expressing their opinion on the way forward. The police vanished from the streets.

After governmental authority in Beijing evaporated, workers groups began to take on responsibility for public safety taking over essential services like transporting food and other vital necessities. A group of People's Liberation Army generals sent a letter of protest to Deng Xiaoping. The army was politically split. Not horizontally, as in a social revolution where the ranks split from the officers, but vertically. This is what an incipient proletarian political revolution looks like. For two weeks the order of martial law was not implemented.

On June 3, Deng was able to mobilize the 27th Army to implement the orders for martial law. The bloodletting began. It is reported that when the troops reached Tiananmen in the early morning of June 4, their first target was th

workers' station at the western end. One student leader saw tanks flatten the tents of the BAAF, killing 20 people. In contrast to the war waged against the working people of the city, most of the students were allowed to leave Tiananmen Square without punitive actions being taken.

Why the savage repression at the very first signs of working-class protest? The Stalinist bureaucracy is a parasitic caste resting upon a collectivized economy. The bureaucrats do not *own* the means of production. They do not have the myriad threads of social control of a ruling capitalist class, such as the right to pass property ownership to their children. Their power stems from monopolizing political control of the governing apparatus. Since they claim to rule in the name of the workers, they cannot tolerate any independent workers organization. Any real workers movement necessarily challenges the legitimacy of the Stalinist bureaucracy. This is the contradiction of every deformed workers state.

The exact toll of the massacre is impossible to determine, but it is likely that several thousand were killed or wounded. Yet the army's terror failed to quell the rebellion. In fact, it served to generalize proletarian resistance, at first, as "dare to die" corps erupted all over China. Protests spread to over 80 cities, and that was only the official count. However, lacking a coherent leadership, the uprising was eventually smashed through state repression. One prominent U.S. left group, Workers World, actually defended the massacre, rehashing Deng Xiaoping's lie that the protesters were counterrevolutionary and for bourgeois democracy. That also happened to be the line of the bourgeoisie internationally. During this period, this is what *WV* said: On May 26, "Upheaval in China: Oust the Bureaucrats—For Lenin's Communism! Workers and Soldiers Soviets Must Rule!" (*WV* No. 478). On June 9, "Beijing Massacre—Civil War Looms; For the Unity of China Under the Leadership of the Workers!" (*WV* No. 479). On June 23, "Defend Chinese Workers! Stop the Executions!" (*WV* No. 480).

### The Lessons of Tiananmen

Wang Hui argues in his article "The 1989 Social Movement and the Historical Roots of China's Neoliberalism": "The direct cause of the movement's failure was violent suppression by the state. However, the indirect cause lay in the movement's own inability to bridge the gap between its demands for political democracy and the demands for social equality that had been its mobilizing force." This is very perceptive. What political program could bridge this gap?

During the Cultural Revolution, society was polarized between students and workers. At Tiananmen, both students and workers protested together, not without their differences, against the bureaucracy. Only a Leninist and Trotskyist party fighting for a proletarian political revolution could have bridged the gap between the demands for political democracy and social equality. But the workers groups did not go beyond upholding "democracy" as freedom from bureaucratic constraint. A revolutionary party that could instill the lessons of past struggles into the political consciousness of the workers was necessary.

The two weeks during which the army refused to implement martial law were a critical juncture. There was a political vacuum. Even a tiny Chinese Bolshevik organization could have been decisive in 1989, especially during those two weeks. The nascent situation of dual power—in which working people were beginning to take control of

the cities in their own hands—needed to be developed into a fight for political power. This would have meant struggling to transform the informal workers assemblies into workers councils open to all except openly counterrevolutionary tendencies.

Lenin described soviets (workers councils) as "the direct organization of the working and exploited people themselves, which *helps* them to organize and administer their own state in every possible way." Migrant workers would be critical to help spread this type of organization into rural communities. Coordinated nationally, these organizations could have been the basis for a revolutionary regime of workers democracy counterposed to the Stalinists and pledged to fight to the death against capitalist restoration.

Because there was a lack of clear leadership, overtly reactionary elements were allowed on some occasions to make their voices heard, including some who raised slogans in favor of the Guomindang. Socialist aspirations were often mixed with great illusions in the U.S. and bourgeois democracy—exemplified by the "Goddess of Democracy" statue. But from the beginning, the protesters' demands, centrally for more democratic rights and an end to corruption, were egalitarian in nature and within the framework of a workers state. Workers marched into Tiananmen Square carrying pictures of Mao Zedong and Zhou Enlai, not Chiang Kai-shek.

In order to win workers, soldiers and students, a Bolshevik party would have to argue head-on against the nationalism of "socialism in one country" and clarify the fact that Mao and Deng were merely two sides of the same anti-Soviet bureaucratic coin. It would have been important to make an appeal to the workers of the world for the unconditional military defense of the Soviet degenerated workers state and the deformed workers states of East Europe, China, North Korea, Vietnam and Cuba. A political revolution in China would have been a spark for the workers of the world, from Japan and South Korea to West Europe and the U.S., but especially in the Soviet Union.

In an interview published by *Revolutionary Worker* in 1999 (they recently reprinted it this June), Li Minqi, a student protester at Tiananmen in 1989, explains the lessons he learned from the uprising and how he was won to what he believes was Marxism (that is, a sort of neo-Maoism): "Initially I shared the general dominance of bourgeois ideology among Chinese students. The student movement did not expect to become a mass democratic movement. But by May 17, when the workers really came into the streets, I began to realize that this was totally different from what I expected. I was saying to myself: this is more and more like a revolutionary situation."

Explaining his political development, Li says: "In the movement, I already sensed that something was wrong. The student leadership did not dare to mobilize the workers, did not dare take steps to organize to take political power, and that resulted in the failure of the movement. So I began to rethink what I had believed, what I had taken for granted—Western ideology and Western-style democracy. I began to think maybe some alternative ideas are needed. And the most obvious alternative idea is Marxism."

Li was arrested by the Deng regime and spent two years in prison. He's now an émigré. Without seeing an alternative to Maoism, Li drew some wrong conclusions from the defeat. He blames the increased nationalism in China on the new

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Chinese capitalism. This is wrong on two counts: China isn't capitalist, and "socialism in one country" is the basis for today's Chinese nationalism. In a dialogue transcribed in *One China, Many Paths*, when Li was asked about his view of China's war with Vietnam in 1979, he said he had nothing to say on the issue. But Li's experience shows how the impact of the working class wielding its social power during Tiananmen changed the political consciousness of some students. With a revolutionary Marxist leadership, the working class can change the course of history.

### The Spectre of Tiananmen, the Intelligentsia and Working-Class Struggle Today

A few years after crushing the uprising, the bureaucracy went on the offensive with their market policies. Between 1993 and 1999, protests against the market reforms quadrupled. By the late '90s, there was a divergence within the Chinese intelligentsia reflecting the renewed social struggle against the market reforms: neoliberal intellectuals and hardliners within the CCP essentially support the repression at Tiananmen. They argue that if the movement had not been stopped, China would not have become a wealthier nation. The neoliberal intellectuals dubbed their antagonists the "New Left" to imply they are Marxists, because the "New Left" opposed the worsening conditions of the masses. They opposed the repression of the Tiananmen uprising, too.

The neoliberals complain that there hasn't been enough privatization and that, therefore, China is still "socialist." The "New Left" believes there is enough privatization to call China capitalist. Wang Hui recognizes, however, that China is not like other capitalist states because it was the only state to navigate successfully through the 1997-98 East Asian financial/economic crises. Wang says that this is because of the nation-state. But Thailand and South Korea were nation-states, too. Wang Hui believes that internationalism and Marxism are old-fashioned.

It is the collectivized property that is responsible for the ability of China to have navigated successfully through that financial/economic crisis. Continued state ownership of the financial system has enabled the Beijing regime up to now to effectively (though not totally) control the flow of money-capital in and out of mainland China. China's currency, the yuan (also called the renminbi) is not freely convertible. It is not traded (legally) in international currency markets.

Knowledgeable spokesmen for Western imperialism recognize that the privatization and especially internationalization of the financial system is a necessary step in breaking the CCP regime's grip on the banks. However, the bureaucracy can't control the fact that the capitalist enclave of Hong Kong is an ever-widening breach through which illegal currency transactions flow in both directions. The expropriation of Hong Kong's financiers and other sections of its bourgeoisie is vitally necessary to protect China's economy from the destructive onslaught of the imperialist bankers.

Referring to the savage privatizations that followed the counterrevolution in the former Soviet Union, Wang Hui commented on the debate about amending the Chinese constitution to render "private property rights inviolable": "A decade later, the question of property rights has become the most pivotal

social issue in China. The principle that private property should receive protection under the law does not divide intellectuals." Wang Hui understands that the key question is private property, but he and the "New Left" draw the wrong conclusion. Their difference with the neoliberals is *how one gets the property*. The neoliberals condone illegal expropriations; the "New Left" is opposed. This amounts to being for capitalism with a human face. Where Wang runs into his own contradictions is on the question of privatizing land. He recognizes that if land were privatized, ordinary peasants would be ruined overnight. Marxists understand that the only class, besides the poor peasants themselves, whose interests are against the privatization of the land is the proletariat.

The National People's Congress, this spring, passed a law that stated: "Citizens' lawful private property is inviolable." It was only a matter of time before such a law was passed. Last year they legitimized party membership for entrepreneurs. In fact, that law did not introduce a significant change in either the social composition of the CCP, which has 66 million members, or its functional ideology. According to an official survey, of China's two million private business owners, 600,000 are party members and have been for some time. The overwhelming majority of these were longtime CCP managerial cadre who took over the small state-owned enterprises they were running when these were privatized over the past several years.

State-owned industrial enterprises can to a degree be buffered from increased import competition by additional government financing via the banks. But there is no way that China's peasant smallholders can compete with the capital-intensive, scientifically managed agribusiness of the U.S. and other major food-exporting countries. The basic line of the regime's agrarian policy is not to protect the multitude of peasant smallholders. It is rather to move toward large-scale, de facto privately owned farms.

Ultimately, the only way to resolve the shortage of arable land in China in the interests of workers and poor peasants is by extending the revolution to an industrially advanced capitalist state like Japan. But the bureaucracy is opposed to this perspective. In the meantime, a government based on workers and peasants councils would not only prohibit or restrict the hiring of labor and leasing of additional land by rich farmers, but it would also promote the recollectivization of agriculture. It would propose material incentives, like the best tractors and chemical fertilizers, and offer reduced taxes and cheaper credits to peasants who joined collectives. An increase in agricultural productivity would raise the need for a huge expansion of industrial jobs in urban areas to absorb the vast surplus of labor no longer needed in the countryside. Clearly, this would involve a lengthy process, particularly given the limited size and relatively low level of productivity of China's industrial base.

Realizing this perspective hinges on the aid that China would receive from a socialist Japan or a socialist America. You see, all roads lead to the necessity of international revolution. Both the dire living conditions suffered by Chinese peasants and their view that conditions will only get worse is the reason why over the last decade China has seen many large-scale peasant protests and riots, especially against increased taxation and corruption.

An indication of serious problems for the Stalinist bureaucracy was reported in a *Herald Tribune* article (3 June): "In contrast to Tiananmen in 1989, the police increasingly admit that most

demonstrators are motivated by legitimate grievances against rapacious managers and corrupt local officials, and are not just pawns of anti-Communist conspirators. Conceding that protest is widespread and enjoys growing popular sympathy, the police are scrambling to learn new anti-protest techniques aimed at containing and defusing, rather than brutally squelching, demonstrations.”

The bureaucracy’s pace of market reforms is limited by its fear of the proletariat, especially the spectre of another Tiananmen. Fuxin, which is northwest of Shenyang, in the northeast, by late 2000 had produced 530 million tons of coal. That’s enough to fill trucks with 60 tons each and line them up end to end until they encircled the Earth 4.3 times! On January 31, 2003, Wen Jiabao spent the Chinese New Year’s Eve together with miners 720 meters underground. He had a very good reason. Official statistics claim that 200,000 of the Fuxin Mining Bureau’s 400,000 miners have been laid off. One article points out: “In the workers’ way of thinking, there is one bond that may not be broken: China’s mining resources belong to the state, and ‘the working class is the master of the state and the master of industry,’ so why is it that in actual experience the ‘masters’ jobs can be bought off one by one in exchange for a paltry ‘subsistence provision’?”

This goes to the heart of the contradictions of the Chinese deformed workers state. The following examples show that a section of the working class sees the necessity of defending collectivized property, they understand that capitalism has not yet been restored, but their political consciousness has real limitations and contradictions.

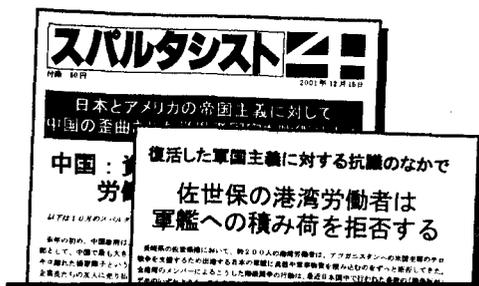
In another interesting article, entitled “Industrial Restructuring and Workers’ Resistance in China,” Feng Chen (of Hong Kong Baptist University) describes how workers in the SOEs have different perceptions of property rights than workers in private enterprises. The latter primarily strike for wages and the conditions of their labor, whereas some SOE workers are concerned over the question of forms of property and corresponding property relations when their factory is “restructured” (privatized). Feng says that in some factories there was an open challenge to the transition to capitalist property relations.

One method of obstructing privatization involves occupying the factory. For example, when workers at a plastics factory in Shanghai heard that their factory was being forced to merge with another one (with the implication of layoffs), they blocked all the entrances to the factory and refused the party secretary entry. The workers justified their occupation of the factory as defending public property to which they had legitimate rights. If these protests were organized, they could spark a conflagration of struggle.

Feng says, “This form of action can be traced back to the tradition of working-class struggle in the final years of the Chinese Revolution. As some workers proudly described it, their action of defending the factory was similar to that of their predecessors on the eve of the communist takeover in 1949, when pro-communist workers formed ‘worker guard



Ohara Institute for Social Research



1927 poster by Japanese Communist Party's National League for Non-Intervention in China Movement calls for immediate withdrawal of Japanese troops and for the right of Japanese, Chinese and Korean workers in Manchuria and Mongolia to organize and strike. Above: Supplement to *Spartacist Japan* (15 December 2001) published an article on refusal by Sasebo dock workers to load arms bound for U.S. troops in Afghanistan.

teams’ (*gongren jiuchadui*) to protect factories from sabotage by the Guomindang” (interview, January 2000).

In some cases, workers’ protests against restructuring eventually brought the disputes to workers and staff councils (WSC). While these WSCs are, according to law, meant to scrutinize management, they are actually for the most part powerless because the trade unions—which the WSCs are based on—are powerless on the shop floor. While workers are pretty cynical about the WSCs, there are cases where they have become a critical arena for contesting restructuring.

At the SL Company, the WSC held a company referendum and the privatizing scheme was rejected by 80 percent of the workers and staffers. According to the workers there, this was the first time in the factory’s history that they had voted to decide something important to their interests.

Workers from Changjiang Sugar Factory in July of 1999 argued in their petition letter to the provincial trade union: “How to restructure the form of property should be democratically determined by workers. The county government cannot unilaterally decide it.... Workers are the master of the enterprise and the main body (*zhuti*) of reform. Restructuring without consulting the workers’ and staff council and selling the factory without informing workers are serious violations of workers’ democratic-rights. We demand to get back our democratic rights.”

This is a powerful example that workers are not prepared to raise the white flag concerning collectivized property. They have an answer to the question “democracy for what class?”: Democracy for the workers to fight in defense of collectivized property. An important political limitation is that they need to defend the collectivized property of the workers state in general, not just of *their* factory. They need to understand that they are part of the international proletariat. This underscores the necessity of a Leninist party to bring this consciousness into the proletariat.

An important misconception that I’d like to deal with is that maximizing productivity and egalitarianism are counterposed in a workers state. This view contends that only the market can discipline managers and workers in order to maximize production and that egalitarianism is only possible

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## China...

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through a command-planned economy. The false political framework of this narrow view is that the *only* political form of a workers state is the political monopoly of the Stalinist bureaucracy.

The only thing the neo-Maoists within the bureaucracy can offer is a command-planned economy. Its limitations are that the workers, technical intelligentsia and managers don't identify themselves with the government that issues the plan, which leads to ignoring and subverting the plan at its base. Thus there is an inherent tendency for Stalinist regimes to replace centralized planning and management with market mechanisms in order to discipline the workers and managers. Trotsky, commenting in *The Revolution Betrayed* on the command-planned economy under Stalin, stated that "The Soviet products are as though branded with the gray label of indifference. Under a nationalized economy, quality demands a democracy of producers and consumers, freedom of criticism and initiative—conditions incompatible with a totalitarian regime of fear, lies and flattery." Workers democracy is key to bridging the tasks of maximizing productivity and egalitarianism within a workers state. This necessitates a revolutionary proletarian party.

### Workers of the World, Unite!

I have clarified that China is a bureaucratically deformed workers state because the core of the economy is collectivized property, and that the Stalinist bureaucracy is a privileged caste with a contradictory nature, not a class; it can't be reformed. Reinstating the "iron rice bowl" with the bureaucracy still grasping political power will not resolve the main problem: the bureaucracy is opposed to the workers mobilized in their own, revolutionary internationalist interests. Its policies, based on building "socialism in one country," undermine the defense of the workers state. The bureaucracy must be removed by the workers.

The examples I gave clearly show that the program of proletarian political revolution, based on unconditional military defense of the Chinese deformed workers state and the establishment of genuine workers democracy, is no pipe dream for Chinese workers. Building a revolutionary internationalist, Leninist-Trotskyist party is necessary to make it a reality. This is the most fundamental historic task of the Chinese proletariat. For such a party, a political revolution establishing a workers democracy and instituting a centralized planned economy with a strict monopoly of foreign trade is part of the program of international proletarian revolution. Workers in the SOEs must tie their struggle to the struggle of workers in private enterprises—to expropriate those enterprises—to migrant workers, to the poor peasants, to women, and to oppressed minorities. The party must be a tribune of all the people. Nationalism is false consciousness.

It is critical to understand that the Japanese proletariat can be an ally of the Chinese proletariat. There is a history of the Japanese proletariat's opposition to Japanese imperialism's aggression against China. In 1927 the Japanese Communist Party called for unconditional withdrawal of Japanese troops from Manchuria and for the right to strike and organize of Chinese, Korean and Japanese workers. In 2001, the Sasebo dock workers refused to load a ship with arms

bound for U.S. troops in Afghanistan. Workers of the world can unite. The ICL fights to reforge Trotsky's Fourth International, the world party of socialist revolution.

The Chinese "New Left" is rife with contradictions. Most defend the inviolability of private property in principle, but they don't like the "down side" of the market. In particular, they understand that if the land is privatized the poor peasants will be ruined. The Chinese "New Left" seeks the impossible: capitalism with a human face. Only the proletariat supported by the poor peasants can defend the nationalized land. Besides, China won't be modernized through capitalism. Capitalist China will look like a mix of the warlordism following the first Chinese Revolution in 1911 and post-counterrevolution Russia today.

The question of "democracy" cannot be separated from the class nature of the state. For example, the fake-Trotskyist affiliate of the United Secretariat in Hong Kong, Pioneer, blazoned in the headline of its New Year's Day 2004 statement in support of the protest that day: "For General Elections Through Universal Franchise and Free Nominations!" This call is virtually identical to the demand issued by U.S. imperialism's representative in Hong Kong the month before. The first order of business in Hong Kong is the expropriation of the bourgeoisie there. These calls for "democracy" with no intention of defending collectivized property on the mainland are a cover for not-so-"democratic" counterrevolution.

For all those who call China capitalist, here's a short anecdote from a novel by Ha Jin, *The Craved*. During the Tiananmen protests a reactionary shouted to the workers: "Don't be slaves anymore!" A locksmith responded: "How dare you call me a slave." Chinese workers are not prepared to surrender; they are not slaves. They want to fight to defend collectivized property. They can be the masters of their state, but they need leadership.

To finish, I wanted to make a few points about the ICL's intervention into the incipient proletarian political revolution in East Germany in 1989-90. The tasks of the international proletariat are immense. Our intervention showed that it is possible when there's a small crack, during a revolutionary situation, like the two weeks it took to enforce martial law at Tiananmen, for a revolutionary program to have tremendous impact. Workers came to us and asked, how do we form workers soviets? Enough East German workers considered what the ICL was fighting for, that when the fascists desecrated the Treptow Soviet war memorial the ruling Stalinist government felt compelled to join a united-front protest we initiated against the fascists and in defense of the deformed workers state. A quarter of a million workers participated. For the first time ever in a deformed workers state, Trotskyists shared a platform with the Stalinists. We were fighting to become the revolutionary leadership. From the platform, our speaker called for "Workers and soldiers soviets to power!"

This was the best defense against capitalist counterrevolution. Two programs were competing: ours, of proletarian political revolution, and the Stalinist program of capitulation and counterrevolution. The Treptow mobilization frightened the powers that be, both East and West, and our forces were too small. We lost. The lessons of that struggle and of Tiananmen must be assimilated by the international proletariat. The key question is not how to modernize China, but how to establish an international soviet system that can resolve the problem of scarcity in the world. ■

## Falluja...

(continued from page 1)

London *Independent* (20 November), "Civilians were told to get out of Falluja, so any man who stayed behind must be in the mujahedin."

Many of those who did manage to get out of Falluja were then killed as they fled to refugee camps or to the homes of relatives outside the city. U.S. forces sank boats ferrying refugees. AP photographer Bilal Hussein dodged gunfire to escape his hometown and attempted to swim across the Euphrates. He watched in horror as, before his eyes, a family of five was shot dead while trying to swim across. Then, he "helped bury a man by the river bank, with my own hands."

The magnitude of the crime demands huge international protest. The international working class, not least the American proletariat, should mount class-struggle actions, demonstrations, strikes and hot-cargoing shipments of war matériel. This requires a political fight against the U.S. labour tops who squandered union coffers and mobilized forces to support the Democratic Party *pro-war* candidate John Kerry who exclaimed, "I'm not talking about leaving [Iraq], I'm talking about winning!" We demand the immediate, unconditional withdrawal of all U.S. and allied troops from Iraq! We call for the defense of the Iraqi peoples against the U.S. occupiers and their puppet Iraqi troops and police. Insofar as the forces on the ground aim their blows against the imperialist occupiers and the mercenaries, we call for their defense. Every blow struck against the U.S. military and allied powers in Iraq is a blow in the interests of the international proletariat.

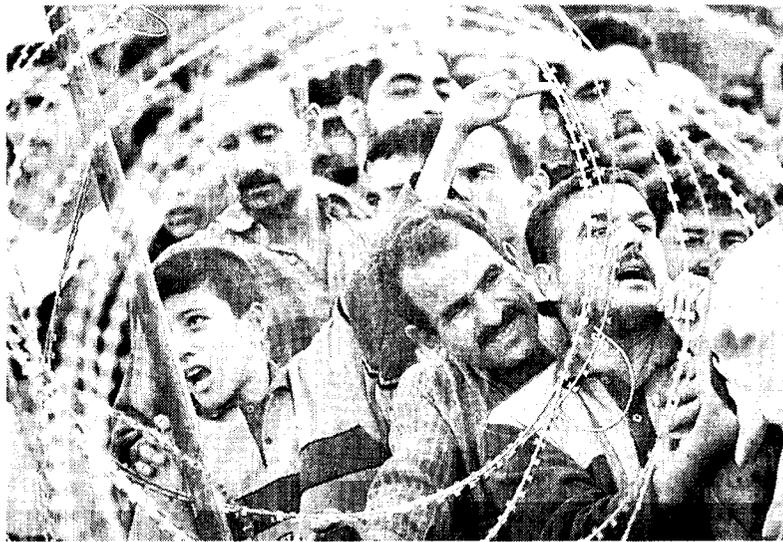
While the Liberal government in Canada took a hypocritical posture against the U.S. invasion, the Canadian capitalist class backs U.S. imperialism to the hilt. Canadian troops have been running the NATO occupation force in Afghanistan. As Canadian companies beg for a share of the Iraqi loot and the Martin government prepares to fete Bush in Ottawa, Canadian imperialism again stands exposed as the U.S.' bloody junior partner.

### Racism and Imperialist Occupation

We have warned that as the American military occupation of Iraq encountered resistance, it would become increasingly brutal. Haifa Zangana, an Iraqi-born novelist imprisoned under Saddam Hussein, writes: "Since the nominal handover of sovereignty on June 30, we have witnessed an escalation of Israeli-style collective punishment of Iraqi cities. Civilian carnage, coupled with enormous damage to homes and infrastructure, has become our daily reality" (London *Guardian*, 17 November). Australian journalist John Pilger reports:

"According to a senior British officer, the Americans view Iraqis as *Untermenschen*, a term that Hitler used in *Mein Kampf* to describe Jews, Romanies and Slavs as sub-humans. This is how the Nazi army laid siege to Russian cities, slaughtering combatants and non-combatants alike. Normalising colonial crimes like the attack on Fallujah requires such racism, linking our imagination to 'the other'."

In this vein, a *Wall Street Journal* editorial (18 November) described the city of Falluja as a "terror den" and justified the shooting of the unarmed, wounded Iraqi man in the



Baldwin/NY Times

Homeless and hungry refugees from Falluja line up for scarce food.

mosque. The atrocity in the Falluja mosque quickly became a template for the U.S. troops and their Iraqi puppet forces. On November 19, 200-300 Iraqi National Guard troops, backed up by American forces, stormed Baghdad's al-Hanifa mosque, one of the most important Sunni mosques in Iraq, when it was filled with worshippers at the end of Friday prayers, killing two and wounding at least nine.

*Le Monde* reported that outside the mosque, dozens of men were forced to lie face down on the ground under the guns of the U.S. Army. The violation of the mosques is a huge affront to every Muslim in the region and in the world. With these acts, the deranged, Christian fundamentalist Bush administration proclaims that nothing is sacred, nothing will be spared in the U.S. occupation, and political fallout be damned.

Cutting water supplies to cities, starving civilians, deliberately killing the unarmed and wounded—all these are war crimes as stipulated by the Geneva Conventions, to which the U.S. is a signatory. But the only rule of war the U.S. recognizes is what it can get away with. Before capitalist counterrevolution destroyed the Soviet Union in 1991-92, fear of the Soviet nuclear arsenal stayed the hand of U.S. imperialism. Now, with a military arsenal that far outstrips any of its rivals, the U.S. is riding roughshod wherever it pleases. Emboldened by re-election, Bush is escalating the brutality of the American occupation in Iraq and is now brazenly saber rattling against Iran and North Korea. We insist that the North Korean deformed workers state has the right to develop nuclear weapons to defend itself against the American imperialists.

The veil of "neutrality" has to be ripped off the bloody face of the United Nations, whose sanctions against Iraq, imposed at the behest of the U.S. in 1990, killed *one and a half million people*. In Canada, the UN sanctions, backed both by the Tory government of the day and the Liberals, were *demand*ed by the social democrats of the NDP who also saluted the Canadian troops sent to enforce them. This starvation blockade as well as the UN weapons inspections literally set the country up for rape and destruction by U.S. imperialism. Notably, the UN and the mainstream capitalist media kept an early appeal for help from Falluja's governing Shura Council a deep, dark secret. *CounterPunch* and

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## Falluja...

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the *Asia Times* published excerpts of a letter sent on October 14 to Kofi Annan by the Falluja Shura Council:

"In Fallujah [the Americans] have created a new vague target: al-Zarqawi. Almost a year has elapsed since they created this new pretext and whenever they destroy houses, mosques, restaurants, and kill children and women, they said: 'We have launched a successful operation against al-Zarqawi.' The people of Fallujah assure you that this person, if he exists, is not in Fallujah...and we have no links to any groups supporting such inhuman behaviour. We appeal to you to urge the UN [to prevent] the new massacre which the Americans and the puppet government are planning to start soon in Fallujah, as well as many parts of the country."

### No Illusions in Capitalist "Democracy"

"Democracy" was of course the pretext for the slaughter in Falluja. George Bush wants a decal of legitimacy slapped on the bloody American occupation of Iraq and so aimed to clean out "foreign insurgents" (look who's calling who "foreigner"! ) before the sham elections projected for January 30. *Time* magazine reports that the CIA is funding its favourite candidates, which is how "the Company" has helped install loyal U.S. neocolonial regimes—that is, when the U.S. even bothers to push ballots after bullets.

Al Jazeera cites the deputy commander of the U.S. Central Command, Lieutenant General Lance Smith, as imperiously stating that elections will likely not take place in Falluja at all. "And so it could be that even without, say a city like Falluja voting, that there will be adequate representation by the Sunnis to feel or look like it was legitimate representation for all the parties involved." Smith stated that additional troops will be deployed to "secure the country" before the vote.

Just before the U.S. launched its previous attack on predominantly Sunni Falluja this April in retaliation for the killing of four mercenaries, the occupiers also moved against Shi'ite cleric Moktada al-Sadr, shutting down his Baghdad newspaper. These events sparked protests around Iraq and temporary expressions of unity between Shi'ites and Sunnis against the occupation. This time around, Washington is taking better advantage of the longstanding ethnic and religious divisions in the country. Thus, the U.S. deployed Kurdish army forces in Falluja and dangles the carrot of serving as Washington's anointed satraps before the Shi'ite leaders. Iraq is not a nation but a patchwork of different peoples and ethnicities, carved up by the British imperialists out of the old Turkish Ottoman Empire at the end of the First World War. The Sunni minority lorded it over the Shi'ite majority under Ba'athist rule, and now it looks like the terms of oppression may be reversed.

### Trotskyist League/Ligue trotskyste

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Meanwhile, many Iraqi Kurds (part of the Kurdish nation which also geographically spans parts of Iran, Turkey and Syria) wrongly look with hope to the American occupation as a rampart against Arab reconquest. As we wrote in "The Left and the 'Iraqi Resistance'" (*Workers Vanguard* No. 830, 6 August): "Absent the working class emerging as an independent political force in a struggle against neocolonial rule, each of these populations can only come to power by oppressing the others and in alliance with U.S. imperialism."

At the same time, thousands of people demonstrated in Baghdad, Basra and Heet in support of the people of Falluja, braving beatings and arrests. The Association of Muslim Scholars rallied 47 political parties, including Sunni, Shi'ite, Christian and even Turkmen, at the Umm al-Qura Mosque to plan a boycott of the elections. As the overextended U.S. military concentrated its forces in Falluja, guerrillas launched large-scale attacks in Ramadi and Mosul.

The U.S. military had hoped that Iraqi troops would take the front lines during the elections, a key component of the *trompe l'oeil* "sovereignty." But Iraqi troops have deserted en masse when militarily confronted by resistance forces. In Mosul on November 10 and 11, nine police stations were overrun while officers deserted. The stations have been recaptured, but only 800 out of 4,000 officers have reported back to serve under the U.S. occupiers (*Financial Times*, 20-21 November). The U.S. military has resorted to extending tours for troops already deployed in Iraq and calling up reservists who haven't handled a weapon or jogged around the block in years.

The terror, destruction and racist subjugation by foreign imperialist occupation is the immediate threat confronted by the peoples of Iraq. The precondition for any liberation is to get the U.S. and allied troops out. This struggle must be combined with combatting the reactionary clerical forces seeking to impose an Islamic regime. These forces seek to reimpose the veil and (Islamic) sharia laws, which reduce women to a status little different than chattel slaves.

Unemployment in Iraq is over 70 percent. The American oil companies and sleazy contractors want to plunder Iraq, and that means grinding neocolonial exploitation of Iraq's working people by the imperialists and their Iraqi front men. Equality for all the peoples of Iraq, and the Near East more broadly, will only come about through the overthrow of capitalist rule in the region and the establishment of a socialist federation of the Near East. This poses the urgency of constructing genuine Marxist parties to lead the fight for workers rule in the region.

The subjugated masses in Iraq and Afghanistan face the same racist and union-busting enemy faced by working people and the oppressed in the United States and Canada. It is in the class interests of the working people to fight for the withdrawal of all U.S. and allied troops from Iraq and Afghanistan. We raise the call for class struggle at home against U.S./Canadian imperialism because it is an essential part of winning the working class to the understanding that it alone has the social power to defeat the imperialist system, and because this Marxist perspective is the *only* way forward. A revolutionary multiracial workers party must be forged to lead the hard struggles ahead to victory. Along with our comrades of the Spartacist League/U.S., the Trotskyist League/Ligue trotskyste is dedicated to this purpose.

—Adapted from *Workers Vanguard* No. 837, 26 November



AP



Laroche/Le Soleil

1999 Seattle protests marked rise of left radicalism among a new generation of youth. Two years later at Quebec City protests, pro-capitalist union tops manhandle radical youth, signaling left/right split within the “anti-globalization” movement.

## TL/LT Conference...

(continued from page 7)

the spring of 2000, and the TL’s Ninth National Conference that summer also formally repudiated it. But the failure to examine more deeply the political roots which underlay the problem continued to distort aspects of our work. And the failure to make a public accounting of this error was disorienting and damaging for both our cadre and those who follow our activities.

In examining our work after Seattle, the conference identified our intervention around the 2001 Quebec City protests as a big step forward. We wrote effective propaganda directed at the more radical elements and concentrated on intersecting the thousands of mainly anarchist-inspired youth who faced down riot police near the summit venue. Meanwhile the union tops and other “respectable” elements were marching tens of thousands of people in the other direction.

We also intervened effectively at other junctures where the left/right divide in the anti-globalization milieu was drawn sharply, e.g., at protests over the killing of anarchist militant Carlo Giuliani by the cops during the summer 2001 anti-G8 protests in Italy. While various reformist groups denounced supposed “violence” by the anarchist Black Bloc, we forthrightly defended these militant youth against the bourgeois state. Outfits like the International Socialists mimic the essentially liberal anti-globalization ideas held by many anarchist youth, while simultaneously maligning and setting up for repression the most militant among these protesters. Our stance is the exact opposite: we polemicize against the anarchists’ politics while standing with them against the capitalist state.

Comrades also assessed our record concerning local direct-action groups like OCAP, which by 2000 had become the main locus for youthful activism in Toronto. We have a record of consistent principled defense of OCAP, the Montreal-based CLAC (Anti-Capitalist Convergence) and similar groups against both state repression and slanderous attacks by housebroken “leftists.” But until fairly recently we failed to address seriously why radical youth were attracted to such groups and their often audacious actions on

behalf of the poor. Our early polemical material on OCAP amounted to little more than empty dismissals of “militant reformism,” and too often we failed to join OCAP actions that were very much in the interests of working people. We have turned this around in multiple ways more recently, for example by participating in OCAP housing occupations. As one comrade put it during pre-conference discussion, “our interventions should seek to be *pedagogical* not denunciatory, and we should seek to be known as activists who *participate* as appropriate in OCAP-initiated activities.”

The fraternal greetings from our comrades of Spartacist South Africa usefully addressed from another angle the question of how a small Marxist nucleus can maximize its impact:

“We should also be vigilant of an inherent possibility of moving from one extreme to another i.e. from sectarianism to trying to intervene in every political event. Proposals about what to do should not have an ultimatum character, as there will always be both internal and external constraints acting on our small organisation. There is reality in the discrepancy between our huge historical tasks and our small forces. Clarifying political fights, in a comradely way, are going to be an important tool in moving forward.”

In discussion, a number of comrades pointed to the danger of over-correction through politically adapting to milieus that are distant from a proletarian revolutionary outlook. Relatedly, the conference resolution underlined the need to effectively address young activists at the ideological level. Some of our polemical material—e.g., against the views of Naomi Klein and Noam Chomsky and the anarchists during the Iraq war—has been effective, but there is room for improvement. Several older comrades related recent developments on the left to ideas prevalent in the “New Left” of the 1960s and early ’70s, e.g., the resurrection of “direct action” and “affinity groups,” as well as the rejection of the centrality of the working class. Comrades emphasized that the current level of consciousness is necessarily shaped by the defeats of the recent past. There is no Soviet Union, there is no Vietnamese Revolution taking on and defeating U.S. imperialism, there have been no working-class upsurges posing point blank the revolutionary capacity of the

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## TL/LT Conference...

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proletariat as in France in May 1968 or even the 1972 Quebec general strikes.

### Reclaiming Our History

A highlight of the conference was an educational panel on TL history from our founding in 1974-75 to the early 1990s, geared especially for newer members. Given by comrades whose experiences centered on different periods of TL history, the panel drew lessons from past work while tracing the continuity of our struggle to forge a revolutionary Marxist vanguard in Canada as part of a democratic-centralist international organization.

One panelist, a TL founding member, cited the importance of our recruitment of youth from the New Left in the early/mid-1970s, particularly those won from in and around the pseudo-Trotskyist United Secretariat (USec) of Ernest Mandel. This work had an impact on youth in various left groups in the U.S. and Europe who were similarly seeking a consistent revolutionary alternative. A few years later, a number of TL cadre moved to Britain and other European countries to assist our fledgling sections there—a conscious assertion of international priorities which at the same time weakened our work in Canada for a period.

Another panelist gave examples of work undertaken over the years by TL supporters in the trade unions. These ranged from struggles in the 1970s and early '80s to put the labour movement on record against Anglo chauvinism and in defense of Quebec's right to independence, to attempts to mobilize union power against fascist and racist attacks. Comrades noted our extensive history of initiating principled united-front action: from successful defense campaigns for anti-fascist unionists, to co-initiating (with Toronto-area Arab groups) the first demonstration against the U.S. blockade and looming war on Iraq in 1990, to our years-long fight to mobilize labour power to free Mumia. Much of this work was undertaken by our fraternal defense organization, the Partisan Defense Committee.

The final panelist was a younger comrade who had been part of a left opposition in the USec group in Edmonton in 1990. He and other comrades, whose group went on to fuse

with the TL, were attracted by our fight against counterrevolution in the Soviet Union and East Europe, noting how this stood in sharp contrast to the USec's support to imperialist-backed "democratic" counterrevolution. To these comrades, this showed that the ICL represented the continuity of Trotskyism, the revolutionary Marxism of our time.

### Conference Debates and Decisions

The conference situated our tasks in the context of broader political developments in Canada. As in the U.S., the Canadian rulers have stepped up their attacks on immigrants, particularly Muslims, as the cutting edge of an offensive against the entire proletariat and fundamental democratic rights. Defense of the rights of immigrants—who are not simply helpless victims but a powerful, growing proportion of the Canadian working class—will remain key to much of our work. With Toronto and Vancouver being among the most heavily immigrant cities in the world, including hundreds of thousands from China and other Asian countries, a continued orientation toward leftist elements of diverse immigrant backgrounds is crucial.

The conference, and especially the youth commission organized by the SYCs, also discussed our work around the Quebec national question. This included a struggle with some SYC members who, amid a widely publicized wave of Anglo bigotry earlier this year (Don Cherry, Conan O'Brien, the sponsorship scandal), were hesitant to build an emergency campus speak-out to highlight our opposition to Anglo chauvinism and support for Quebec independence. The justification raised by one, that "youth are not interested in Quebec," was an adaptation to prevailing indifference to the national oppression of Quebec among English Canadian youth, which extends into the activist milieu and is itself a reflection of the chauvinist status quo.

As one comrade noted during pre-conference discussion, "For the first time in a while, young radical activists (and others), who typically denied that the national question had any special significance in Canada, were confronted with the fact that it obviously did." The fact that the Quebec national question remains the *central strategic question* for would-be proletarian revolutionaries in this country was shown again in the federal elections, where the Bloc Québécois won nearly three quarters of the seats and half the popular vote in Quebec.

In Quebec itself, many in the anarchist/Maoist "far left" also dismiss the national question and oppose independence. They reject Quebec nationalism, which is correct, but this is vastly insufficient as a program for combating and ultimately replacing the rule of capital. As the conference document noted:

"The Quebec working class, which despite defeats over the last two decades remains the most militant in North America, cannot be broken from nationalism through pious wishes. Proletarian revolutionaries have to *identify* with the workers' opposition to national oppression and *support* the struggle for an independent Quebec as the only evident means to bring to the fore the crucial class question of labour vs. capital."

The youth commission affirmed that the main venue for SYC work would remain the campuses, where we aim to win dissident intellectual youth to the side of the working class and the struggle for communism. Given our size and social composition, work toward youth and other radical activist milieus has to remain our central orientation.

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At the same time, the conference noted the need for more attention to our work toward the organized proletariat. The recent period has seen significant union battles against austerity and privatization. This includes the mass Day of Disruption in Quebec last December and a near general strike in support of embattled B.C. hospital workers this spring that was flagrantly sold out by the labour bureaucracy and NDP. Our Vancouver comrades' intervention into the hospital workers strike, including bringing students to the picket lines, shows the kind of union-focused work that even a largely student local can undertake. In Toronto, while we have supporters in a fairly wide array of unions, we need both more systematic work and a concentration of forces.

The conference reaffirmed the centrality of producing *Spartacist Canada* as a high-quality quarterly paper. Comrades felt that in the recent period the press has better addressed the actual arguments of youth who have a hatred of capitalism but look to perspectives other than Marxism as the answer. There has also been notable improvement in our coverage of social issues like women's and gay oppression.

The conference concluded with the election of a new Central Committee to direct the work of the organization until our next national conference. It was noted that the TL today consists essentially of three political generations: cadre with 20 to 30 years of experience who mainly comprise our evolved leadership, a layer of young activists recruited out of recent struggles, and a small but crucial component of comrades in their early 30s who somewhat bridge the gap. Education, internal political debate and active intervention into social struggles are the means to make useful the tension born of very different political experiences, which in turn point to a potentially healthy mixture for building a Leninist vanguard.

We firmly believe that the only road forward lies through forging revolutionary Marxist parties in Canada and around the globe, the essential instruments for liberating the working



SC photo

**TL/LT joins September 18 Montréal demo in defense of Palestinian refugees in Canada.**

class and oppressed. This remains a difficult political period for proletarian revolutionaries, as it has been for the proletariat as a whole. An organization of our small size and lack of roots could simply have been blown away, or decisively capitulated, in the face of a defeat as cataclysmic as the overturn of the only proletarian revolution in history. Look at pseudo-Marxist groups like the USec, now little more than left-talking social democrats. We have made our share of errors and have suffered damage, but we have fought to understand and rectify and reconstruct, while maintaining our fundamental programmatic integrity. We are determined to continue the fight for revolutionary continuity, including through intervening, recruiting and educating a new generation of Bolshevik fighters. ■

## Wal-Mart...

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full-time commitment.... The secret of staying union free is the internal elimination of problems." And that means threats, intimidation and firing for anyone who looks sideways at a union.

Wal-Mart's success is a reflection of the grim state of affairs for unionized workers in North America. In the U.S. today, the unionization rate is just 13 percent. In Canada, it is much higher at 30.5 percent. But this is deceptive: in the private sector, the rate has plummeted in just a generation from 26 percent in 1977 to just 18 percent today. Behind this number is the story of relentless attacks on workers, unions and livelihoods, compounded by a labour leadership that has pushed concessions and give-backs down the workers' throats.

The drive to organize Wal-Mart is a key challenge for all of labour: turn back the tide of defeats and start moving forward, or lose yet more ground to the profit-bloated capitalists. The UFCW has also applied for recognition in Brossard and Saint-Hyacinthe, Quebec. In Terrace, B.C., Weyburn, Saskatchewan and again in Windsor, UFCW organizers are signing up Wal-Mart workers. At seven B.C. Wal-Mart Tire & Lube Express departments, workers signed cards with UFCW Local 1518.

A successful fight to organize Wal-Mart across Canada could be a springboard for a powerful organizing drive south of the border. But beating back this viciously anti-union outfit requires breaking with the UFCW leadership's legalist strategy of relying on labour boards and other agencies of the capitalist state. The labour movement has powerful tactics and traditions that can forge unions and win strikes: mass pickets, hot cargo edicts (secondary boycotts), plant and building occupations, political solidarity strikes. Key to winning union recognition and a decent contract for Wal-Mart workers will be active solidarity by the longshore, trucking and rail unions who can stop the flow of goods to the stores and distribution centers.

## Capitalist Profiteering and the Decline of Labour

Wal-Mart is poised to enter the supermarket business in Canada, now dominated by the all-Canadian grocery giant Loblaw's, owned by the fabulously wealthy Weston family. Karl Marx was right on the money when he described the tendency of capitalism toward monopoly. Two decades ago, there were some 20 major supermarket operators in Canada. Today Loblaw's is by far the largest national food chain, having driven out most of its competitors.

In the 1970s, a union job in a supermarket looked fairly secure and you could get by on your paycheck. The industry

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## Wal-Mart...

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is still heavily unionized—at Loblaws, about 85 percent. But after years of the union tops bowing to the companies' attacks, the jobs pay only a bit better than Wal-Mart, are part-time and have multi-tier wage schemes that set workers against each other. In B.C. in the late 1980s when Loblaws opened its Real Canadian Superstores, at the company's behest the UFCW tops created a new second-class local with lower wages and conditions for the 8-9,000 workers hired over the next decade.

In 2003, the UFCW tops did another dirty deal, this time in Ontario where Loblaws plans to open superstores. Invoking the Wal-Mart bogey, Loblaws got the UFCW misleaders to ram through an appendix to Local 1000a's current contract enforcing lower pay and benefits, no sick days, no Sunday premiums and no Christmas bonus for people at the new stores. Brazenly calling this stinker a "no concessions" package, the union brass agreed to Loblaws' demand that the 12,000-strong Local 1000a not be allowed to vote on it! As Wal-Mart and Loblaws battle for supremacy, both are waging a relentless war on current and future workers, slashing wages and conditions and keeping out the union or rendering it housebroken.

In the U.S., too, the bosses use the Wal-Mart spectre to gut union jobs and wages. A year ago, 60,000 UFCW workers waged a bitter strike against the Southern California supermarket bosses. But instead of mobilizing the collective, countrywide strength of the union, each region was left to negotiate separately. Hundreds of thousands of workers also fighting for new contracts were kept chained to the job. Massive support from other unions, including an eight-hour port shutdown by ILWU longshoremen in Los Angeles, bolstered the strike, but it was not mobilized on the picket lines and at distribution centers. Faced with a drawn-out battle and a leadership opposed to doing what was needed to win, the strikers returned to work after five months with a deeply concessionary contract that includes a three-year wage freeze and a pernicious two-tier wage scheme (see "UFCW Strike and Class Struggle in America," *Workers Vanguard* Nos. 821 and 822, 5 and 19 March 2004).

### Workers and Bosses Have No Interests in Common

A serious North American organizing drive against Wal-Mart would resonate among workers everywhere. But victory requires a class-struggle perspective counterposed to the narrow pro-capitalist outlook of the current union leadership. Wal-Mart is committed to *its* class interests. As one union organizer put it, "They are very disciplined, and they've got a program" (*Nation*, 28 June 2004). The workers and their unions need that same hardnosed *class* understanding. Yet the union leadership instead pushes the class-collaborationist lie that workers and their bosses share a common interest.

This is seen most starkly in the view that increased profits for the bosses benefit the workers. In a memo to Local 1000a justifying their sellout deal with Loblaws, the UFCW tops were explicit: "...a more successful and profitable company will be able to provide more job security and stability." The experience of millions of workers who are ruined while they see the bosses amass vast wealth shows how false this is. As Karl Marx explained in *Wage-Labour and Capital*: "A



Potvin/FTO

**Jonquière, January 31: Mass union demonstration supporting militant occupation of Alcan's Arvida smelter.**

rapid growth of capital is synonymous with rapid growth of profits. Profits can grow rapidly only when the price of labour—the relative wages—decrease just as rapidly...."

The union tops invariably urge workers to rely on capitalist governments and courts. In places like B.C. and Ontario, the UFCW puts its hopes in electing NDP governments which they expect will undo provincial anti-union laws. But the NDP is no "friend of labour." It's a social-democratic party committed in every way to the capitalist system. Just look how they sabotaged the recent HEU hospital workers strike in B.C., helping ram through a wretched give-back deal just as the province was on the edge of a general strike in solidarity with the HEU. For every pro-union platitude muttered in opposition, when it's in power the NDP serves the bosses' interests, breaking strikes and slashing social services.

In the U.S., labour is disarmed by the union leadership's allegiance to the capitalist Democratic Party. Andrew Stern, president of the Service Employees International Union, bemoaned the low unionization rate as an electoral liability: "When only 13 percent of the American work force is in unions, our ability to win national elections is limited" (*New York Times*, 10 November). Stern is calling on the AFL-CIO to use the \$25 million-a-year Union Plus credit card royalties to organize Wal-Mart and double the amount spent on organizing. But the AFL-CIO spent *six times* that—over \$150 million—to get out the vote for Democrat John Kerry. Bush's win is bad news for workers, but Kerry's election would not have been good news. Like the Republicans, the Democrats are a ruling-class party dedicated to the interests of the American capitalists, which are counterposed to those of workers, blacks and all the oppressed.

The union misleaders pound workers with the idea that the bosses' state—its courts and cops—can be an ally in their struggles. Countless strikes have foundered because of this. In the struggle to unionize Wal-Mart, many of the union drives in B.C. and Quebec are tied up waiting for labour board decisions. As a strategy, this demobilizes workers. Far from neutral, these boards are a weapon of the boss class, and they often back Wal-Mart.

A UFCW Canada pamphlet against Wal-Mart is called "Blowing the Whistle on a Neighbourhood Bully." One of

its political themes is protectionism. "Blowing the Whistle" points the finger at cheap foreign labour in Myanmar and Thailand, and tries to scandalize Wal-Mart by pointing out that its "Made in Canada" label on manufactured goods is bogus. But Canadian capitalists are not a shred better than their U.S. counterparts. Look at Loblaws! Capitalists go where they will make the greatest profits, and they will always try to drive down wages and conditions. Protectionism doesn't save jobs. It does undermine the international class struggle needed to win, especially against global conglomerates like Wal-Mart, setting workers against each other instead of the capitalist bosses.

Protectionism, the idea that Canadian workers have interests counterposed to workers in other countries, is not unique to the UFCW leaders. Buzz Hargrove's CAW autoworkers union trumpets a "progressive," social unionism. But the CAW leadership vituperates against Japanese and Korean cars, undercutting international solidarity and the unity of workers here, themselves of myriad nationalities and races. And for all Hargrove's militant posturing, many workers at A&P and Dominion stores, organized by the CAW's Retail Wholesale division, are also subjected to multi-tier wage schemes, their pay starting at around the minimum wage.

In Canada and the U.S., the union tops rail against China. Wal-Mart is the eighth largest buyer of exported goods from China. These goods are largely produced in the Special Economic Zones (SEZs) by firms usually owned at least in part by outside capitalists. This China bashing serves the U.S. imperialists and their Canadian junior partners in the counterrevolutionary crusade to open up China to full-scale capitalist exploitation, turning it into a giant sweatshop.

The union tops' fulminations against China do double duty, both pushing anti-Communism and scapegoating a "foreign enemy" for the loss of jobs, instead of fighting capitalism at home. Just as workers defend their unions—despite the sellout leaders—against the bosses, workers must defend China against imperialist-backed counterrevolution despite the Chinese bureaucracy's accommodation to the capitalist market.

### **For a Fighting Labour Movement to Bring Wal-Mart to its Knees!**

What will it take to organize Wal-Mart? In a sense, the answer to this is also the answer to the question: How to turn around the situation for the working class? Militant tactics don't guarantee victory, even if the struggle is led by class-struggle Marxists. But class struggle is the only way workers have won or held on to significant gains. The problem is the present union leaders limit their program and aims, and for the most part their tactics, to what is acceptable to the bosses.

Organizing Wal-Mart, especially as it moves into the multi-racial urban areas of Montreal, Toronto and Vancouver, requires consciously fighting the anti-immigrant racism and chauvinism the bosses use to poison union struggles. During last year's UFCW strike, U.S. "Homeland Security" agents raided 60 Wal-Marts, rounding up 250 undocumented workers. Instead of fighting to defend these desperate immigrant workers, the UFCW bureaucrats—who say they want to organize Wal-Mart—did nothing to mobilize the union in their behalf.

Immigrants are a big component of the Canadian working class, and in Toronto, comprise a massive 75 percent of food industry workers. Along with their Canadian-born daughters

and sons, immigrants are often in the forefront of militant class battles like the B.C. hospital workers strike last spring. The fact that Wal-Mart plays on the insecurities of immigrants who know they are vulnerable to arbitrary firings and loss of status makes concrete that the demand "Full citizenship rights for all immigrants!" is in the interests of *all* workers.

It's not accidental that the UFCW gained recognition first in Quebec, where the reality of national oppression has often fuelled militant class battles. The Quebec unionization rate is 41 percent, and Jonquière, and the whole Saguenay region, has a history of militant working-class struggle. Parallel to the UFCW's Wal-Mart campaign, last January Alcan workers in Jonquière occupied Alcan's Arvida smelter in a spectacular action to prevent the closure of the plant and the loss of 550 jobs. This defiance of the capitalists' sacred private property won the support of workers in the area and only ended after the Quebec Labour Relations Board ruled the action illegal.

It's good that an international union, the UFCW, is running a union drive spanning Quebec and English Canada, for this can help undercut the anti-Quebec chauvinism that is rife among Anglo-Canadian workers. For decades the labour leaders of English Canada—and especially the NDP—have pushed reactionary "Canadian unity," which is really support for the *oppression* of the Québécois nation. This undermines solidarity with the Quebec labour movement, which in the main supports independence, and drives Québécois workers into the arms of the bourgeois nationalists of the Parti Québécois. The result is a working class that is deeply divided along national lines. In English Canada militant workers must oppose Anglo chauvinism down the line and advocate Quebec independence, thus showing Quebec workers that they, not the Québécois bosses, are their true allies.

In the struggle to unionize Wal-Mart, the grinding oppression of working-class women is also a burning issue. In the biggest class-action suit in U.S. history 1.6 million former and current Wal-Mart women employees are demanding restitution for years of vicious and flagrant anti-woman discrimination. Union control of hiring, with affirmative action recruitment and training for women and minorities would go some ways to redressing historic inequalities. For the impoverished and heavily female workforce at Wal-Mart, demands for free 24-hour child care would strike a real chord. Taking on the destruction of the health care system, the demand for decent across-the-board medical benefits must be linked to the fight for free, quality health care for all.

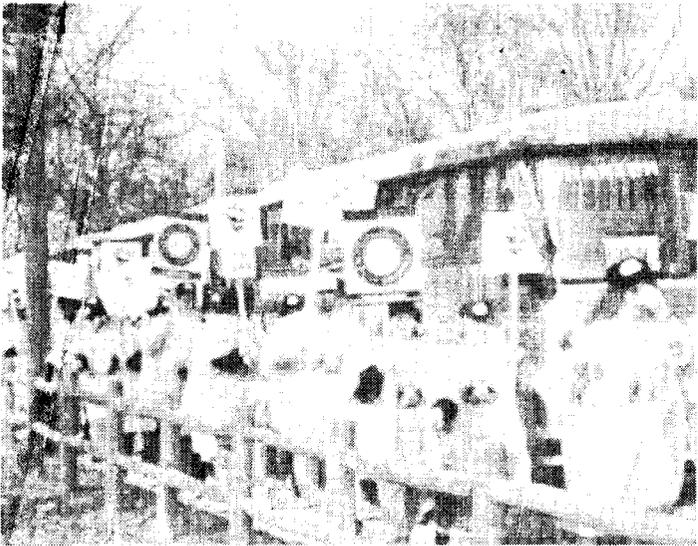
In the 1930s and '40s, the thousands of militants who considered themselves communists propelled the great industrial union organizing drives forward. Motivated by their ideals of building a society where those who labour rule, they knew that spiking the bosses' attacks on minorities and immigrants was crucial to victory. This must inspire today's militants who face the task of ousting the cowardly union bureaucrats and forging a new, class-struggle leadership of the unions. The fight to organize the unorganized could be the crucible in which a revolutionary workers party is forged in political struggle against the pro-capitalist labour brass and the NDP. Such a party is indispensable to unite the working class and lead it in the revolutionary overthrow of the bosses' rule. A workers government that rips the economy out of the hands of the capitalists is the only road to the creation of a truly human society in which production is for human need, not profit. ■

## Jonquière, Quebec



Boissinot/CP

Workers protest at Wal-Mart's Bentonville, Arkansas headquarters (left). Above: Wal-Mart workers in Jonquière. A successful organizing drive in Canada could be springboard for union drive against Wal-Mart in the U.S.



UFCW

# Union Victory Against Wal-Mart

When Wal-Mart workers in Jonquière won union recognition in August it was international news. Everywhere, workers who have been on the receiving end of layoffs and union busting cheered a victory against the labour-hating retail giant. It was a hard-fought battle and the 170 mostly women workers were justly proud. A few months earlier, the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) drive at the store was set back after a union vote narrowly lost. A 2002 effort to unionize was also defeated. For now, the Jonquière store is the only unionized Wal-Mart north of Mexico.

Now comes the struggle for a first contract. It won't be easy to beat the union-busting weapons in Wal-Mart's arsenal and win more than the starvation wages—about \$7.60 to \$8.60 an hour—and terrible working conditions at Wal-Mart. In 1997, the UFCW organized a Windsor, Ontario store but the union was decertified. Wal-Mart meatcutters in Jack-

sonville, Texas won union recognition only to have the boss shut down its meatcutting operations. Now Wal-Mart threatens to close its Jonquière store, whining that it is suddenly unprofitable.

Wal-Mart is the biggest retailer on the planet. Sales in 2004 are pegged at \$256 billion (U.S.)—more than the GDP of Austria. It's the biggest private employer in the U.S. and in Mexico it controls half the grocery business. In Canada, with 234 stores and six Sam's Clubs, in just ten years Wal-Mart has cornered half the department store market.

What is the source of Wal-Mart's huge profits? They do what capitalists do: squeeze workers to the bone with poverty wages, keep out the union and undercut competitors. To stay "union free," Wal-Mart will stop at nothing. A company manual instructs managers that "Staying union free is a

*(continued on page 21)*

**For a Fighting Labour Movement! Organize the Unorganized!**