

Canada Out of Afghanistan Now!



McHugh/AFP/Getty Images

Canadian imperialist troops terrorize Afghan prisoners in Kandahar province, May 12.

Down With Imperialist Occupation of Iraq!

Some 2,300 Canadian troops are rampaging through southern Afghanistan, leading the NATO occupation force that is propping up the U.S.-installed regime of Hamid Karzai. This military deployment is now set to escalate, as Canada prepares to take command of the entire Afghanistan occupation starting in 2008. Addressing Canadian soldiers in Kandahar during a mid-March visit, Tory prime minister Stephen Harper claimed they were “demonstrating an international leadership role for our country” against “international terrorism.” The real face of this bloody occupation force was shown only hours later when Canadian troops killed an unarmed Afghan civilian, Nasrat Ali Hassan, shooting up his rickshaw taxi as it approached a military checkpoint.

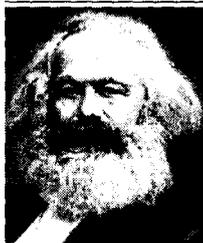
Opinion polls show a substantial majority of the Canadian

population opposed to the Afghan operation. Yet it has been backed by every party in the federal parliament: the Liberals who sent the army in the first place; the NDP, whose leader Jack Layton claimed Canadian troops were furthering “the pursuit of peace, justice and democracy”; and the Bloc Québécois, which endorsed the occupation despite overwhelming popular opposition in Quebec.

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Imperialists Threaten Iran
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Marx



Lenin



Trotsky

Imperialism, War and the Working Class

The reformist left speaks of building a "broad" movement of all those opposed to war and occupation in Iraq and Afghanistan. In practice, this amounts to using the "struggle against war" as a vehicle for tying workers and the oppressed to their capitalist enemy. Imperialist war is a necessary outgrowth of the decaying capitalist system, and the struggle against it demands a struggle for workers revolution to root out that system. This was the central theme in a 1936 pamphlet issued by the Workers Party, then the Trotskyist organization in the U.S., and authored by James Burnham (under the pseudonym John West), a leading Trotskyist publicist before his defection from the Marxist movement in 1939-40.

To many persons, war seems to come as if it were a law of Fate. In former days it used to be thought that war was a punishment sent by God to punish men for their sins. Others believe that wars are due to the ambition or "lust for power" on the part of certain rulers or warriors. Still others think that wars result from what they call "racial or cultural antagonisms." To many of these people it seems that war is a special and peculiar and frightful event that happens every so often, no matter what we try to do about it. Some of them, on the other hand, conclude that we could get rid of war if only we could get enough people to want to get rid of it, if we could develop a "will to peace" among men.

All views of this kind are absolutely useless in helping us to understand what war is; and are therefore equally useless in the struggle against war—since we cannot struggle effectively against war unless we understand the true nature of war.

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The first, the very first thing we must know clearly about war is that war is not something "special," not something that "just happens." War is, on the contrary, an essential and necessary part of the society we live in, that is, of imperialist-capitalist society....

The finance-capitalists control enormous amounts of capital. This capital must be put to use, that is, must be set to work making a profit. A profit cannot be made, however, unless a market can be found in which commodities can be absorbed at a price sufficient to cover "costs of production" plus a profit.... Above all, at the present time, they seek *new outlets for capital investment itself*, new fields outside of their own national territory where capital can be poured in and an additional market created. It is this last feature particularly, the drive for external capital investment, for what is called "the export of capital," which is the distinguishing mark of *imperialism* on a world scale....

The world, however, is limited in extent. The areas available for new forms of capital expansion and exploitation are growingly restricted. Conflict is therefore inevitable.

The truth of the matter is this: In the stage of imperialism, capitalist society is continuously at war. This is of the essence of imperialism. It is not a question of one war starting, then stopping, to be followed in a decade or two by a new war. It is war all the time, changing only in the form it takes, in the degree of violence....

The moral, religious, racial and ideological disguises that war wears must not be allowed to hide the fundamental conflicts which are the true source of modern war. The general conclusion is inescapable: Modern war is neither accidental nor due to the evil of human-nature nor decreed by God. War is of the very essence of imperialist-capitalism, as much a part of capitalism as wage labor. To speak of capitalism without war is like speaking of a human being without lungs. The fate of one is inextricably bound to the fate of the other.

—"John West" (James Burnham), *War and the Workers* (1936)

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SC149

Build the Campaign to Free Mumia Abu-Jamal!

Mumia Honoured in France

On April 29, the city government of Saint-Denis, a suburb of Paris, named a new street in honor of class-war prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal. Some 150 people attended the dedication ceremony, held a few steps from Nelson Mandela Stadium. The French Communist Party (PCF) city mayor, Didier Paillard, hailed Mumia for becoming "a symbol of the fight for justice." Patrick Braouezec, PCF member of Parliament and president of the group of towns that includes Saint-Denis, said, "We in Saint-Denis wished to find an event which would allow us to salute the fight led by Mumia in prison, not just for him but for all those today who are on death row and who have been condemned to death."

The fight to free Mumia, America's foremost class-war prisoner, has reached a critical turning point. His legal case has been put on the "fast track" by the Third Circuit federal appeals court and decisions that will put his life in the balance could be made within months. At the event in Saint-Denis, Rachel Wolkenstein, Partisan Defense Committee counsel and a former member of Mumia's legal team, emphasized: "The cops, prosecutors and the entire so-called 'criminal justice system' have colluded to kill Mumia for the crime of being an eloquent and effective critic of racist oppression, for being a former Black Panther Party member, and for being a MOVE supporter. In Mumia, the U.S. government sees the spectre of black revolution."

Mumia Abu-Jamal was framed up and sent to death row, falsely charged with killing Philadelphia police officer Daniel Faulkner in 1981. Shredding their own precedents, court after court has rubber-stamped the wholesale trampling of Mumia's rights at his 1982 sham trial. The courts have barred proof of Mumia's innocence, including the *sworn confession* of Arnold Beverly that he—not Mumia—shot and killed Faulkner. In fact, in the current round of court hearings, Mumia is barred from presenting evidence that he had nothing to do with Faulkner's killing. Mumia's opening brief, due July 13, is limited by the courts to three issues: the D.A.'s racist jury selection that kept blacks off the jury in Mumia's 1982 trial; the D.A.'s prejudicial closing argument stating that the jury should convict because Mumia would get "appeal after appeal"; and the grossly biased state post-conviction hearings before the notorious hanging judge Albert Sabo, who presided over the original trial.

Wolkenstein was invited to address the Saint-Denis gathering to speak on the Beverly confession and other evidence that proves Mumia's innocence. Referring to the current



Rachel Wolkenstein of the Partisan Defense Committee speaking at inauguration of street named in honour of Mumia Abu-Jamal in Paris suburb of Saint-Denis, 29 April.

legal proceedings, she warned, "We cannot be lulled by the fact that the courts have agreed to hear legal issues which could lead to a new trial or new appeals proceedings. It is necessary and urgent, now more than ever, for there to be a mass mobilization based on the power of labor. The rallying cry for this movement must be to free Mumia now! That Mumia is an innocent man—that the frame-up was racist and political." This is a vital point in the fight for Mumia's cause. The international mass movement that stayed the executioner's hand after a death warrant was signed in 1995 has since been demobilized, not least by the reformist left and liberals who subordinated the fight for Mumia's freedom to the call for a "new trial." These groups promoted the illusion that the very same courts that have kept Mumia on death row for 24 years could give him justice.

In an interview printed in the PCF's daily newspaper, *L'Humanité* (25 April), Mumia himself said, regarding the current court hearings: "I have very little hope in a favorable decision from the Federal Court which has accepted to look at three points of the petition submitted to appeal by my lawyers." As Wolkenstein underlined in her speech: "We must place all our faith in the power of the masses. It is that power, centered on the power of labor to shut down the workings of this system, which can free Mumia now. The courts will provide justice for Mumia only when faced with the determination of that power."

Other speakers at the Saint-Denis event included Robert Bryan, Mumia's attorney; Pam Africa and Ramona Africa of the International Concerned Family and Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal (ICFFMAJ); Julia Wright, daughter of author

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Protest Ottawa's Ban on Tamil Tigers!



Eells/New York Times



SC photo

Terror against Tamil population remains rampant in Sri Lanka. Left: Tamil-owned stores burned by Sinhalese in Trincomalee in April this year. Right: TL-initiated protest in Toronto against anti-Tamil pogroms of 1983.

On April 10, “public safety” minister Stockwell Day announced that the government had placed the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) on its ever-expanding “terrorist” list. Two days later, the RCMP staged a jackboot raid on the offices of the World Tamil Movement (WTM) in Montreal, soon followed by raids on WTM offices in Toronto. The cops seized files, mailing lists, computer equipment, bank records—even flags and clothing bearing the LTTE emblem—and temporarily shut down the weekly paper *Ullaga Tamil* (World Tamil). For days afterwards, anyone trying to phone the WTM’s Toronto office had their calls answered by police. Police also raided a large shop in Toronto’s heavily Tamil St. Jamestown area, seizing CDs and DVDs.

These attacks are an ominous assault on democratic rights and a direct threat to Canada’s large Tamil immigrant population. The 250,000 Tamils in this country, the largest concentration outside South Asia, are mainly refugees from murderous pogroms orchestrated by successive Sinhala-chauvinist governments in Sri Lanka. The bloodbath peaked in 1983, leading to civil war and the effective partition of the island on ethnic lines. Many thousands of Canadian Tamils sympathize with the LTTE, which runs the de facto Tamil mini-state in the north and east, and its objective of an independent Tamil Eelam. They now find themselves in the crosshairs of Ottawa’s racist “war on terror.”

The government’s ban on the LTTE under the Anti-Terrorism Act is part of its drive to criminalize political activity by immigrants and minorities. Other groups illegalized under this draconian law include the Communist Party of the Philippines, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine and the left-wing Colombian FARC guerrillas. Under its provisions, anyone who knowingly provides financial support to a banned organization can be jailed for up to ten years, while

those who fundraise or otherwise “facilitate” its work face 14 years in jail. When Ottawa introduced this legislation following the September 11, 2001 attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon, we warned that it was seizing on the so-called “war on terror” to restock its arsenal of domestic state repression. As we wrote:

“This arsenal is aimed at the whole of the working people and their organizations. In the first instance, the targets are immigrants and refugees, from the Middle East and elsewhere. But immigrant workers today form key battalions of the working class, and have come increasingly to the fore in important labor battles. In its own defense and that of all the oppressed, the labor movement must oppose Ottawa’s racist anti-immigrant laws and demand full citizenship rights for the foreign-born.”

—“For Class Struggle Against Canadian Imperialism!”

SC No. 131, Winter 2001/2002

The Toronto area in particular has large numbers of Tamil workers, concentrated in the restaurant and hotel industry. It is in the urgent interest of all working people to oppose Ottawa’s police-state crackdown on the LTTE and defend Tamil organizations against state repression. While no charges have yet been laid in connection with the recent police raids, there is a deadly danger that the ban on the LTTE will be followed by further state-sponsored attacks on Tamils. Indeed, as was shown in the case of Maher Arar—a Canadian citizen deported by the U.S. to Syria’s torture chambers with the direct complicity of Canadian authorities—under the “war on terror” you don’t need to have *any* political connections to find yourself caught up in the worldwide network of secret torture facilities, detention flights and “renditions” set up at Washington’s behest after September 11. Hands off the LTTE, WTM and their supporters! Labour must defend immigrant rights!

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Down With Reactionary Age of Consent Laws!

Tories' Anti-Sex Crusade Targets Youth, Gays

Sex is a big part of being a teenager, but if you're under 16 what was once fun and legal will soon be a crime. Waving the hoary "save our children" banner, the right-wing Conservative government plans to raise the age of consent from 14, which it has been since 1892, to 16. A recent survey showed that at least 25 percent of youth are having sex by the time they are 14. But if Stephen Harper and his justice minister Vic Toews get their way, these youth and their partners will become criminals. At the same time, the Tories have vowed to lower to 14 the age at which youth can be tried and sentenced as adults for some crimes. If these repressive plans become law, you'll be too young for legal sex, but not too young for jail.

With brazen hypocrisy the Tories are renaming "age of consent" as "age of protection." Harper & Co. have as much interest in protecting kids as they have in contracting genital herpes. Youth *could* use some protection—against the ruling class and its repressive state apparatus. It is the capitalist rulers who are the biggest abusers of children in this society. Today one in six children live in poverty, thanks to ever more layoffs, union busting and the destruction of social programs by provincial and federal governments of all stripes.

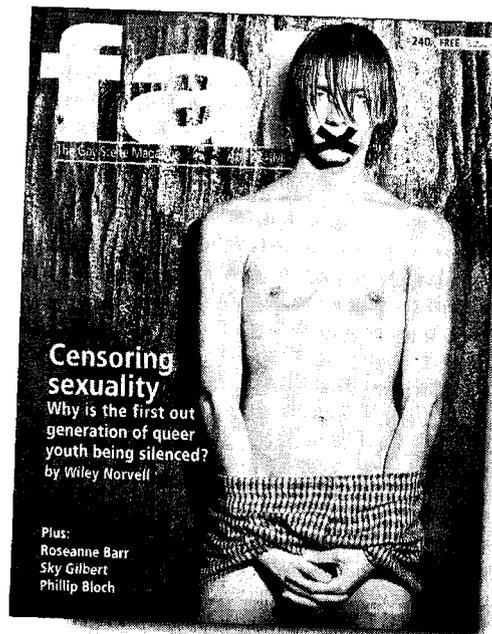
Now Harper is poised to gut daycare which, outside Quebec, is already costly and scarce. His caucus is rife with religious yahoos who think homosexuality is a plot to destroy the "traditional" family and that Christian holy writ is scientific truth. Attacking daycare, moving to overturn gay marriage, and now the early rumblings of an anti-abortion drive—this is the Tory social agenda. They've even resurrected the odious R.E.A.L. Women, using these anti-gay, anti-abortion bigots to promote an entirely bogus "childcare" program which aims to push women out of the workforce and back into the home.

Raising the age of consent won't stop kids from having sex, but it will make it a lot more dangerous and guilt-ridden. Youth will fear asking for information about birth control, abortion or diseases like AIDS. It is especially punitive for gay youth who, in coming to terms with their sexuality, often seek out older partners. Canada has one of the highest youth suicide rates in the world; little wonder, given the



no credit

Prime minister Stephen Harper and his caucus packed with right-wing Christian bigots aim to intensify attacks on youth, gays and women. Right: Toronto gay magazine *fab* (22 April 2004) protests state anti-porn crackdown. State out of the bedroom!



pervasive homophobic ugliness both in the schools and outside, that gay youth comprise a third of these deaths.

This crackdown on teen sexuality is another piece in the anti-sex panic which has swept North America over the last 25 years. In the 1980s and 1990s, people were force-fed the lie that there was an epidemic of child molestations and ritual abuse of children, while sexual predators supposedly lurked behind every teacher's desk. In 1994 Toronto artist Eli Langer was dragged through the courts on charges of producing "child pornography" for his paintings depicting children engaged in sex acts with each other and with adults. And it has only gotten worse. Private consensual acts are increasingly criminalized, and thousands have been victimized in a frenzy over internet porn. False allegations of child sexual abuse or possessing child pornography have destroyed lives, torn up families and led to suicides.

In April, the deadly logic of this was laid bare when a Cape Breton man obsessed with "sex offenders," Stephen Marshall, drove down to Maine and murdered two men whose names appeared on an internet "sex offenders" registry. One of those killed by the Canadian vigilante was 24-year-old William Elliott. For having a sexual relationship with his girlfriend who was just two weeks shy of 16,

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U.S. Hands Off Iran! Out of Iraq Now! Imperialists Threaten Iran

As the Bush administration steps up its threats to attack Iran, including the possible use of nuclear first-strike weapons, Stephen Harper has been quick to back his senior partner in the White House. "Our allies have a very serious concern," Harper told the media, adding that he had discussed Iran with the U.S. president during their recent meeting in Mexico. The following article on Washington's war threats against Iran is reprinted from Workers Vanguard (No. 869, 28 April), newspaper of the Spartacist League, U.S. section of the International Communist League.

"All options are on the table." That was the response of George W. Bush, head of the most blood-drenched, massively armed imperialist power in history, on April 18 when asked whether his administration is considering nuclear strikes against Iran under the pretext that Iran is developing nuclear weapons. The whistle was first blown by the *New Yorker's* Seymour Hersh, who argued in a thoroughly documented article, "The Iran Plans" (*New Yorker* Web site, 8 April), that even as the Bush administration goes through the motions of pursuing "diplomacy" to stop Iran from developing a nuclear weapon, it has stepped up covert activities aimed at overthrowing the Iranian government and escalated plans for a major air attack. As Hersh revealed and as a series of *Washington Post* articles described in further chilling detail, such an attack may or may not involve deploying part of the U.S.'s own massive stockpile of "tactical" nuclear weapons against Iran's underground nuclear sites.

There is clear agreement across the U.S. bourgeois political spectrum, from the religious fanatics in the White House to the Democratic Party, that Iran has to be "dealt with." If anything, the Democrats have been more belligerent over Iran, with a common criticism of Bush being that the occupation of Iraq has been a distraction from dealing more forcibly with Iran, as well as with the North Korean deformed workers state.

As the bipartisan threats demonstrate, the greatest menace to the workers and oppressed of the world is the U.S. imperialist rulers—who have not only acquired the means to destroy the world several times over, but who have actually carried out nuclear holocaust, incinerating some 200,000 Japanese people in the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945. The Iranian regime says that its nuclear energy program does not include plans to develop the bomb. The fact of the matter is that in the context of threats by the nuclear-armed imperialists, Iran clearly *needs* nukes to defend itself and deter a U.S. attack. In today's world, possession of nuclear arms has become the only real measure of national sovereignty. As a Pentagon "war on terror" adviser quoted by Hersh observed, "The Iranians realize that only by *becoming* a nuclear state can they defend themselves against the U.S." Recall that in 2003—notwithstanding the Bush administration's lies that Saddam Hussein had amassed "weapons of mass destruction"—it was precisely Iraq's obvious vulnerability, after more than a decade of U.S.-dictated United Nations sanctions and disarmament programs had



Getty

Nuclear madmen in Washington target Iran.

stripped it of the means to defend itself, that paved the way for the second Persian Gulf War and Iraq occupation.

With its military currently overstretched, the U.S. cannot launch an all-out invasion and occupation of Iran without reinstating the draft, an option seen by most bourgeois politicians as likely political suicide. This underlines that the threats of military strikes against Iran, including a nuclear attack, are very real as they do not require the mass mobilization of troops.

With the exception of the U.S., all other members of the United Nations Security Council today formally oppose military action against Iran. At the same time, they have all ordered Iran, which announced on April 11 that it had succeeded in enriching uranium, to stop its atomic activities, hinting that the country will be subject to sanctions if it does not obey. The UN is historically little more than a fig leaf for the dominant imperialist power.

In "U.S. Hands Off Iran!" (*WV* No. 863, 3 February) we urged:

"In the event of military attack against Iran by U.S. imperialism or by Israel, or by any other force operating on behalf of the imperialists, we Marxists declare: **The international proletariat must stand for the military defense of Iran against imperialist attack.** At the same time, we give not one iota of political support to the reactionary Tehran regime. Our defense of capitalist Iran is conditional: In military conflicts between an imperialist power and a dependent semicolonial country, our policy is revolutionary defensism. We defend the oppressed country against the oppressor country and promote class struggle in the imperialist centers, as well as in the oppressed country. Every victory for the imperialists in their military adventures encourages more predatory wars; every setback serves to assist the struggles of working people and the oppressed."

In the lead-up to the U.S. invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq, we called for the military defense of both countries



AP

Iranian women form human chain at Isfahan Uranium Conversion Facility in support of Iran's nuclear program, January 22.

against attack without giving any political support to the reactionary Taliban or the bloody capitalist regime of Saddam Hussein. Today, we call for the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of all U.S. and allied troops from Afghanistan, Iraq and Central Asia.

We fight for class struggle against the U.S. capitalist rulers at home. The same ruling class that is butchering the people of Iraq, that is threatening Iran, is also carrying out a war against the working people of the U.S.—shredding democratic rights through the reactionary “war on terror,” gutting pensions and health care, crushing unions. It is the same ruling class that abandoned the black and poor of the Gulf Coast to Hurricane Katrina. Its interests and the interests of the working people of the U.S. are polar opposites. Our perspective for class struggle demands a political fight against the pro-capitalist labor bureaucracy, which chains the U.S. proletariat to its class enemy, most often through the capitalist Democratic Party, under the rubric of the “national interest.”

The “national interest” is the class interest of the bourgeoisie. We fought for the military defense of Iraq and Afghanistan—and would stand for the military defense of Iran against U.S. attack—not least because these positions express the vital interests of the multiracial U.S. proletariat. We fight to build a multiracial revolutionary workers party in the U.S. to lead the American proletariat in struggle for socialist revolution and the establishment of working-class rule.

The International Communist League's struggle is to forge workers parties throughout the world to fight for international socialist revolution, including in backward countries such as Iran. While the bulk of the left internationally cheered on the victory of the mullahs against the CIA-backed Shah in Iran in 1979 as “anti-imperialist,” we said, “Down with the Shah! No to the mullahs! Workers to power!”

Iran is ruled by a reactionary mullah regime that has enslaved women under the veil, slaughtered thousands of leftists and trade unionists and intensified repression against Kurds and other minorities. A recent bus workers strike in Tehran, one of an increasing number of strikes in the country, has been met by fierce government repression, including the jailing of strikers and their leaders. It is the task of the working class in Iran, leading all the oppressed behind it, to overthrow the Persian-chauvinist Islamic regime. Key to this perspective is the forging of a Marxist workers party. The fight to forge Marxist workers parties in the Near East is essential to break the proletariat of the region from fundamentalism and all forms of nationalism in the struggle for a socialist federation of the Near East. This is the Trotskyist perspective of permanent revolution, which vitally includes the fight to extend working-class rule to the imperialist centers, not least through the struggle for socialist revolution in the U.S.

Down With U.S. Nuclear Blackmail!

Hersh's article details that the Bush administration's quest for “regime change” in Iran is at least partly predicated on a growing acceptance within the Pentagon of using tactical nuclear weapons to achieve its aims. As Hersh puts it, “The lack of reliable intelligence leaves military planners, given the goal of totally destroying the sites, little choice but to consider the use of tactical nuclear weapons.” Iran today has at least nine different nuclear facilities, mainly underground, including the main centrifuge plant at Natanz, nearly 200 miles south of Tehran. The military proposed this winter to use a “bunker-buster” tactical nuclear weapon like the B61-11 against such sites. Hersh quoted one former senior intelligence official:

“Every other option, in the view of the nuclear weaponeers, would leave a gap. ‘Decisive’ is the key word of the Air Force's planning. It's a tough decision. But we made it in Japan.... Nuclear planners go through extensive training and learn the technical details of damage and fallout—we're talking about mushroom clouds, radiation, mass casualties, and contamination over years. This is not an underground nuclear test, where all you see is the earth raised a little bit.”

The U.S. stockpile of some 10,000 nuclear warheads reportedly includes about 50 such B61-11 nuclear weapons, known as earth-penetrating weapons or EPWs. A May 2005 report on EPWs, by Lisbeth Gronlund, David Wright and Robert Nelson of the Union of Concerned Scientists, gave the following as a possible scenario, using a 1.2 megaton thermonuclear warhead (which dwarfs what was dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki): “According to a simulation using software developed for the Pentagon, if one of these weapons were used against the underground nuclear facility in Esfahan, Iran, 3 million people would be killed by radiation within 2 weeks of the explosion, and 35 million people in Afghanistan, Pakistan and India would be exposed to increased levels of cancer-causing radiation.”

But it's not only Iran that the Dr. Strangelove military planners view as a feasible potential nuclear target. The Bush administration's January 2002 Nuclear Posture Review (NPR) ordered the Pentagon to draft plans for the use of nuclear weapons against at least seven countries—Iraq, Iran, North Korea, China, Libya, Syria and Russia (which was later struck from the list)—because “all have long-standing hostility towards the United States and its security partners.

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Iran...

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All sponsor or harbor terrorists, and have active WMD [weapons of mass destruction] and missile programs." The supposed existence of Iraqi WMDs, of course, has since been proven a lie.

The NPR also called to develop improved "bunker-busting mini-nukes," as they were termed in the *Los Angeles Times* (9 March 2002) article that first revealed the NPR. In fact, following the 2001 attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon, calls were made to use tactical nuclear weapons in Afghanistan for the demented purpose of destroying, not even deep underground bunkers, but the caves said to be harboring Al Qaeda operatives.

U.S. imperialist musings over nuclear weapons as a feasible military option have escalated since September 11, which can partly be attributed to the especially deranged nature of the Bush administration. As one House [of Representatives] member commented to Hersh, "The most worrisome thing is that this guy has a messianic vision." Or as *New York Times* (19 April) columnist Thomas Friedman put it; faced with a choice of nuclear-armed Iran or an attack carried out by Bush & Co., "I'd rather live with a nuclear Iran." As war-crazed as the Bush administration is, sporadic calls by the U.S. ruling class to use its massive nuclear arsenal have occurred as long as these weapons have existed. Among the more recent calls, in 1996 during the Clinton administration, consideration was given to carrying out a tactical nuclear attack on a Libyan chemical weapons facility at Tarhuna.

Defend China!

The U.S. historically amassed its lethal stockpile of nuclear arms—and dropped the bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945—for the primary purpose of threatening and ultimately destroying the Soviet Union. The USSR, the world's first workers state, was born through the only suc-

cessful workers revolution, led by Lenin and Trotsky's Bolshevik Party in October 1917. Although political counterrevolution led by Stalin in 1923-24 resulted in the Soviet Union's bureaucratic degeneration, the USSR's existence served to deny a sixth of the globe to capitalist exploitation and acted as an obstacle to the imperialist ambitions of the U.S. and other powers. The Soviets' development of nuclear weapons and delivery systems in parity with the U.S. stayed the hand of U.S. imperialism. Democrats and Republicans were united in pursuing the Cold War drive against the Soviet Union and gloated over the supposed "death of communism" signaled by capitalist counterrevolution there in 1991-92.

To the end, we called for the unconditional military defense of the Soviet degenerated workers state against imperialism and capitalist counterrevolution, and recognized that its collapse was a world-historic defeat for the international proletariat and oppressed. We stand for the unconditional military defense of the remaining deformed workers states—China, North Korea, Vietnam and Cuba. China was cited in the 2002 NPR as "a country that could be involved in an immediate or potential [nuclear] contingency." The report speculated that this could result from a military conflict such as over the status of capitalist Taiwan, while another possible scenario for using nukes would be against North Korea in response to an attack on South Korea.

Indeed, the U.S. saber rattling against Iran poses a threat to the Chinese deformed workers state, U.S. imperialism's strategic target in the post-Soviet world. China gets 14 percent of the oil for its growing economy from Iran, and in late 2004 signed a \$70 billion deal with Iran for oil and natural gas for some 30 years. It is vital that China oppose the imperialist drive to disarm Iran. However, the Beijing Stalinists' policy of "peaceful coexistence" with imperialism undermines China's own defense. While verbally opposing UN sanctions against Iran, Beijing has collaborated with the imperialists on Iran and recently condemned the Iranian government for successfully enriching uranium. As part of our defense of the Chinese workers state, we fight for workers political revolution to oust the Stalinist bureaucracy and replace it with a regime based on workers democracy and revolutionary internationalism.

Down With U.S. Imperialism!

The London *Independent* (2 April) quoted Professor Zoltan Grossman stating: "After every US military intervention since 1990 the Pentagon has left behind clusters of new bases in areas where it never before had a foothold. The new string of bases stretch from Kosovo and adjacent Balkan states, to Iraq and other Persian Gulf states, into Afghanistan and other central Asian states... The only two obstacles to a geographically contiguous US sphere of influence are Iran and Syria."

Even as the Bush administration insists that the U.S. occupation of Iraq will end some day, upon the establishment of what the U.S. deems a viable government there, it has been pouring money into military bases that are widely recognized, if not



Occupation troops in house-to-house search in Tal Afar, Iraq. U.S. invasion and occupation has devastated the country.



Tavakolian/Polaris

June 2005: Iranian women demonstrate demanding equality in front of Tehran University.

officially, to be permanent. The U.S. has set up 110 forward operating bases in Iraq, of which only 34 have reportedly been turned over to the puppet government there. According to the *Independent*, occupation forces are spending millions to establish at least six “enduring” bases, at least four of which would continue to be operated by the U.S. indefinitely.

Former Marine Anthony Zinni, head of the U.S. Central Command in the late 1990s, is among those who oppose the building of permanent bases in Iraq, arguing that they further damage the image of the U.S. abroad. He is also one of the half dozen retired generals—war criminals all, half of them with years’ experience in leading the Iraq occupation—who are now loudly calling for Donald Rumsfeld’s resignation. The military doesn’t generally protest when it sees its war is going well. The context for the generals’ rebellion is the fact that Iraq, which was supposed to be a showpiece for American “democracy” in the region, has instead become an inferno. What the generals want is a more effective military.

Polls show that popular opposition to the occupation of Iraq is at an all-time high. That, combined with innumerable domestic scandals and embarrassing leaks, has led to an all-time low in the polls for the Bush administration, which has presumably contributed to the reshuffling of posts in the White House, including the departure of White House spokesman Scott McClellan and the reassignment of Karl Rove.

Break with the Democrats! For a Revolutionary Workers Party!

With the Bush administration in serious political trouble, the organizers of the antiwar protests are working to set the stage for a Democratic Party victory in this year’s Congressional elections and the 2008 presidential election by pushing the Democrats to “really” oppose the occupation of Iraq. That will be the message delivered at the April 29 New York City antiwar protest initiated by United for Peace and Justice. The call for the demonstration declares: “Our message to the White House and to Congress is clear: Either stand with us or stand aside! We are coming together to march, to vote, to speak out and to turn our country around!”

The April 29 demonstration is being built by several pseudo-socialist organizations, such as Workers World Party (WWP) and the International Socialist Organization (ISO).

WWP, which initiated the International ANSWER coalition and currently leads the Troops Out Now Coalition, wrote in an editorial that antiwar activists must “make the message ‘Stop War on Iran!’ an inescapable element in this [April 29] and every major demonstration from now on” (*Workers World*, 13 April). The reality is, however, that Workers World has from the beginning of the antiwar protests sought to appeal to Democratic Party liberals, who, if anything, have been even more hawkish on Iran than the Bush administration. A 13 April *Workers World* article complains that “to this day the Democratic Party leadership won’t take a clear anti-war stand.”

The dividing line separating us from the reformist leftists like Workers World and the ISO is political program. As Marxists, we understand that war, racist oppression and exploitation are inherent to the capitalist system, a system that cannot be reformed to serve the interests of working people and the oppressed. Only socialist revolution, by rip-

ping power from the hands of the capitalists and placing it in the hands of the working class, can end imperialist war.

The reformists, however, spread the illusion that capitalism can be reformed—that we can have an end to imperialist war, racism and exploitation under the present social order. Thus, a common slogan raised by WWP and the ISO is, “Money for jobs and education, not for war,” as though the problem were one of reordering the priorities of the capitalists. The bourgeoisie’s top priority is to maintain and defend its capitalist system of exploitation, which necessarily entails the waging of wars—against both neocolonial countries and their imperialist rivals (as took place in World Wars I and II).

To the reformists, the capitalist system is their system. Very revealing is the slogan commonly promoted by the various antiwar coalitions, “Bring the Troops Home.” This slogan is meant to evoke sympathy for the U.S. armed forces and serves to clean up the tarnished image of U.S. imperialism. Even more explicitly, the call for the April 29 demonstration declares, “End the war in Iraq—Bring all our troops home now!” Meanwhile, a “model resolution” for labor unions on the Web site of “U.S. Labor Against the War,” an outfit largely made up of left-talking union bureaucrats that has endorsed the April 29 demonstration, is titled: “Support Our Troops & Veterans—End the War and Bring Them Home Now!” These are not “our” troops! U.S. troops in Iraq are the enforcers of a vicious occupation that by some estimates has cost the lives of 100,000 Iraqis. The photo of Lynndie England, dog leash in hand abusing a naked Iraqi prisoner, is a graphic reminder of the routine brutality meted out by imperialism’s military enforcers.

The U.S. working class uniquely has the social power to bring down the U.S. imperialist beast. The key to unlocking this power is breaking the class collaborationism pushed by the labor tops and their fake-socialist backers. It is necessary to break the chains forged by the labor tops that bind the proletariat to the capitalist Democratic Party. If there is to be an end to imperialist war, racist oppression and poverty, the multiracial working class must be won, through Marxist education and its own experience in struggle, to the fight for a revolutionary workers party to defeat U.S. imperialism through socialist revolution. ■

Mumia Abu-Jamal...

(continued from page 3)

Richard Wright and coordinator of the International Committee in Solidarity with Mumia Abu-Jamal and Political Prisoners, Paris; and Leslie Jones from the Youth for Mumia and the ICFFMAJ. Also present at the event were our comrades of the Ligue Trotskyiste de France, section of the International Communist League, who for years have played a key role in bringing Mumia's case to broader forces in that country. Mumia sent a note of thanks and solidarity to the gathering.

Ramona Africa, who spent seven years in prison for the "crime" of being the only adult survivor of the government's 1985 bombing of Philadelphia MOVE, powerfully spoke of the government's vendetta against MOVE and Mumia: "The government murdered my family but nobody went to prison for it except me. Nobody sits on death row for burning babies alive. But they want to convince you that Mumia is a murderer and that he should be executed. Mumia is innocent."

In the U.S., the death penalty is a legacy of black chattel slavery and represents the pinnacle of state terror. Though in France the death penalty has been abolished, minorities, particularly those of North and West African descent, face daily police brutality and racist discrimination, a legacy of French colonialism. As Wolkenstein stated, minority youth in

France "are stigmatized as potential 'Islamic terrorists,' 'casseurs' [hooligans—a racist codeword] and 'anti-Semites.' When young people revolted in the *banlieues* [suburban minority ghettos] last fall, the workers movement should have taken up their cause. They should be freed, granted amnesty and all charges dropped!"

In her speech at Saint-Denis, Wolkenstein emphasized: "A labor-centered campaign on Mumia's behalf must be built on the principle of political independence of the working class from the capitalist class enemy and its state. In the U.S., just as the so-called 'war on terror' is supported by both major parties of capitalism, Democrats and Republicans, Mumia is in all their gun sights. In France, that means no illusions in a new Popular Front." This was a warning against the attempts in France by the PCF, the Socialist Party and several small bourgeois parties—such as the Chevènementistes, the Left Radicals and the Greens—to form a new popular-front capitalist government, disarming the working class by tying it to the class enemy.

It is crucial that Mumia's fight be taken up internationally. A week before the Saint-Denis event, a French delegation from the PCF and CGT trade-union federation participated in a meeting in Philadelphia for Mumia's defense. Earlier this year, a coalition including the PCF, the CGT, and other labor, anti-racist and left groups launched a drive to raise 100,000 euros (close to \$130,000) for Mumia's defense. And in Mexico City on May Day, a comrade from the ICL section Grupo Espartaquista de México addressed a rally of some 15,000 people sponsored by the Zapatista National Liberation Army (EZLN), calling on Mexican workers and youth to join the campaign for Mumia.

The key to Mumia's freedom lies in the social power of labor. In her speech, Wolkenstein referred to the fact that France was rocked this spring by two months of massive protests, involving student youth and workers, and strike against the hated First Employment Contract, forcing the government to back down. This is the kind of social power that must be mobilized behind Mumia's cause! As Wolkenstein stated: "That Mumia is innocent is the truth. That the capitalist state has spent decades putting its lying, corrupt class- and race-biased forces to work to see Mumia dead is also the truth. But we need to use these truths and bring out more power, social power, to fight for Mumia's freedom.

Free Mumia now! Abolish the racist death penalty!

—Reprinted from *Workers Vanguard* No. 870, 12 May

Organizing Meeting and Video Showing

From Death Row, This Is Mumia Abu-Jamal

Thursday, June 22

7:00 p.m.

Trinity St. Paul's Centre
427 Bloor St. West

(just west of Spadina)

Toronto

For more information, contact the Partisan Defense Committee,
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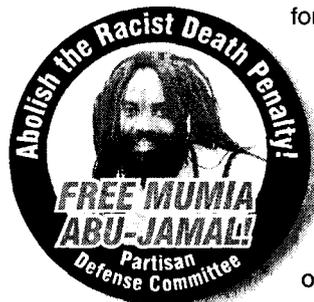
Join the Campaign to Free Mumia Abu-Jamal!

Funds are urgently needed for legal defense! Make a contribution today, payable to "National Lawyers Guild Foundation" (earmarked for "Mumia") and mail to: Committee to Save Mumia Abu-Jamal, 130 Morningside Drive, Suite 6C, New York, NY 10027.

Organize Protest! Pass motions in your unions, campus, community and religious organizations demanding Mumia's freedom. Get your union or organization to make a contribution and join rallies and protests for Mumia. Publicize Mumia's case in your union or organization's newsletter.

Spread the Word! Contact the PDC for copies of our pamphlet, *Mumia Abu-Jamal Is an Innocent Man!* This 32-page pamphlet arms activists in the struggle

for Mumia's freedom with the explosive evidence which completely destroys the more than two-decades-long frame-up of this eloquent fighter for black freedom. It is available for 50 cents. Get the PDC button: "Free Mumia Abu-Jamal! Abolish the Racist Death Penalty!"—\$2 each. Order the PDC video, *From Death Row, This Is Mumia Abu-Jamal*—\$10 for DVD, \$15 for VHS. Bundles of the 4-page brochure, *Mumia Is an Innocent Man: Free Mumia Abu-Jamal!*—\$2 for 25 copies. Order from, make checks payable to Partisan Defense Committee at our Toronto address below.



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Tamil Tigers...

(continued from page 4)

In targeting the LTTE, the Harper government is seeking to project a "get tough" image for both domestic and international consumption. But the Tamil community has long been in the sights of the capitalists' government, cops and media. The previous Liberal government had already barred LTTE supporters from raising funds in Canada. For months, bourgeois newspapers of all political stripes have run feature stories and editorials portraying pro-LTTE Tamils in Canada as violent thugs and gang members. The media have also heavily publicized a recent Human Rights Watch (HRW) report that accused the LTTE of "intimidation, extortion and physical violence" in the Tamil diaspora. The HRW report, which was denounced by numerous Canadian Tamil organizations, could not have been better timed to give the government a "human rights" cover for state repression.

The U.S. had long urged Canada to follow its lead and ban the LTTE as a "terrorist" group. Following the Canadian ban, the European Union has now frozen all LTTE assets in preparation for formally designating it as "terrorist." This comes in the context of a rapid re-escalation of attacks by the Sri Lankan government and the collapse of a ceasefire that had been in effect for the last three years. An April 27 statement by the Canadian Tamil Congress warned that by banning the LTTE, Ottawa has "given its tacit endorsement to the Sri Lankan government to continue to oppress the Tamils," citing "the Sri Lankan air force's sporadic bombing of Tamil areas within two weeks of Canada's decision to list the LTTE."

The International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist), including its Canadian section the Trotskyist League/Ligue trotskyste, has a long and principled history of

defending the right of Tamil self-determination. In 1983, we organized and joined protests in Canada, the U.S., Australia and several European cities, calling to "Stop the massacre of Tamils in Sri Lanka!," "For the right of Tamil Eelam!," "U.S. out of the Indian Ocean!" and for a "Federated socialist republic of Eelam and Lanka." Against the racist demagoguery of the Canadian rulers, we have fought for an end to deportations and asylum for Tamil refugees.

Our defense of the oppressed Tamil people derives from the internationalist, proletarian and revolutionary outlook of Marxism. As such, we have a very different political perspective than the petty-bourgeois nationalist LTTE, which has met the horrific attacks on Tamils by the Sri Lankan state and pogromists with its own indiscriminate massacres of Sinhalese and Muslim villagers in areas of mixed population. As we wrote in the wake of the 1983 pogroms:

"What is desperately needed is the building of an internationalist Trotskyist party in Sri Lanka, necessarily substantially based among the exploited Tamil masses. The struggle against the hideous national oppression of the Tamils and communalism is central to reforging such a party. Lasting national and class justice for the Tamils will only be secured through permanent revolution—rule by the workers and peasants—and a socialist federation of South Asia, which can liberate all the many oppressed peoples of the region, including the almost 60 million Tamils in India."

—"Massacre in Sri Lanka," SC No. 59, Fall 1983

This perspective is necessarily linked to the fight for socialist revolution in the heartlands of world imperialism. Here in Canada, that means forging a Marxist workers party dedicated to mobilizing the fighting power of the multiracial proletariat on behalf of all the oppressed and with the aim of sweeping away the racist and exploitative capitalist system. ■

Afghanistan...

(continued from page 1)

The NDP and Bloc have now seized on Harper's call for a two-year extension of Canada's deployment to distance themselves from the occupation, voting against this extension in a non-binding parliamentary vote on May 17. Layton called for Canada to return to the days when it disguised its military sorties as "peacekeeping." In particular, the New Democrats want Canada to send troops to the Darfur region of Sudan as part of a United Nations occupation force. The last time Canadian troops were sent to this part of Africa under the guise of a "humanitarian" UN mission, racist Canadian Airborne soldiers brutally tortured and murdered a black teenager, Shidane Arone, in Somalia in 1993.

Canadian "peacekeeping" has long been a cover for support to the military adventures of U.S. imperialism. This was the case during Washington's long, losing war against Vietnam in the 1960s and '70s, when Canadian "peacekeepers" and "observers" served as spies for their American masters. But the Chrétien Liberal government's decision to bow to massive domestic opposition, especially strong in Quebec, and formally stand aside from the 2003 U.S. attack on Iraq led to frayed relations with Washington. This was despite Canada's ample covert military support to the U.S. war moves.

The Liberals' troop deployment to Afghanistan, a huge hike in military spending, and close co-operation with Washington in orchestrating the 2004 overthrow of Haitian president Jean-Baptiste Aristide were all aimed in part at mending fences with the Bush administration. Now, abandoning any pretense of "peacekeeping," the new and very right-wing Tory government has taken a hard-line militarist stance in support of its U.S. senior partner. Harper even mimics Bush's rhetoric over Iraq, vowing that the Canadian army will not "cut and run" from Afghanistan.

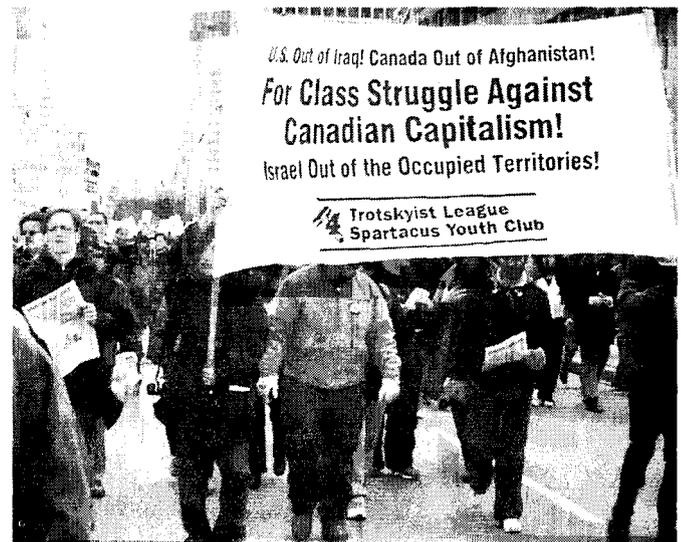
As forthright opponents of our "own" imperialist ruling class, we demand the immediate, unconditional withdrawal of all Canadian forces from Afghanistan and Haiti. We say: No UN/Canadian troops to Sudan! Our perspective is proletarian struggle against Canada's capitalist rulers, who are not potential "peace-loving" allies of workers and the oppressed, but their deadly enemies. We print below an edited version of a speech given by Trotskyist League Central Committee member Arthur Llewellyn at TL forums in Vancouver and Toronto in early April.

Three years into the colonial occupation of Iraq, that country has become a hellhole of all-sided bloodshed, with scores killed daily by occupation forces, government death squads and communal militias. Over 100,000 Iraqis have died in the war and occupation, on top of tens of thousands slaughtered in the 1991 Gulf War and more than 1.5 million killed as a result of United Nations sanctions between 1990 and 2003. Shortly after U.S. troops took Baghdad, we warned:

"The imperialist occupation has encouraged reactionary forces to emerge, from fundamentalists demanding an Islamic republic to monarchists to 'democrats' on the CIA payroll.

"Ethnic and religious antagonisms, stoked by the British imperialist conquest at the end of World War I and fueled by decades of bourgeois-nationalist rule, now threaten to erupt in an orgy of bloodletting."

—"Down With Colonial Occupation of Iraq!" SC No. 137, Summer 2003



SC photo

TL banner at March 2005 antiwar demonstration in Toronto.

Now we are seeing this come to fruition. The government Washington created is dominated by Shi'ite and Kurdish parties at the expense of the minority Sunni Arabs, who enjoyed a relatively privileged existence under the regime of Saddam Hussein. The recent wave of attacks and counterattacks marks an escalation of what Iraq's masses have been suffering through since the invasion: whole towns laid waste, entire families annihilated, imprisonment and torture at the hands of the American imperialist occupiers, sectarian bombings and attacks that purposely hit civilians as they try to go about their daily lives. Such are the bitter fruits of U.S. imperialism's "Operation Iraqi Freedom."

Meanwhile, Canada has taken charge of the NATO forces supplementing some 23,000 U.S. troops who continue the murderous occupation of Afghanistan. The U.S. and NATO plan to add 10,000 more troops this year and to expand operations throughout the country. There have been documented incidents of torture, abusive detentions leading to deaths in custody, and civilian deaths from bombing and other indiscriminate use of force. Canadian troops collude with the "rendition" of individuals to other countries for purposes of torture, while CIA "torture flights" regularly use Canadian air space and airports.

Canadian troops aren't even on a pretense of a "humanitarian mission" in Afghanistan. They are propping up the puppet government of Hamid Karzai, which is permeated with warlords and anti-woman bigots. Afghanistan's U.S. overseers brokered a constitution that effectively enshrines Islamic fundamentalist *sharia* law. Last October the Afghan Supreme Court sentenced a journalist to two years in prison for merely questioning the use of stoning to execute women accused of "adultery."

And now Washington is leading a concerted campaign against Iran over that country's purported nuclear weapons program (see "Imperialists Threaten Iran," page 6). We say: Protest imperialist nuclear blackmail of Iran—U.S. hands off! Down with the colonial occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan!

U.S. and Canadian Imperialism: Enemy of Workers and the Oppressed

Supported by Ottawa, the U.S. imperialists are running roughshod over the peoples of the world. Every military victory for these warmongers strengthens their hand not only

against the masses of the so-called Third World, as well as their imperialist competitors, but also against the working class at home. As Marxists, that's fundamentally our interest in desiring the defeat of our "own" imperialist government in foreign wars. We are not pacifists but revolutionary opponents of capitalism.

During the Afghanistan and Iraq wars, we had a policy of **revolutionary defensism**: we had a military side with these desperately poor, semicolonial countries without extending one iota of political support to the reactionary Taliban regime or the dictator Saddam Hussein, both one-time allies of the U.S. who fell out with their masters. Our starting point is how to further the struggles of the working class internationally. A defeated or weakened imperialism would mean more room for class struggle to emerge at home. It would mean less scope for military interventions against the peoples of the world, as the example of U.S. imperialism's defeat in Vietnam showed. It would mean more room for struggles by working people in the semicolonial world, and the opportunity to build revolutionary parties in the course of sharpened struggles there. For all these reasons, we said that the workers of the world had a stake in defending Afghanistan and Iraq against the U.S. and its allies.

Similarly today, military blows against the imperialist occupiers of Afghanistan and Iraq coincide with the interests of the working class. But the proletariat must be politically hostile to the insurgency forces that have revealed themselves thus far. As we wrote last year:

"[The] deadly communal violence is often carried out by the *very same forces* that are fighting the occupation armies.

"In the absence of working-class struggle against the occupation in Iraq and internationally, the victory of any of the reactionary Islamic or Ba'athist forces who apparently compose today's resistance is more likely to come about through an alliance with U.S. imperialism than against it."

—SC No. 144, Spring 2005

Rather than cheerleading for the politically reactionary "resistance" forces in Afghanistan and Iraq, we seek the creation of revolutionary proletarian parties in the semicolonial world. If there were a Marxist party in Iraq, for example, it would not lose sight for a moment of the fact that while the imperialist invaders are the main enemy, the bourgeois nationalists and Islamists are also enemies. Such a party would issue proclamations of solidarity with the international working class in order to spur them to oppose the onslaught by the imperialist invaders through concrete class-struggle actions.

Given the enormous power of the U.S. military, we said from the start that the foremost means to defend Afghanistan and Iraq was not on the military plane but through international working-class struggle. Our contingents on antiwar demonstrations cut hard against the prevailing Canadian nationalism and pro-NDP reformism. Our banner called for "Class Struggle Against Canadian Capitalism!" By its very nature as an exploiting system, capitalism creates its own gravedigger in the proletariat. With its hands directly on the means of production—the factories, resource and transport industries—it alone has the social power and class interest to bring about the downfall of capitalism.

The chief obstacle to such struggle is the pro-capitalist bureaucracy atop the trade unions and their political arm, the NDP. The Canadian Labour Congress opposed the Iraq war, but instead of mobilizing the working class in struggle they issued pathetic calls for "respecting a minute of silence,

wearing a white scarf, armband or ribbon, faxing or emailing messages of protest to the U.S. embassy in Ottawa and faxing or emailing the local MP." The CLC went on: "Canadian working people call on all employers and business decision-makers in this country to raise their voices on the side of peace, decency and respect for civilian lives." Echoing bourgeois cant about the Canadian capitalists being a progressive force, the labour bureaucracy acts as a prop for social peace and the exploitative order.

Reformist left groups like the International Socialists (I.S.) painted the NDP as a "party of peace." Yet in the build-up to the first U.S. war on Iraq in 1991, the NDP demanded UN sanctions as an "alternative" to war. These sanctions ended up killing more than a million and a half Iraqis. As the second war was being prepared, the NDP backed the disarmament of Iraq by UN "weapons inspectors." After the war, Jack Layton called for Canadian "peacekeepers" to be sent to Iraq under UN command—an imperialist occupation under a different flag. And the NDP supported outright Canada's role in the military occupation of Afghanistan.

The Reformists' "Antiwar Movement": Wrapped in the Maple Leaf

Back in 2002 and 2003, there were tens of thousands of protesters in the streets of Canada, millions around the world. But the misleaders of the "antiwar movement" channeled mass opposition to the war into politics acceptable to the capitalist ruling class. Groups like the I.S., Communist Party (CP) and Fire This Time (FTT) deliberately obscured the class nature of war and pushed the illusion that imperialism, especially Canadian imperialism, could be pressured to be humane. They joined with pro-capitalist NDP and even Liberal Party politicians to campaign for "peace," i.e., the maintenance of the deeply unjust status quo. They refused to call for the defense of Afghanistan or Iraq because that would mean calling for the defeat of U.S. imperialism and

(continued on page 14)

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Der Spiegel

Soviet tanks in Afghanistan. In 1979, we said "Hail Red Army!", "Extend gains of October Revolution to Afghan peoples!" We denounced 1988-89 withdrawal, a betrayal by the Moscow Stalinist bureaucracy, which emboldened local warlords and the imperialists' drive to destroy USSR.

Afghanistan...

(continued from page 13)

its Canadian junior partner.

Typical slogans at these protests were "No to war" and "Money for jobs and human needs, not war." This is all premised on accepting the framework of capitalism, at most calling to reorder the policies and priorities of the government. In no way do such slogans challenge capitalism as a system that is itself *responsible* for poverty and war. The mobilizing leaflet for a November 2002 Vancouver peace march, endorsed by the I.S. and CP, sported a big red Maple Leaf. It was even endorsed by a federal Liberal cabinet minister! The whole strategy of the reformist left was to pressure the government to "stand up" to the U.S. "Just say 'no,' Jean!" pleaded the I.S.'s *Socialist Worker*, adding, "Hold Chrétien's feet to the anti-war fire." To promote the capitalist rulers of Canada—oppressors of the Québécois, Native people and immigrants—as potential allies against a U.S. war is social chauvinism: "socialist" in words, chauvinist in deeds.

And how do these groups oppose the Afghanistan occupation today? Here's a statement from the Canadian Peace Alliance (CPA), which is supported by the I.S. and CP among others:

"More than 1500 of our soldiers are being sent there to become embroiled in an increasingly hostile and unwinnable war. Government officials even admit the futility of the operation.... Our soldiers are being sent to a violent war that is getting worse by the day with no end in sight."

The CPA's opposition to this hideous colonial occupation, which props up a government of woman-hating warlords, is that "our" soldiers face an "unwinnable," "futile" war. Their concern is clearly to find a more rational policy for Canadian imperialism, through pressuring and collaborating with the capitalist ruling class. We describe such coalitions as popular-frontist, a reference to the "popular fronts" built by the Stalinist Communist parties from the 1930s on, which subordinated the workers' interests to alliances with bourgeois parties. Marxists don't join, build or support "antiwar" coalitions of this type.

The Vancouver-based FTT sometimes uses more militant rhetoric, but shares the same bankrupt perspective. Its front group MAWO (Mobilization Against War and Occupation) calls to "Bring the troops home now"—a social-patriotic demand meant to engender a false sense of common interest with the imperialist military, while covering up their murderous role. The CPA is even more blatant on this score, calling to "Support our troops—Bring them home." MAWO has lately taken to holding "emergency" pickets to protest, not the killing of Afghan civilians, but the deaths of Canadian soldiers! It is also campaigning for an "independent public inquiry" into the Afghanistan intervention. Channeling anti-militarist sentiment into pleas for "necessarily toothless inquiries" can only serve to refurbish the image of the capitalist state.

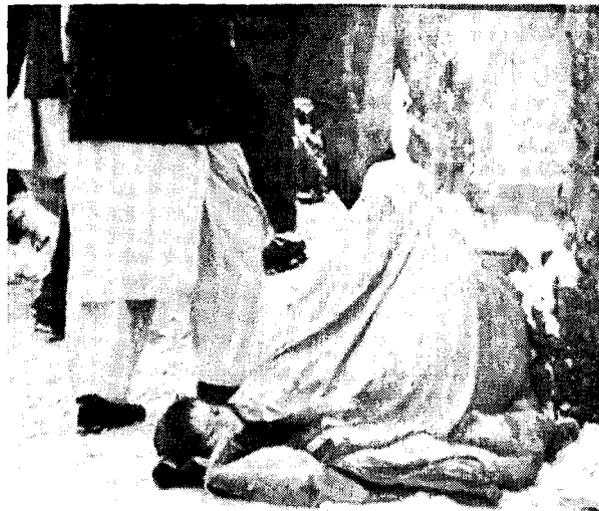
The reformists portray imperialism as a set of policy decisions by the rulers that can be changed through mass pressure. In contrast, we understand that imperialism is, in the words of V.I. Lenin, leader of the October 1917 workers revolution in Russia, the "highest stage of capitalism." Under the modern imperialist system, a handful of advanced capitalist states in North America, Europe and Japan exploit and oppress the colonial and semicolonial masses in Asia, Africa and Latin America, arresting the all-round socioeconomic and cultural modernization of the vast majority of humanity. Their drive to control markets and spheres of exploitation has produced inter-imperialist wars (World Wars I and II) and countless predatory wars against colonial and semicolonial countries. The imperialist rulers will not sacrifice their guns for the benefit of the people any more than a boss would abandon profits to provide job security and a decent living for the workers. A just and egalitarian future for mankind requires socialist revolution to sweep away capitalist rule on a global basis and create an internationally planned, socialist economy.

We Said "Hail Red Army in Afghanistan!"

The current period of stepped-up U.S. imperialist rampage around the world is a direct outgrowth of the 1991-92 destruction of the Soviet Union, the world's first workers



Northern Neighbors



rawa.org

Left: Woman teaches literacy class following progressive 1979 Red Army intervention. Right: Today under imperialist occupation, Afghan women endure segregation, degradation and misery.

state, created through the 1917 October Revolution. Despite its subsequent degeneration under the political rule of a parasitic Stalinist bureaucratic caste, the Soviet Union provided a crucial military counterweight to U.S. imperialism. It provided living evidence that the overturn of capitalist rule and the building of a collectivized economy, even in the rather miserable circumstances of backward Russia, could provide everyone with a job, a place to live, basic health care and a decent education. This is something no capitalist society has achieved or will ever achieve.

The Trotskyist League and International Communist League defended the Soviet Union against all threats of capitalist counterrevolution, while fighting for workers political revolution to oust the Stalinist bureaucrats and return the USSR to the revolutionary road of Lenin and Trotsky. This question came sharply to the fore in late 1979 when Soviet troops went into Afghanistan to help a left-nationalist Afghan government put down a CIA-bankrolled, Islamic fundamentalist insurgency which aimed at rolling back social progress and enslaving Afghan women.

The Soviet intervention in Afghanistan—a country so backward that it lacked a proletariat to carry out a social revolution—posed the possibility of extending the social gains of the October Revolution to the Afghan peoples. Today, the bourgeois rulers of the U.S. and Canada rail against the barbarity of Islamic fundamentalists like the Taliban to “justify” their brutal predatory wars. But not so long ago, these rulers, tailed by most of the left, heralded the same Islamic reactionaries as “freedom fighters” against the Soviet “evil empire.” Throughout the 1980s, the CIA doled out billions to the Afghan *mujahedin* fighting the Soviet army. This was the largest operation in CIA history, and included aid to Osama bin Laden, who would later turn on his former masters. Ottawa too backed the fundamentalist cutthroats to the hilt. The Cold War diatribes of former UN ambassador and NDPer Stephen Lewis on behalf of the Afghan reactionaries rivaled those of Ronald Reagan.

Uniquely in modern history, the rights of women were a central issue in the civil war that raged in Afghanistan from the late 1970s to the early 1990s. The Islamic tribalists were in rebellion against the pro-Moscow People’s Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA), which took power in an April

1978 coup. The PDPA sought to implement some minimal reforms to bring Afghanistan closer to the 20th century: land distribution, freeing women from the *burka* (the head-to-toe “veil”), reducing the bride price to a nominal sum, and providing education for girls. These basic reforms sparked a ferocious rebellion by landlords, tribal chiefs and mullahs who launched a *jihad* (holy war), burning down schools and flaying teachers alive for the “crime” of teaching young girls to read. When the PDPA requested assistance from Moscow in quelling the bloody rebellion, the Soviet Army intervened, acting to defend the USSR’s southern border against the CIA-backed insurgency.

We declared: “Hail Red Army in Afghanistan!” Our defense of the Soviet intervention was based on our understanding that the USSR was a workers state, despite its Stalinist bureaucratic degeneration. Sending troops into Afghanistan was an unambiguously decent and progressive act that cut across the Stalinist bureaucracy’s dogma of building “socialism in one country,” which meant renouncing the struggle for world socialist revolution in favour of a futile quest for peaceful coexistence with imperialism. As we wrote at the time:

“For revolutionary socialists there is nothing tricky, nothing ambiguous about the war in Afghanistan. The Soviet army and its left-nationalist allies are fighting an anti-communist, anti-democratic mélange of landlords, money lenders, tribal chiefs and mullahs committed to mass illiteracy. And to say that imperialist support to this social scum is out in the open is the understatement of the year.... The gut-level response of every radical leftist should be fullest solidarity with the Soviet Red Army.”

—“Afghanistan and the Left: The Russian Question Point Blank,” *Spartacist* [English-language edition] No. 29, Summer 1980

The liberating effects of the Soviet intervention can be measured in hard statistics. In 1988, women made up 40 percent of the doctors and 60 percent of the teachers at the University of Kabul; 440,000 female students were enrolled in educational institutions and 80,000 more in literacy programs. Western dress was common in the cities, and women enjoyed some real measure of freedom from the veil and subjugation for the first time in Afghanistan’s history. This

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Afghanistan...

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has all been drowned in blood.

Capitulating to imperialist anti-Communism, the bulk of the left internationally condemned the Soviet "invasion" of Afghanistan. In contrast, we took the side of the Soviet army, while warning that the Moscow bureaucracy might well cut a deal with the imperialists. In the end, in an attempt to placate Washington, Moscow treacherously betrayed the Afghan peoples as well as Soviet defense by pulling out its troops in 1988-89. Following the Soviet withdrawal, the Partisan Defense Committee wrote to the Afghan government in early 1989 offering to organize international brigades to help fight the CIA's *mujahedin* killers. Though this offer was declined, the PDC and fraternal defense organizations internationally raised \$44,000 to aid civilian victims of the anti-woman cutthroats in the city of Jalalabad. But with the Soviets out, the PDPA regime collapsed by 1992, giving rise to a brutal civil war between the various warlords that culminated in the Taliban's victory in 1996.

The Kremlin's retreat from Afghanistan emboldened the imperialist rulers in their drive to destroy the Soviet workers state and strengthened the forces of capitalist counterrevolution within the USSR. Withdrawal from Afghanistan was followed by the capitalist reunification of Germany in 1990 and the final undoing of the October Revolution in 1991-92. We fought to the best of our ability and resources against the counterrevolutions that ushered in the reactionary period we are now living through. Today we emphasize the need to defend the remaining deformed workers states—China, Vietnam, North Korea and Cuba—while fighting to replace the Stalinist misleaders with the revolutionary rule of workers soviets (councils). That is what genuine anti-imperialism is really all about.

Canadian Imperialist Crimes in Haiti

Canada acts in the imperialist world system as a junior partner of U.S. imperialism. The new right-wing regime of Stephen Harper is seeking better relations with the U.S., including through modernizing and streamlining the army so that it can act as an effective adjunct to Washington's military adventures. Military spending under the previous Liberal government was already at its highest level since World War II, and the Liberals—with NDP support—set aside another \$12.8 billion for the armed forces in last year's budget. The Conservatives will add at least another \$5.3 billion to this. They are also expanding the Canadian forces by 13,000 soldiers, 8,000 more than the Liberals planned.

While Harper is a down-the-line backer of the Bush administration, the Liberals' earlier posturing against the U.S. attack on Iraq was basically smoke and mirrors. Canadian warships escorted the U.S. fleet as it fired Tomahawk missiles at Iraqi targets. Canadian soldiers manned AWACS aircraft to direct missiles at their targets. Canadian officers worked at CENTCOM in Qatar, helping with logistics, i.e., planning the invasion. In addition to this direct military involvement, Canadian business is a major producer of equipment for the U.S. war machine.

Canada's role in furthering U.S. imperialist interests, as well as its own, can also be seen clearly in Haiti. In 2004, the Canadian government was a central actor in the U.S.-engineered removal of Haiti's elected president, Jean-Baptiste



outofhaiti.ca

Canadian military helicopter flies over the Haitian Presidential Palace after Aristide's 2004 ouster.

Aristide. When this populist, sometime radical-posturing priest was first elected in 1990, we warned: "Aristide will either play the role of groveling instrument of the Haitian bourgeoisie and the U.S. imperialist overlords or he will be swept away in a reactionary crackdown aimed at decisively disciplining the pitilessly oppressed population" ("Haiti: Election Avalanche for Radical Priest," *Workers Vanguard* No. 517, 4 January 1991). In the end, both things occurred.

Initially, Aristide irked the U.S. by resisting its economic diktats and establishing diplomatic relations with Cuba. Then, after he was toppled in 1991, Aristide proved his reliability to his U.S. overseers by agreeing in advance of his return to power to a drastic austerity program, privatization of state-owned industry, mass layoffs in the public sector and the virtual abolition of import tariffs. Washington reinstalled Aristide at the point of bayonets in 1994 in large part to stop the flow of Haitian refugees to the U.S. The axing of import tariffs induced the collapse of the indigenous economy as the market was flooded with, for example, American rice at prices cheaper than the Haitian-grown product. Having dissolved the army (a center of his opposition) in 1995, Aristide propped up his rule with a brutal police force and gang terror.

Despite all this, Aristide wasn't pliant enough. In January 2003, Canada hosted a secret meeting of senior U.S., Latin American and European officials dubbed the "Ottawa Initiative on Haiti." Needless to say, no representatives of the Aristide government, which had been re-elected in 2000, were invited. This gathering reached a "consensus" that "Aristide must go." A year later, 550 Canadian troops—including the elite Joint Task Force 2, who secured the airport—participated in the kidnapping of Aristide, aiding the U.S. in whisking him out of the country. Ever since, Haiti has been occupied by UN "peacekeepers," including Canadian forces.

After Aristide was overthrown, right-wing paramilitaries with links to the former U.S.-backed death-squad regime entered the Haitian capital. They went on a killing spree, massacring thousands of poor peasants and slum dwellers. Hundreds more were later murdered by the RCMP-trained Haitian National Police.

Earlier this year, former Aristide ally René Prével was

elected as the new Haitian president in what was widely seen as a slap to Washington and the U.S.-backed Haitian elite. But, as an article in the *New York Times* (10 February) explained, "Préval was sought out by the United States and governments leading the United Nations Stabilization Mission struggling to restore order." Préval has called for the occupation forces to stay for two years or more; he also wants to increase the number of police. The *Times* added "Préval also suggested that he would reach out to his opponents among the middle and upper classes. He said that much of his campaign had been financed by the elite."

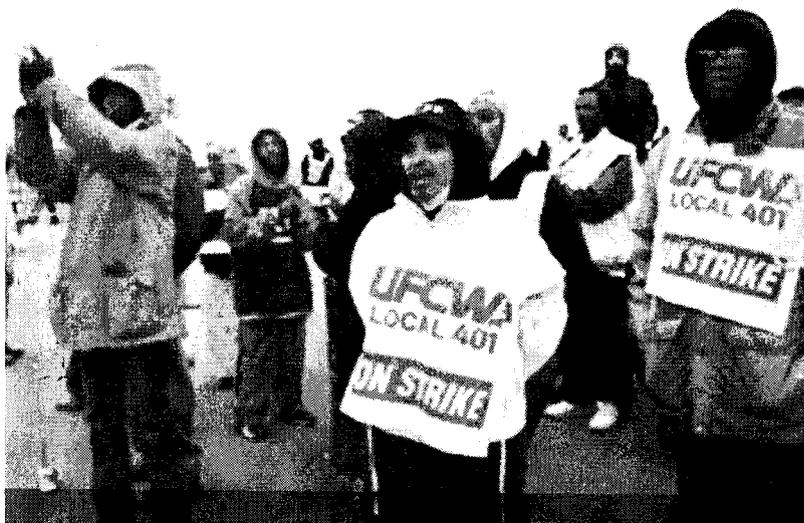
Then there's Patrick Elie, a member of Aristide's first government who recently staged a speaking tour of Canada under the auspices of the Canada Haiti Action Network, another coalition backed by various reformist left groups. Elie's credentials include: National Coordinator of the fight against drug trafficking in Haiti from 1991-94, and Secretary of State for National Defense in 1994-95, when he was instrumental in creating the National Police. During his tour, Elie defended Préval's call for the UN armed forces to remain in Haiti, saying, "If the UN were to pull out overnight, it would leave a power vacuum that the rightist forces are better placed to fill than us at this point" (*Socialist Voice*, 26 March). Thus the same reformist leftists who lead chants of "Canada out of Haiti" on demonstrations are touring around a guy who is opposed to the unconditional, immediate withdrawal of Canadian and UN forces!

After winning independence from France through an anti-colonial revolution more than 200 years ago, Haiti was compelled to pay 150 million gold francs—about \$18 billion at today's prices—to its former colonial masters. By the end of the 19th century, 80 percent of Haiti's national budget was going to pay off its former exploiters, and the country remains a hideously impoverished debtor nation today. That describes another way that imperialism enforces its mastery over the poor countries of the "Third World." There can be no justice for the masses of this or any other nation oppressed by imperialism short of the struggle for international socialist revolution.

Only Socialist Revolution Can End Imperialist War!

After the September 11, 2001 attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon, bourgeois pundits have described Bush's "war on terror" as a "clash of civilizations": a new, racist pseudo-justification for neocolonial pillage. For their part, various left academics and activists have portrayed it as a conflict between the First World and the "Global South." By dividing the world into good, progressive peoples and bad, oppressor ones, this schema writes off entirely the question of *class*.

Real opposition to imperialist war is impossible without opposition to the system that breeds it, an opposition that must, in the last analysis, be based on the mobilization of the working class, the only force capable of challenging and overturning bourgeois rule. Imperialist war and militarism are the inevitable outcome of capitalist, class-divided society, in which a tiny minority of the population owns the banks and industry and amasses profit by exploiting the



UFCW

Militant picket faced down meatpacking giant Tyson in Brooks, Alberta last year. For class struggle against capitalism!

labour of the working class.

The venal despots who run the neocolonial world on behalf of imperialism are incapable of raising the economic development of these countries to the level of the advanced industrial world. Caught between the seething masses and the dictates of their paymasters, democracy is a luxury these rulers generally cannot afford. Drawing on the experience of the 1917 October Revolution, Leon Trotsky argued that in countries of belated capitalist development the fight for national emancipation from imperialism and the struggle for democracy falls to the industrial working class. And once the working class has seized power, it cannot stop at these tasks, but must move to destroy private property and establish a workers state. To survive and flourish, a socialist revolution in such a country must be extended to the imperialist heartlands. This is the essence of what Trotsky called the theory of permanent revolution.

But what about countries like Afghanistan or Haiti where the working class is weak or non-existent? In such cases, there is no purely internal solution. The destiny of these countries is directly tied to the international class struggle, in the first instance in those countries in the region that do have important proletarian concentrations, including immigrant workers from throughout the semicolonial world.

The same capitalist rulers who are waging bloody war in Iraq and Afghanistan are savaging jobs, working conditions and basic rights at home, while tearing to shreds social programs like EI and medicare. In the course of sharp class struggle, the workers must become conscious of themselves as a class fighting for their own independent interests and those of all the oppressed against the brutal capitalist system. This requires the instrumentality of a revolutionary party to educate the working class in the understanding not only of its social power but of its historic interests. The aim of the Trotskyist League/Ligue trotskyste is to forge such a party. Thus we approach every social struggle from the point of view of furthering the interests of the working class, raising its consciousness and instilling an understanding of its task of sweeping away this racist and exploitative social order and ushering in an egalitarian communist future for mankind. ■

Anti-Sex Crusade...

(continued from page 5)

Maine's age of consent, Elliott was jailed for four months in 2002. Smearred as a "sex offender," his picture and address were to be on this public registry for *ten years*—and that's what got him killed. In a very direct way, these cold-blooded murders are a product of the bourgeoisie's anti-sex hysteria.

"Family values" hypocrisy is hardly the exclusive preserve of Tory bigots. Harper's move against teen sex picks up where the previous Liberal government left off. The first act of Paul Martin's regime in 2004 was to introduce Bill C-2 which, among other measures, created a new crime of "sexual exploitation" that makes consent irrelevant. A witchhunter's dream, the Criminal Code now says that a relationship between someone under 18 and another in a "position of authority" is by definition exploitative, a crime for which the latter could spend up to ten years in jail.

Even this is not enough for the NDP's federal justice critic, Joe Comartin. He backs a higher age of consent because it will be easier to win convictions for the "crime" of engaging in such relationships—consent be damned! In 2000, the ruling B.C. NDP was at the forefront of a witch-hunting frenzy targeting several women teachers for entirely consensual relationships with younger people. And the NDP, like the Tories, wants to lower the age at which youth may be tried as adults, in their case to 16. Peddling such reaction is central to this social-democratic party's role as a transmission belt for bourgeois ideology into the working class.

The State Anti-Pornography Witchhunt

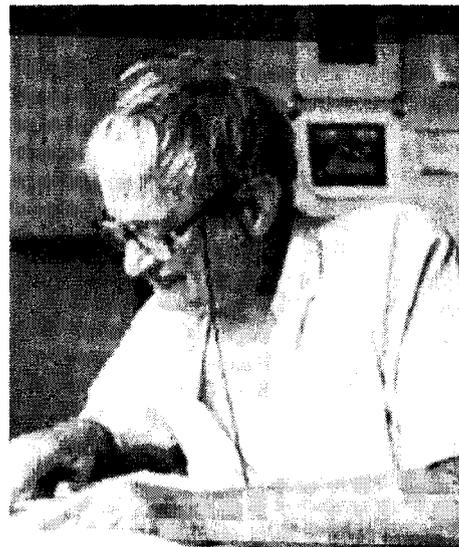
Alongside the drive to regulate who people have actual sex with, the government also aims to bar everyone from even reading about or viewing depictions of sex, especially if youth are involved. After many years of trials, in 2002 Vancouver resident John Robin Sharpe was acquitted of child pornography charges stemming from his fictional sexual stories and sketches portraying youth. Sharpe successfully used the defense of artistic merit. As an article in the Toronto gay magazine *fab* noted, this decision became "the legal umbrella under which the first generation of queer youth emerged. The ability to find and create works of art probing sexual taboos... were rights denied previous generations of queers" (22 April 2004).

Furious at Sharpe's acquittal, the Liberals eliminated the defense of artistic merit. With Bill C-2 now law, the accused must now prove that their creations further the "public good" and have a "legitimate purpose." As the *fab* article asked, "So what happens when kids exploring their sexuality through art become their own child pornographers?" Harper's government plans to close even the shabby "public good" loophole. What next? Will everything from Nabokov's *Lolita* to today's mountain of steamy coming-of-age teen novels be consigned to the censors' bonfires?

There has been some disquiet in the bourgeois media about the massive sweep of this state anti-porn dragnet. In recent years, thousands have been charged—in 2002-3 alone



Gosse/Globe and Mail



robinsharpe.ca

Newfoundland resident Wanda Young had career and life torn apart after being put on a "child abuse" registry for a term paper she wrote on juvenile offenders. For years John Robin Sharpe (right) was persecuted in vicious state anti-porn vendetta.

it was 303. Yet even in a witchhunting social climate the state secured convictions in fewer than half of these cases.

The necessarily arbitrary nature of "child pornography" laws lets the state ensnare almost anyone with this humiliating and fearful accusation. In April, racist border cops subjected Sikh immigrant Paramjit Singh to a terrifying ordeal. Caught in the crosshairs of two state crackdowns, the racist "war on terror" and the anti-porn hysteria, he was charged with possessing child pornography and denied entry to Canada, all for having a few pictures of his naked baby on his cell phone. The charges were dropped, but a chilling edict from the "Public Safety" ministry insisted that "the images of the prepubescent infant by definition is child pornography under the Criminal Code."

Marxists oppose all laws against "crimes without victims," such as prostitution, drug use or pornography. We utterly reject the practice whereby looking at pornography is equated with violent crimes such as rape, sexual assault and even murder. We also oppose the criminalization of those who look at child pornography which, like all pornography, is simply words and images designed for pleasure. And while we're talking about the difference between images and acts, consider the very real *acts* of sadistic torture and sexual violence carried out on prisoners in Abu Ghraib and Guantánamo-as U.S. imperialist policy.

State Out of the Bedroom!

From the start, we have been outspoken opponents of the anti-sex hysteria. For us Marxists, the guiding principle in sexual relations is that of *effective consent*, not age, relationship, sex, number or degree of intimacy. This means nothing more and nothing less than mutual agreement and understanding, as opposed to coercion. As long as those who take part agree to do so at the time, no-one, least of all the state, has the right to tell them they can't do it.

To understate the matter, sexuality is complex. Human society has seen a tremendous variety of social and sexual customs and practices, some of which might give pause to even the most freewheeling among us. Monogamy is at variance

with the fundamental instincts of our mammalian species; “transgressions” against it provide inexhaustible fuel for divorce courts and a vast body of literature in many languages.

It was Friedrich Engels, Karl Marx’s closest collaborator, who laid out a materialist understanding of sexual and familial relationships which, like all social questions, are conditioned by time, place and social relations. In *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* (1884) he wrote:

“Prior to the invention of incest (and it is an invention, and one of the utmost value), sexual intercourse between parents and children could be no more disgusting than between other persons belonging to different generations—such as indeed occurs today even in the most philistine countries without exciting great horror; in fact, even old ‘maids’ of over sixty, if they are rich enough, occasionally marry young men of about thirty.”

In line with this, we do not think intergenerational sex is by definition abusive, nor do we think incest is *a priori* a crime to be punished by the bourgeois state.

The Family, Private Property and the Bourgeoisie

Absent an understanding of the institution of the family as a key prop in maintaining the capitalist system, one cannot comprehend the bourgeoisie’s irrational and prurient obsession with sexual issues. The family is the central instrument for the subjugation of women (and youth) under capitalism. Its historical function is to transmit private property to “legitimate” heirs through inheritance. This function has little relevance to working-class people, who generally have little to pass on. The family also serves as an ideological bastion of conservatism, instilling obedience to bourgeois codes of morality and retarding the development of social consciousness.

Anything that deviates from this stultifying regime of “one man on one woman for life” is viewed as a threat. This is at the heart of the crusades against pornography, youth sexuality, prostitution, homosexuality and abortion, which aim to regiment the population and bolster family, church and state.

We oppose age of consent laws because we oppose state intervention into people’s private sexual activities. We do not accord the capitalist state the right to decree the age at which youth may engage in consensual sexual activity. To support the state’s right to legislate morality is to support this decaying social order which produces genuinely horrific crimes against women and children.

Such laws also seek to deny the sexuality of young people, especially girls. As we wrote 20 years ago in “Children, Sex, State Witchhunters: The Uses of Abuse”:

“The attitude toward children today is linked to the myth of female asexuality. All children are supposed to be asexual until puberty, at which point boys are expected to become instantly sexually aggressive. Girls are not, even after they are ‘properly’ married at a ‘proper’ age.”

—*Women and Revolution* No. 29, Spring 1985

At bottom, it’s all about preserving a girl’s chastity for marriage. In the Philippines and Mexico, for example, the legal age of consent is 12. This reflects not a liberal regime of per-



SC photo

TL joined Toronto protest against 1994 cop raid on Eli Langer exhibit.

sonal freedom for women, but the ruling class’s view that this is the age at which girls can be married off and have children.

Sometimes—especially between youth and older adults—it can be difficult to determine what is effective consent. In addressing the “date rape” hysteria of the mid-1990s, we wrote:

“Consent is *always* colored by the society we live in. Consensuality is rendered something less than complete when sexist attitudes and economic constraints (however expressed through a complex set of social factors that make them more or less ‘acceptable’) keep estranged couples together. And given the tangle of race, sex and class in this bigoted society, relationships can often be emotionally exploitative and unequal—but to call them ‘crimes’ is to bring in the government, which is the very enforcer of that bigotry and exploitation.”

—“The ‘Date Rape’ Issue: Feminist Hysteria, Anti-Sex Witchhunt,” *Women and Revolution* No. 43, Winter 1993-Spring 1994

Or, as Irish playwright Brendan Behan put it: “I have never seen a situation so dismal that a policeman couldn’t make it worse.”

A Workers Party: Tribune of the People

Sexuality is not in itself a political question. It is the bourgeoisie which politicizes this issue, victimizing those who run afoul of its writ. When that happens, a Marxist party cannot remain silent. In fighting to build a revolutionary workers party, we seek to expose and protest every instance of bourgeois injustice, violence and cruelty. Our defense of the right to enjoy pornography and our rejection of age of consent laws are part of the struggle to lay bare the ways in which the bourgeoisie maintains its grip on the working people.

Almost 30 years ago, *The Body Politic*, a Toronto gay liberationist newspaper, was hit with police raids and legal repression after publishing a controversial article called “Men Loving Boys Loving Men.” The Trotskyist League joined and built protests in defense of *The Body Politic*, as did some other left groups. While there was an uproar in some gay and feminist circles about the article’s content, intergenerational

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Anti-Sex Crusade...

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sex was not nearly the explosive "hot button" question it is today. Our political debates at the time largely centered on struggling for a Marxist, working-class perspective, as opposed to the sectoralist politics promoted by many gay liberationists.

However, the effects of more than two decades of ideological warfare and state repression have penetrated deeply into society. NAMBLA (North American Man-Boy Love Association), which advocates the right to intergenerational sex, is persecuted and hounded. That they have almost no defenders on the left outside of our own organization is a measure of how deeply the so-called "socialist" groups have adapted to "family values" bourgeois reaction. The refusal of gay groups and defenders of gay rights to defend a vulnerable group like NAMBLA is both cowardly and suicidal; it was not that long ago that homosexuality was considered a crime or at best a pathology.

In witchhunts those who dare defend the witches are themselves anathematized. "Only child pornographers, pimps, Internet lurers, child molesters and those involved in child sex tourism would line up against the proposed age of consent legislation," is how Canadian Press (19 April) reported the views of the anti-prostitution outfit, Beyond Borders. For our defense of NAMBLA against the state, we have been berated by "family values" Maoists, pseudo-Trotskyists and other reformist leftists as "child abusers." Like their bourgeois puppet-masters, these groups willfully conflate consensual sexual activities with vicious abuse. Their embrace of bourgeois "morality" reflects a fundamental loyalty, however rhetorically masked, to the current social order.

It is very much in the interests of working people to oppose the (currently Tory) offensive against youth sexuality, women and gays. The capitalists' need for labour, combined with economic necessity, has drawn unprecedented numbers of women out of the home and into the workforce in recent decades. This in turn has produced a reactionary backlash. We fight for the fullest integration of women into the workforce, and for this working people desperately need free, quality 24-hour childcare. Instead, even the paltry and inade-



Battistoni/CP

Picket line during 2004 hospital workers' strike, Vancouver. Multiracial proletariat is strengthened by influx of women workers.

quate existing programs are to be slashed, leaving working-class women with the "options" of either paying for expensive daycare or staying home to look after their children, thus living in poverty. Either way, they are bombarded with fear-mongering stories that their kids are in mortal peril, be it by rapists, satanic sexual abusers or drug peddlers. It's all meant to torment women with guilt about leaving their children in the care of "strangers" while they are at work.

Socialist revolution will lay the basis for replacing the family and drawing women fully into social production. This alone will make possible the liberation of women. Such was the program of the Bolshevik Party of V.I. Lenin and L.D. Trotsky which in 1917 led the working class to power in tsarist Russia. The early Bolshevik regime did all it could to implement the promise of women's emancipation, taking measures toward socializing the private functions of the family. But they lacked the material resources to make this a reality in backward and impoverished Russia, devastated by civil war and imperialist intervention. Their earliest measures included making abortion and homosexuality legal and divorce a mere civil matter.

Real violence is perpetrated daily against women and children under this brutal class system. Social degradation and dehumanization (which permeate sexual relations as all else) are rooted in the nature of this society and the exploitation of labour. The social alienation of a system in which the vast mass of people have to sell their labour power to enrich the very few is compounded by institutionalized inequalities of race, nationality and sex. To create genuinely free and equal relations between people in all spheres, including sex, requires nothing less than the destruction of this class system and the creation of a communist world. In a classless society, social and economic constraints over sexual relations will be non-existent, and in the words of Friedrich Engels, "there is no other motive left except mutual inclination." ■

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Immigrant Rights...

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immigrant rights protests, also appeals to a wing of the capitalists. Last year they issued an open letter that called on the Toronto civic government to “take leadership and initiative” by implementing pro-immigrant policies. A core NOII demand is for a “full and inclusive regularization program.” Yet NOII pointedly does *not* demand full citizenship rights for all immigrants, a basic democratic right which is crucial in forging the fighting unity of the working class.

Looking to capitalist governments or bourgeois parties, the class enemies of workers and immigrants, is counterposed to what is needed: a class-struggle fight to defend all

immigrants. Bourgeois immigration policy can only serve the interests of the racist Canadian ruling class and of capitalist production. We fight for the working class to take up the cause of immigrants and minorities as its own. Unions must combat nationalism and chauvinism to *organize the unorganized*, especially immigrant workers.

We reprint below a joint declaration of the Spartacist League/U.S. and the Grupo Espartaquista de México. Issued on March 24, it was distributed the next day at a demonstration in Los Angeles of up to one million people, a protest largely led by Catholic Church officials and featuring capitalist politicians such as Democratic Party mayor Antonio Villaraigosa. Subsequent massive protests, notably those of May 1, were politically dominated by the same class forces.

Down With Racist U.S. Imperialism! For Socialist Revolution on Both Sides of the Border!

Full Citizenship Rights for All Immigrants!

As millions of impoverished Mexican and Central American immigrants risk their lives to find some means of livelihood in the U.S., the racist U.S. imperialist rulers are proposing a spate of new anti-immigrant measures. Each in its own way, the various proposed “reforms” would further strengthen the stranglehold of repression and regimentation implemented in the name of a bipartisan “war on terror.” The HR 4437 bill passed in the House of Representatives in December calls for building 700 miles of wall at the border and for making it a felony to even be an undocumented immigrant, or to assist one in any way. Two alternative proposals in the Senate would also tighten border control, albeit without a new wall, while creating massive “guest worker” programs that amount to indentured servitude.

The racist border wall proposal has provoked widespread outrage in Mexico. In the U.S., opposition runs the gamut from Latino organizations and the trade unions to the Catholic church hierarchy, Democratic Party liberals and even a section of the Republican Party. In Chicago this month, some 100,000 demonstrators marched against these measures. Further protests against HR 4437 are planned in other cities. As proletarian internationalist opponents of U.S. imperialism, the Spartacist League/U.S. opposes both the criminalization of immigrant workers and the legalization of indentured servitude. The SL/U.S. and the Grupo Espartaquista de México, sections of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist), join in calling for the unity in struggle of the U.S. and Mexican proletariat. We demand: Down with racist anti-immigrant repression! No deportations! Full citizenship rights for all immigrants!

We start from the standpoint that only socialist revolution internationally can put an end to the growing immiseration of the toiling masses—both in dependent capitalist countries like Mexico and in the imperialist centers. Under capitalist imperialism, a handful of wealthy industrial powers strive to divide and redivide the rest of the world for their own aggrandizement, leading to neocolonial exploitation and imperialist war.



Marcus

March 25: Some one million people demonstrated in downtown Los Angeles against racist immigration bill.

As we explain in the ICL Declaration of Principles (*Spartacist* [English-language edition] No. 54, Spring 1998):

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

The massive increase in immigration from Mexico over the past period is a direct result of the imposition of the NAFTA “free trade” agreement in 1994, which forced millions

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Immigrant Rights...

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of Mexican peasants out of the countryside and led to a huge increase in urban poverty. Close to 10 percent of the Mexican population now lives in the U.S., and the money they send home—some \$20 billion annually—is Mexico's third-largest source of income. A 1991 joint statement of the Mexican, Canadian and U.S. sections of the ICL called to "Stop U.S. 'Free Trade' Rape of Mexico" and declared: "There is a burning need for an *internationalist* proletarian opposition which stands with the working class and impoverished peasantry of Mexico against the imperialist assault" (*Workers Vanguard* No. 530, 5 July 1991).

The fundamental divide in all capitalist countries is the divide between the working class, whose labor makes society run, and the capitalist class, which reaps enormous wealth from exploiting that labor. The Mexican rulers' crocodile tears over the plight of Mexican immigrants is used to enhance the nationalist lie that exploiter and exploited share the same interests because "we are all Mexicans." This is only a smokescreen to cover exploitation and oppression by the parasitic Mexican bourgeoisie, which serves as the local enforcer of imperialist domination. In 2004, the Mexican government arrested almost four times as many Central Americans—over 200,000—seeking transit to the U.S. as were arrested by the U.S. border authorities (*La Jornada*, 13 November 2005). The GEM opposes such attacks and calls for full right of transit as well as full citizenship rights for all those who want to stay in Mexico.

In the U.S., the most powerful and dangerous of the imperialist countries, the multiracial proletariat has a particular obligation to oppose the wars and depredations of the U.S. capitalist class. Defense of immigrant rights is necessary not only to fight the exploitation of the most vulnerable layers of the population. It is also crucial to reversing the decades-long decline of the trade unions, by enlisting immigrant workers, many of whom have a history of militant struggle, in the front ranks of the labor movement. Mexican immigrant workers can serve as a human bridge linking the struggles of the North American and Latin American proletariat.

Opposition to anti-immigrant racism in the U.S. is directly intertwined with the struggle against black oppression. It is particularly important to combat anti-immigrant chauvinism among U.S.-born black and white workers, while immigrant workers must grasp that anti-black racism remains the touchstone of social reaction in the U.S. Black oppression is the cornerstone of American capitalism. It was the Southern slavocracy's desire to extend slavery that partly motivated the 1846 invasion of Mexico, which resulted in the U.S.



AP

Mexico City, March 7: Mass rally in solidarity with National Mining and Metallurgical Workers Union after government attack on union leader. ICL fights for class-struggle unity of Canadian, U.S. and Mexican proletariat.

stealing half of Mexico's territory. A workers government in the U.S. would return to Mexico certain predominantly Spanish-speaking areas along the border.

As expressed in the two Senate "guest worker" bills, the bourgeois opposition to the nativist racist mindset expressed in HR 4437 reflects the interests of employers reliant on low-wage, non-union labor, like Wal-Mart. The bill being fashioned by Republican Arlen Specter with the tacit support of the Bush White House includes criminalization of undocumented immigrants and their supporters. Unlike the Specter proposal, the bill co-authored by Republican John McCain and liberal Democrat Ted Kennedy holds out the promise of eventual permanent residency or citizenship for some "guest workers."

Even without the proposed new criminalization provisions, in 2004 more than a million Mexicans were detained trying to enter the U.S. Intensified border repression, whether carried out by the hated *la migra* or vigilante terror gangs like the Minutemen, simply forces desperate immigrants to seek more dangerous and deadly routes. In 2005, at least 279 bodies were found near the Sonora-Arizona border alone. U.S. college students Daniel Strauss and Shanti Sellz were recently arrested in Arizona for attempting to transport several severely dehydrated immigrants to a hospital and face up to 15 years in jail and fines of \$250,000 for "conspiring to traffic" immigrants (*Proceso*, 12 March). Drop all charges against Strauss and Sellz!

"Use 'em, abuse 'em and send 'em back" has long been the motto of U.S. capitalists, who have seen Mexico and other countries as a vast reservoir of cheap labor to be tapped in order to drive down wages in the U.S. The current "guest worker" legislation is reminiscent of the notorious *bracero* program of 1942-64, under which thousands of "temporary" Mexican workers, denied the most elementary rights, were brought in to slave in agribusiness. Former *braceros* and their families are still trying to get wages never paid them.

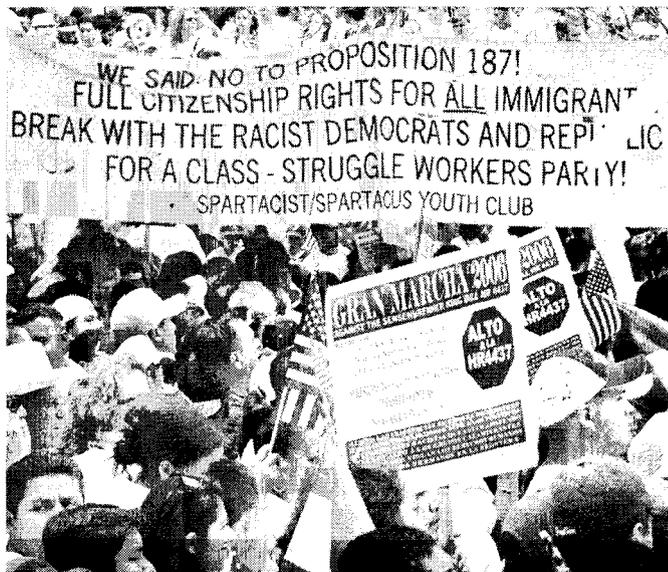
What is needed is a class-struggle mobilization to *organize the unorganized* into the unions with full rights and protections. The potential for this was seen in the widely popular

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Workers Vanguard

Los Angeles, March 25: Spartacist banner at massive demonstration for immigrant rights.

strike by Southern California supermarket workers—black, Latino and white—in 2003-2004. Had the union tops made a concerted effort to extend the strike nationally and to enlist Teamsters truck drivers in halting shipments to the supermarkets and warehouses, that strike could have ended in a resounding victory and paved the way for an organizing drive against Wal-Mart. A successful drive to organize Wal-Mart would have an immediate impact in Mexico, where the corporation is the largest private employer.

But instead of mobilizing union power in defense of immigrants, the union tops embrace one or another of the capitalists' anti-immigrant "reforms," particularly favoring their so-called "friends" in the capitalist Democratic Party. This policy of class collaboration, sacrificing labor's interests on the altar of capitalist profitability, flows from the labor bureaucracy's support for the capitalist system and its identification with the "national interests" of U.S. imperialism. This program has led to defeat after defeat, leaving the U.S. labor movement weaker today than at any time since the early 1900s.

When NAFTA was first proposed in the early 1990s, the AFL-CIO bureaucracy denounced it from the standpoint of chauvinist protectionism, railing against Mexicans "stealing American jobs." The Teamsters bureaucracy, today a component of the "Change to Win" breakaway from the AFL-CIO, is notorious for its chauvinist campaigns against Mexican truckers on U.S. roads. The leaders of two other leading "Change to Win" unions—the heavily immigrant SEIU service employees union and UNITE HERE hotel, restaurant and garment workers union—support the McCain-Kennedy plan for a new *bracero* program.

For its part, the AFL-CIO bureaucracy has waffled on McCain-Kennedy. Rejecting guest worker programs, AFL-CIO executive vice president Linda Chavez-Thompson declared in a March 1 statement: "We propose that if employers can demonstrate a real need for outside workers, these workers should be allowed into our country with the SAME RIGHTS AND LABOR PROTECTIONS as any U.S. citizen." This leaves it to the capitalists to determine who will be let in and under what conditions they will remain. Opposed to a program of class struggle, the labor tops look to

the capitalist state to defend the rights of workers and immigrants. The unions should use their power to fight for full citizenship rights for *everyone* who makes it into this country.

A class-struggle perspective requires an uncompromising fight for the class *independence* of the proletariat from all wings of the capitalist exploiters. In the U.S., that chiefly means breaking the ties that bind labor to the Democratic Party, which occasionally postures as "friends" of labor, immigrants and black people to better hoodwink the exploited and oppressed. The Democratic Party avidly embraced Bush's "war on terror" and now proclaims itself the party most capable of prosecuting this "war," which was never more than a pretext for imperialist adventures abroad and ripping up democratic rights at home. Indeed, it was Democratic president Clinton who enacted the 1996 Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act, which calls for deporting even longtime permanent residents for trivial offenses committed years earlier. Under Clinton's "Operation Gatekeeper," a border wall was built to seal off San Diego. Break with the Democrats! For a workers party that fights for a workers government!

In Mexico, bourgeois nationalism is the chief means binding the exploited to their exploiters. It was the nationalist PRI (Institutional Revolutionary Party), not the clerical reactionary PAN (National Action Party) of "free market" exponent Vicente Fox, that pushed through the NAFTA agreement in the early '90s. And the Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD), which is today the chief exponent of populist nationalism, does not even oppose NAFTA.

While the PRD has not yet gotten its chance to devastate living standards as have the PRI and the PAN, its populist nationalism is but another means of administering capitalist/imperialist exploitation. In the context of the tragic death of 65 miners in an explosion caused by the bosses' criminal thirst for profits, PRD presidential hopeful López Obrador joined Fox in denouncing the miners union, accusing its leaders of being "contract dealers." Break with all the bourgeois parties—PAN, PRI, PRD! For a workers party that fights for socialist revolution!

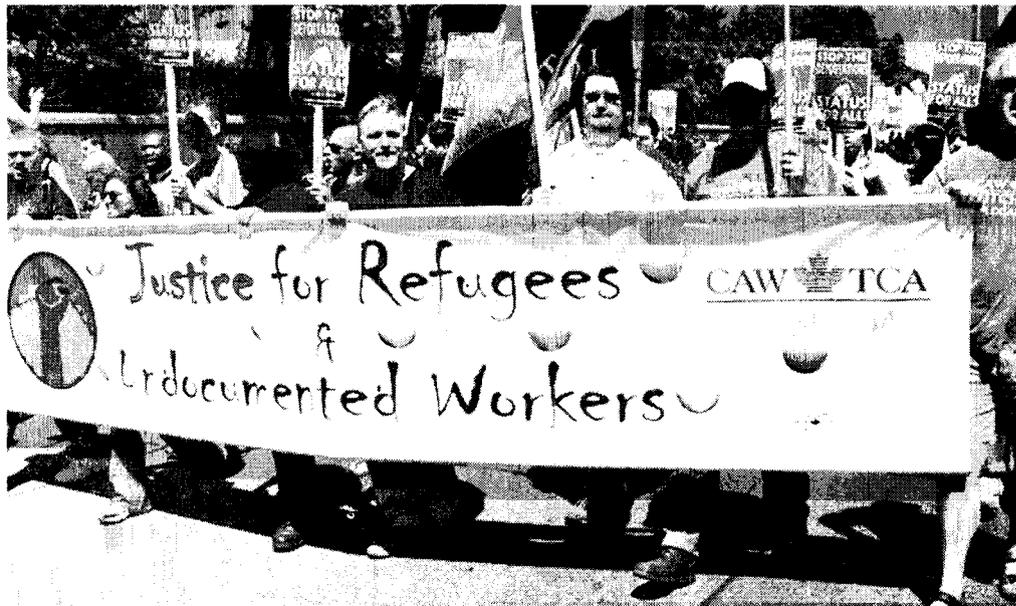
Our model is the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917, which replaced the rule of the capitalists and landlords with that of the working class and raised high the banner of world socialist revolution. Despite the Stalinist degeneration that ultimately opened the door to capitalist counterrevolution in 1991-92, the Soviet Union demonstrated the power of a planned, collectivized economy in providing employment, education, health care and decent living conditions. When put to the service of all humanity, the enormous wealth and productive resources extracted by the U.S. bourgeoisie from the sweat and blood of working people in the U.S. and around the world would provide an enormous impetus for the advance of all mankind. But that requires the smashing of the capitalist state and the expropriation of the rapacious U.S. bourgeoisie through proletarian revolution.

The counterpart to the nationalist myth of "we are all Mexicans" is the idea that there is no class struggle in the U.S. The December strike by largely black and immigrant transit workers in New York, which crippled the world center of finance capital, refuted that notion. The multiracial U.S. working class is potentially the most powerful ally of Mexican workers. The SL/U.S. and the GEM are dedicated to forging revolutionary workers parties on both sides of the border as part of the fight to reforge Trotsky's Fourth International, world party of socialist revolution. ■

For a Class-Struggle Fight to Defend Immigrant Rights!



Bull/Toronto Star/CP



smugnuq.com

Top: Toronto youth seized hostage by immigration cops, threatened with deportation. Right: Autoworkers' contingent at May 27 immigrant rights demo in Toronto.

Across the United States, massive demonstrations totaling millions of mostly Latino participants have taken to the streets to protest proposed legislation which would further criminalize immigrants and create a racist border wall with Mexico. Similar, though smaller, protests have arisen in Canada following the deportation of dozens of undocumented Portuguese and Latin American construction workers from Toronto. On April 21, the Universal Workers Union (UWU) brought 1,000 to Queen's Park and a like number marched the next day, while Portugal's foreign minister demanded an emergency meeting with the Canadian government. A week later, immigration cops staged terrifying raids in two Toronto schools, taking children hostage until their parents surrendered themselves for deportation.

New immigrants have always been the most exploited and oppressed sector of Canada's working class. From Portuguese and Latin American construction workers to Filipina nannies and Mexican farmworkers, immigrants are relegated to the dirtiest, most dangerous and lowest-paying jobs. Those without papers are commonly intimidated by employers to prevent unionization and denied the most basic rights on the job. Fearing deportation, they are unable to access health care, education, pensions and other programs that are paid for by their labour.

While right-wing ideologues push anti-immigrant chauvinism to divide the working class, much of the bourgeoisie recognizes that immigrants are essential to capitalist production. The union misleaders and reformist left have met the Conservative government's attacks by promoting a dead end "fight the right" strategy which has embraced the bourgeois Liberal Party as well as the pro-capitalist NDP. Spokesmen for both parties have been prominent in the protests against the actions of their Tory colleagues. Yet when in office, the Liberals and NDP alike have unleashed state repression against immigrants. Immigration minister Monte Solberg rightly claims that the Tories are merely "proceeding at the same rate of removals as the previous [Liberal] government" (CTV.ca, 26 March). For its part, the B.C. NDP government jailed hundreds of Chinese migrants during a racist anti-Asian furor in 1999.

It is only in the last five years that the misleaders of UWU, Local 183 of the Laborers' International Union of North America, have even tried to organize undocumented immigrants. Today, their strategy is to look to their "management partners" and make donations to capitalist Liberal Party pols in a common campaign to regularize undocumented workers. No One is Illegal (NOII), organizers of a number of recent

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