

Immigrants, Minorities: Key to Workers Struggle



MacDougal/CP

Pickets stop scab vehicle, shut down production at Tyson Foods in Brooks, Alberta, October 2005. African-born workers were central to militant strike.

We print below, slightly edited and abridged, a presentation by Miriam McDonald, editor of Spartacist Canada, at a September 22 Trotskyist League forum in Toronto.

Two years ago 2,300 workers in Brooks, Alberta struck Tyson, one of the largest meatpacking and food processing companies in the world. In their majority refugees and immigrants from Sudan, Somalia and Nigeria, they stood firm, virtually shutting down production, as Tyson ran scabs and tried to inflame racism to defeat the strike. These workers process a staggering **40 percent** of Canada's cattle. That is real social power. The unity of their picket line, which included white workers and women workers, enabled them to overcome divisions of race and sex and win a first contract for the UFCW union. Their strike showed powerfully that minorities and immigrant workers are increasingly key to the workings of the Canadian economy and the class struggle, and are often more

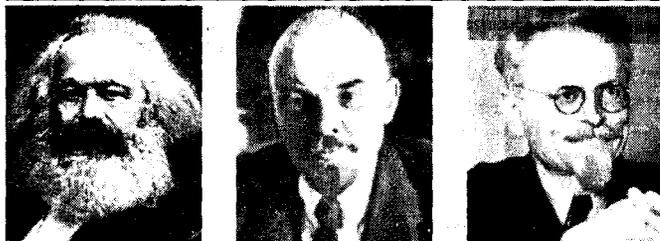
willing to fight for the rights of all workers. In this way, they can be a catalyst for broader class and other social struggles.

Canada has always been a country of immigrants, and immigrants have always played a vital role in the class struggle here. As far back as 1919, foreign-born workers played a leading role in the Winnipeg General Strike and suffered state repression including deportations in the wake of the strike. Our predecessors in the early Communist Party of Canada were heavily immigrant. Then as now, here as elsewhere, the ruling class foments religious, national and ethnic divisions to poison and defeat class struggle.

Not a day passes that is not marked by an instance of capitalist barbarism, brutal state repression or vile anti-immigrant racism. Worlds away from southern Alberta are the desperately poor, decaying inner suburbs of Toronto where tens of thousands of people of West Indian and African origin live.

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For a Multiethnic Revolutionary Workers Party!



Marx

Lenin

Trotsky

Marxism, the Capitalist State and the Police

The question of the class nature of the state is a decisive dividing line between revolutionary Marxists and reformists. The understanding that the capitalist state—which at its core consists of the cops, military, prison system and courts—is the instrument for organized violence to ensure bourgeois rule over the proletariat, and that it must be smashed through socialist revolution, is elementary to Marxism. This understanding is sharply counterposed not only to pro-capitalist social democrats like the NDP—whose governments have regularly unleashed police repression against workers, minorities and the left—but also to various reformist “socialist” groupings who falsely portray the police as “workers in uniform.”

*In the following excerpts, Bolshevik leaders V.I. Lenin and Leon Trotsky uphold the Marxist understanding of the state against those who obfuscate and falsify Marxism in the service of parliamentary reformism. Stripping bourgeois democracy of its class character—i.e., portraying the capitalist state as representing the interests of the classless “people”—inevitably leads to political support to the capitalist class. The first excerpt, from Lenin’s *The State and Revolution*, draws heavily on Friedrich Engels’ classic 1884 study, *The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State*. The second, dealing more specifically with the role of the police, is from Trotsky’s writings against the rise of fascism in Germany.*

Engels elucidates the concept of the “power” which is called the state, a power which arose from society but places itself above it and alienates itself more and more from it. What does this power mainly consist of? It consists of special bodies of armed men having prisons, etc., at their command....

A standing army and police are the chief instruments of state power. But how can it be otherwise?...

Civilised society is split into antagonistic, and, moreover, irreconcilably antagonistic, classes, whose “self-acting” arming would lead to an armed struggle between them. A state

arises, a special power is created, special bodies of armed men, and every revolution, by destroying the state apparatus, clearly shows us how the ruling class strives to restore the special bodies of armed men which serve *it*, and how the oppressed class strives to create a new organisation of this kind, capable of serving the exploited instead of the exploiters....

The petty-bourgeois democrats, those sham socialists who replaced the class struggle by dreams of class harmony, even pictured the socialist transformation in a dreamy fashion—not as the overthrow of the rule of the exploiting class, but as the peaceful submission of the minority to the majority which has become aware of its aims. This petty-bourgeois utopia, which is inseparable from the idea of the state being above classes, led in practice to the betrayal of the interests of the working classes, as was shown, for example, by the history of the French revolutions of 1848 and 1871, and by the experience of “socialist” participation in bourgeois Cabinets in Britain, France, Italy and other countries at the turn of the century....

Bourgeois states are most varied in form, but their essence is the same: all these states, whatever their form, in the final analysis are inevitably the *dictatorship of the bourgeoisie*. The transition from capitalism to communism is certainly bound to yield a tremendous abundance and variety of political forms, but the essence will inevitably be the same: *the dictatorship of the proletariat*.

—V.I. Lenin, *The State and Revolution* (1917)

* * *

The “Iron Front” is essentially a bloc of numerically powerful Social Democratic trade unions with impotent groups of bourgeois “republicans” which have lost entirely the support of the people and all confidence in themselves....

In case of actual danger, the Social Democracy banks not on the “Iron Front” but on the Prussian police. It is reckoning without its host! The fact that the police was originally recruited in large numbers from among Social Democratic workers is absolutely meaningless. Consciousness is determined by environment even in this instance. The worker who becomes a policeman in the service of the capitalist state, is a bourgeois cop, not a worker.

—Leon Trotsky, “What Next? Vital Questions for the German Proletariat” (1932) in *The Struggle Against Fascism in Germany* (1971)

SPARTACIST CANADA



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ANNUAL HOLIDAY APPEAL FOR CLASS-WAR PRISONERS

Friday, December 14, from 7 to 10 p.m.
Steelworkers Hall, 25 Cecil Street, Toronto

West of Queen’s Park Station,
1 block south of College at Ross Street

Free Mumia Abu-Jamal!
Abolish the Racist Death Penalty!

\$5.00 for advance tickets, \$8.00 at the door
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Outrage Over Cop Taser Killing in Vancouver

VANCOUVER—On October 14, Polish immigrant Robert Dziekanski was killed by the RCMP at Vancouver International Airport. A month later, millions saw the gut-wrenching ten-minute video taken by another traveler, Paul Pritchard, which showed unambiguously that this was a cold-blooded execution. After a grueling 20-hour journey from Poland, Dziekanski, who spoke no English, spent ten hours in the airport waiting for his mother who was, unknown to him, only a few feet away in the public waiting area. The video shows a distressed and obviously harmless man confronted by four RCMP officers who within 25 seconds tasered him with 50,000 volts at close range at least twice. Seconds later Dziekanski is writhing on the ground, screaming in agony as the cops crush him with their knees on his neck. Then he is dead.

Dziekanski's death sparked outrage across the country and internationally, and in B.C. it has become a focal point for a wave of animosity against the cops. In the days after Pritchard's video first aired, outraged people berated the RCMP at the airport and the four cops were reassigned "for the officers' own safety." Memorials were held in several cities and 1,000 people rallied on November 24 in Vancouver.

In the last four years police have killed at least ten people in B.C. Some were shot, some were tasered, and in several cases the cover-ups unraveled enough to reveal a glimpse of the daily reality of police violence. In 2005 in Houston, B.C., a young mill worker, Ian Bush, was arrested for the "crime" of holding a beer outside a hockey game. Twenty minutes later he was dead, shot in the back of the head. It was the persistence of Bush's bereaved mother that made this brutal police crime a touchstone for anger and distrust of the cops. For two years the RCMP lied, covered up and protected the killer cop who has, predictably, now been exonerated by the Commission for Public Complaints Against the RCMP—the same body now charged by the federal government with reviewing the use of tasers.

The cops, along with the prisons, courts and military, make up the core of the capitalist state, an instrument of organized violence used to maintain the rule of the capitalists against the working class. When the police kill and brutalize immigrants and Natives, repress leftists, attack picket lines or student protesters, this flows directly from the fact that they serve but one master, the capitalist class. Acting as judge, jury and executioner, their job is to protect the profit system that creates unemployment, poverty and oppression.

These political facts are obscured by the fiction that the state is neutral and serves everyone in society equally. This is all the more the case in a country like Canada where the naked rule of capital is masked by the trappings of parliamentary democracy. The cops cannot be made to serve the interests of the oppressed and the state cannot be reformed. It must be overthrown by the working class in a socialist revolution.



Reuters
Vancouver, November 24: 1,000-strong protest against cop killing of Polish immigrant Robert Dziekanski.

The killing of Dziekanski was unusual only in that it was filmed, making crystal clear to all that just about everything the cops said about it was a brazen lie. For a month the cops suppressed the video, holding on to Pritchard's camera until he hired a lawyer and threatened legal action. Underscoring that they are a law unto themselves, the cops responded to the public outcry by tasered and killing two more people. In Halifax on November 22, a mentally ill man, Howard Hyde, was tasered and died in police custody. In Chilliwack, B.C., a day later, Robert Knipstrom died after being tasered, pepper sprayed and beaten.

Lies, More Lies and Public Inquiries

The *Globe and Mail* (16 November) editorialized that Dziekanski's death at the hands of the cops would be seen "as the summary execution of an innocent man for the crime of being disoriented, for not understanding, for being a stranger." The *Globe's* recent exposures of RCMP misdeeds are driven by a crass aim of damage control for a ruling class worried about the growing public-mistrust of the police.

That is the sole purpose of the B.C. Liberal government's public inquiry into Dziekanski's death and the Harper Tories' review of taser use: to refurbish the image of the racist, capitalist state. In our article on the Ipperwash inquiry into the racist 1995 Ontario Provincial Police killing of Native activist Dudley George (*SC* No. 146, Fall 2005) we wrote:

"The capitalist rulers have a time-honoured strategy for dealing with public outrage. First, they lie through their golden teeth. Second, when anger persists, they stall. Then, if things still don't settle down, they 'reluctantly' hold an 'independent' public inquiry, staffed by judges, professors, priests or other loyal

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Young Spartacus

Mass Arrests in Montreal

Defend Quebec Student Protesters!

In the early hours of November 14, riot police brutally assaulted and arrested more than 100 students at Cégep du Vieux-Montréal for staging a peaceful bed-in against the Quebec government's plans to raise tuition fees. This followed police attacks and arrests of students at nearby Université du Québec à Montréal (UQAM) two days before. The cops used batons and pepper spray, injuring at least 20 students. While the protesters were released, many face serious charges including assault and battery and armed assault on police. Drop all charges now!

The sit-ins and protests were part of a three-day student strike at campuses around the province. In the midst of last spring's elections, marked by the racist anti-immigrant backlash over "reasonable accommodation," Liberal premier Jean Charest also announced an end to Quebec's fourteen-year freeze on tuition, which is by far the lowest in Canada. Student unions, centrally the more militant Association pour une Solidarité Syndicale Étudiante (ASSE), have been organizing protests and strikes against this, possibly leading to an all-out strike in 2008. In 2005, a month-long student strike forced the Liberal regime to drop an attempt to severely cut student grants. This time, Charest & Co. unleashed state repression early on in an attempt to beat protesters into line. These attacks illustrate once more that the cops are the armed fist of the bourgeois state, arrayed against the working class and all those who would challenge the capitalist status quo.

While student protests have won support from college teachers and other union members, the Quebec capitalist media has run a frenzied campaign against "privileged" student "casseurs" (hooligans). The two opposition parties in the National Assembly, the right-wing Action Démocratique du Québec and the supposedly "friend of labour" Parti Québécois, have backed the government's stance, just as they have fanned the flames of the current hysteria against Muslim immigrants and minorities.

In a context where the bosses and politicians are beating the drums for "reengineering" Quebec society—i.e., smashing the unions and gutting social services—racist "divide-and-rule" schemes and attacks on social programs go hand-in-hand. Students could provide a spark for the broader social struggle necessary to beat back these attacks. What's needed is to ally with the organized *working class*, which must be mobilized independently of the PQ and all other capitalist parties. Due to its central position in social production—in



Montreal cops attack student pickets at UQAM, November 12.

AFESH

the factories, transport and service industries—the working class uniquely has the power to strike real blows against the bourgeoisie's profit system, and to give a lead to all the many victims of the racist capitalist system.

Typically, the English Canadian bourgeois media has been almost totally silent on the repression of students in Quebec. While hypocritically tut-tutting the Québécois over the outpouring of racist scapegoating coming out of the current Bouchard-Taylor commission hearings on "reasonable accommodation," they are fully behind Charest's move to "clean up" Quebec's public finances through attacks on the unions and on social programs like accessible postsecondary education.

The Quebec Cégep system (short for Colleges of General and Vocational Education) arose out of the modernizing reforms of the 1960s known as the "Quiet Revolution." This was fueled in large part by militant labour class battles against national oppression, the stifling hold of the Catholic church—not least on the education system—and the grinding exploitation of Québécois workers at the hands of what was then an overwhelmingly anglophone ruling class.

The expansion and secularization of education was part of a drive by a modernizing francophone elite to cohere a distinct Québécois bourgeoisie and professional/technocratic stratum. At the same time, the creation of the Cégeps served to somewhat undercut the division between mental and manual labour,

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Mumia Is Innocent!

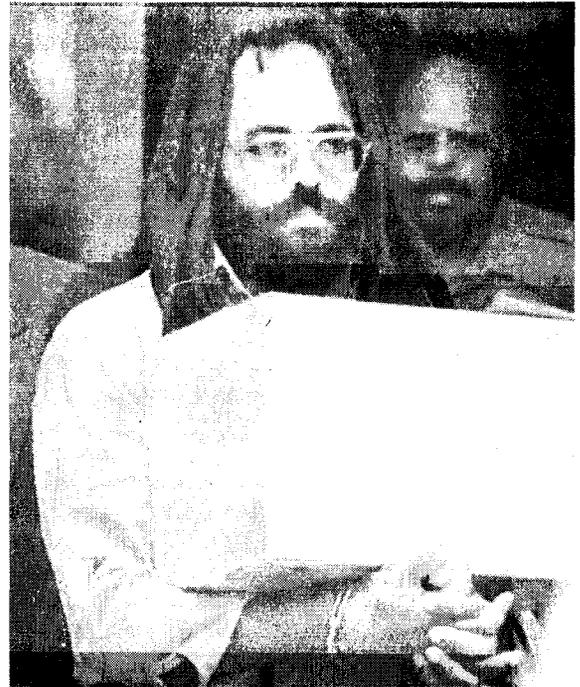
Free Him Now!

With the Third Circuit Court of Appeals set to rule in the case of U.S. death row political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal, the fight to free this former Black Panther Party spokesman, renowned journalist and MOVE supporter is growing ever more urgent. As the court decides whether to uphold his death sentence or keep him in prison for life, or alternatively to grant a new trial or further court hearings, the forces of racist capitalist "law and order" are once again howling for his legal lynching. The cops and prosecutors, Democratic and Republican politicians and press hacks tell any lie to bury this unbroken fighter for the oppressed. The biggest lie

Sinister Book Recycles Frame-Up Lies

of all is that Mumia shot and killed Philadelphia police officer Daniel Faulkner on 9 December 1981. Now a new book by Faulkner's widow Maureen—luridly titled *Murdered by Mumia: A Life Sentence of Loss, Pain and Injustice*—is due for release in early December, an ominous escalation in the drive to kill this innocent man.

Faulkner and co-author Michael Smerconish, a Philadelphia shock jock, will be trotted out on a book tour blitz, and Faulkner is due to appear on the *Today* show on December 6. Smerconish, who once served as a political adviser to the late Frank Rizzo, Philly's notoriously racist police chief and mayor, has orchestrated the Fraternal Order of Police (F.O.P.) media offensive against Mumia, including the "Justice for Daniel Faulkner" website. In 1999, Smerconish hosted a \$100-a-plate dinner to fund his anti-Mumia crusade, drawing over 800 F.O.P. heavies and a phalanx of local Democrats like Pennsylvania governor and former Philly mayor Ed Rendell, who as District Attorney in the early 1980s oversaw the frame-up of Mumia. Last April, the International Concerned Family



Mumia Abu-Jamal in handcuffs entering Philadelphia courthouse for July 1995 hearing. AP

and Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal was forced to change venues for events celebrating Mumia's birthday in Philadelphia and New York after the F.O.P. threatened the venues' proprietors.

As mouthpieces for the cops' frame-up machine, Maureen Faulkner and Michael Smerconish even deny Mumia's credentials as a journalist, which flies in the face of Mumia's widespread acclaim as the "voice of the voiceless." Mumia was recently awarded membership in PEN, a writers organization for human rights, in recognition of his writings. A new documentary about Mumia titled *In Prison My Whole Life* premiered in London and Rome in October, helping to publicize his struggle.

Beginning with Mumia's 1995 post-conviction hearings, reams of evidence have refuted the cops' and prosecutors' lies, establishing beyond any doubt that Mumia's conviction was the product of a wide-ranging, multilayered, racially and politically motivated frame-up. This overwhelming evidence of innocence is capped by Arnold Beverly's confession that he, not Mumia, shot and killed Faulkner. According to Beverly, who gave his testimony in a June 1999 affidavit, he and an accomplice were hired to kill Faulkner because he was interfering with police graft and mob vice in Philly's Center City. Mumia arrived after the shooting, had nothing to do with it and was shot by arriving police reinforcements. The Beverly confession, Mumia's own statement that he did not kill Faulkner and other evidence of Mumia's innocence are laid out in detail in the Partisan Defense Committee pamphlet, *The Fight to Free Mumia Abu-Jamal—Mumia Is Innocent!*

Beverly's account is backed up by a range of supporting evidence, including the fact that in December

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Prepare Now for Emergency Protests!

On May 17, the U.S. Third Circuit Court of Appeals heard oral arguments in Mumia's case, and there could be a decision at any time.

If the court rules to uphold the death sentence or denies Mumia's appeals for a new trial or a new hearing, the PDC calls for protests the day after the decision.

Mumia Abu-Jamal Is an Innocent Man! Free Mumia Now! Abolish the Racist Death Penalty!

Toronto: Across the street from the U.S. Consulate, 360 University Ave., between Dundas (St. Patrick station) and Queen (Osgoode station)

Rally at 6:00 p.m. if on a weekday, or at 1:00 p.m. if on a weekend

Vancouver: UBC Student Union Building, South Plaza

Rally at 12:00 p.m. on a weekday.

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New ICL Bulletin

The Logan Dossier

We reprint below the Preface to The Logan Dossier, produced by the International Secretariat of the International Communist League in August 2007. All references not otherwise cited refer to documents published in the bulletin.

This bulletin documents the facts and findings leading to the expulsion of Bill Logan from the international Spartacist tendency, now International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist), at our first delegated International Conference in August 1979. Logan had been national chairman of the Spartacist League of Australia and New Zealand (now Spartacist League/Australia) during its formative period, 1972-77, national chairman of the Spartacist League/Britain at the time of its founding in 1978 and a member of the International Executive Committee (IEC), the leading body of the iSt/ICL. Logan was investigated by an International Control Commission, tried and found guilty of crimes against communist morality during his tenure as SL/ANZ national chairman and shown to be a "proven, massive liar and a sexual sociopath who manipulated the private lives of comrades for reasons of power politics and his own aberrant appetites and compulsions in the guise of Marxism" ("Motion and Vote on the Findings of the Trial Body"). By a unanimous vote, the conference delegates resolved that Logan had no place in the iSt and "cannot be and should never have been a member of a working-class organization."

Following Logan's expulsion, we took the unusual step of publicly releasing three internal bulletins titled "On the Logan Regime" (*International Discussion Bulletin* No. 10, Parts I and II, January 1979; Part III [*International Information Bulletin* No. 16], November 1983). The first and second of these deal with the fight against Logan's abusive regime in the SL/B and some initial re-examination of the Logan period in the Australian section. The third contains materials related to the SL/ANZ charges and the trial, including the reports from the trial body to the conference and excerpts of the floor discussion. Some of the material in this bulletin was originally assembled for inclusion in one or more additional bulletins at the time, but has remained unpublished until now. Other materials in this bulletin were retrieved from our party archives or transcribed from the tape recordings of the trial proceedings.

What Logan did to the Australian comrades first emerged at a national gathering of the SL/ANZ in January 1979. A couple of months before that, in October 1978, Logan had

International Communist League
(Fourth Internationalist)



THE LOGAN DOSSIER

Documentary Evidence and Testimony in the
August 1979 Trial and Expulsion of Bill Logan
from the international Spartacist tendency for Crimes Against
Communist Morality and Elementary Human Decency

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August 2007

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- Summary of Facts and Findings
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been ousted as national chairman of the SL/B, resigning from the post after a sharp political confrontation. During his 18 months in Britain, Logan had shown himself to be unfit to lead the section. He was duplicitous in his dealings with the iSt center, the Interim Secretariat (I.S.—now International Secretariat), and with his peers on the IEC; abusive in his treatment particularly of women comrades, and heavy-handed in his response to criticism or disagreement from SL/B members. At the time, the Logan regime in Britain was seen as a bureaucratic aberration, the result of an insecure, trigger-happy leader who was in over his head. Logan remained on the IEC and, at considerable party expense, he and his wife and collaborator, Adaire Hannah, were transferred to New York to work in the I.S.

No one could then imagine that a leading member of our communist organization could be the monstrous sociopath Logan was soon proved to be. Logan's abusive practices were constrained in the SL/B by its frequent contact with the international leadership and its core of mature cadre. The SL/ANZ, on the other hand, was a distant section with relatively inexperienced young comrades. But the fight in Britain unlocked and catalyzed a process of re-examination by the SL/ANZ membership. This came to a head at the SL/ANZ national gathering, as comrades began revealing to each other and to the visiting I.S. representative, Reuben Samuels, painful experiences they had long kept to themselves for fear of being "disloyal." The SL/ANZ conference saw an outpouring of traumatic recollections and accusations.

Those accusations were subsequently codified in a resolution of the SL/ANZ Central Committee (see "Charges from the SL/ANZ Central Committee"). An International Control Commission (ICC) was appointed by the IEC. It was charged with amassing and weighing the evidence and was constituted as a trial body to pursue further testimony and reach a verdict in the case. This trial body was made up of comrades from throughout the international who were highly regarded for their integrity and had had no significant previous involvement with Logan. It was chaired by comrade Martha Phillips (Piper) from the SL/U.S., who was murdered in Moscow in 1992 while fighting to cohere a Trotskyist nucleus in the face of the counterrevolutionary tide that destroyed the Soviet Union. The trial body included other comrades from the SL/U.S. and from the Canadian and German sections of the iSt. Also serving on the trial body was the veteran Sri Lankan Trotskyist Edmund Samarakkody, whose organization had until then been engaged in fraternal relations with the iSt for some time. Comrades Toni R. and Rachel W. served as recording secretary and support counsel, respectively, for the Commission. Comrade Dave Reynolds of the SL/ANZ Central Committee acted as prosecutor on behalf of the Australian complainants.

In the months before the trial, over three dozen statements and documents totaling hundreds of pages were submitted by SL/ANZ members and other comrades offering detailed testimony of Logan's acts, and by Logan and Hannah in his defense. More than 30 witnesses testified in person at the trial, which took place over a period of four days immediately preceding the formal opening of the International Conference. Several hundred pages of documentary evidence from the period of the Logan/Hannah regime—minutes, memoranda, political correspondence and extracts of some personal correspondence—were also available to the Control Commission. Logan had the right to cross-examine witnesses and dispute the documentary evidence. The findings of the trial body were then reported to the conference and were the subject of an extensive discussion involving two reporters and more than 40 speakers.

We publish here essential documents submitted as written testimony to the trial body as well as certain correspondence and other materials from the period of the Logan regime in Australia demonstrating how it flouted

existing Spartacist norms and corroborating the testimony. Additionally, we are including substantial extracts of the transcripts of the proceedings of the trial body, where such testimony does not largely replicate the written materials. It should be stressed, as it was at the outset of the trial by comrade Martha P., that in a Leninist party trial written and oral testimony are given equal weight. For the sake of convenience, the current bulletin includes some items previously published in *IIB* No. 16: the SL/ANZ CC resolution detailing the charges, Dave R.'s summary presentation to the trial body and the ICC motion expelling Logan adopted by the International Conference.

* * *

As Marx understood when he put aside other critical work for the better part of a year in 1860 in order to expose the dubious and slanderous Herr Vogt, necessary tasks of political sanitation cannot long be avoided without paying a price. In the years after his expulsion Logan resurfaced in New Zealand and managed to insinuate himself back into the left internationally, in good part through the instrumentality of a clot of embittered ex-members of ours in North America who in October 1982 declared themselves an "External Tendency of the iSt" (ET—renamed Bolshevik Tendency, BT, in 1985). In its October 1982 founding "Declaration of an External Tendency of the iSt," the ET made Logan the poster boy for the launch of a vendetta against our party, portraying him as a scapegoat of our allegedly bureaucratic "regime." Yet, to our knowledge, the ET/BT then maintained a public silence on Logan for more than eight years, until the sudden announcement in 1991 of its 1990 "fusion" with his New Zealand Permanent Revolution Group (PRG). At that point, not only did these political desperadoes publicly embrace Logan, they actually anointed him principal leader of their new "International Bolshevik Tendency." As we will detail later, while pursuing its own brand of Stalinophobic, social-democratic politics, over the years the BT has engaged in all manner of provocation and slander against us in its drive to destroy our party.

This same Logan, while masquerading as an "international Bolshevik" leader, has simultaneously maintained a real-life

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Earlier Bulletins

On the Logan Regime (Three parts)

As a service to the workers movement we have made these internal international bulletins documenting Logan's crimes publicly available.

Part I (January 1979) \$3 (82 pages)
Part II (January 1979) \$3 (44 pages)
Part III (November 1983) \$3 (79 pages)

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Post Conference: 4

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TL/LT Eleventh National Conference: **Fighting for a Revolutionary Perspective in a Reactionary Period**

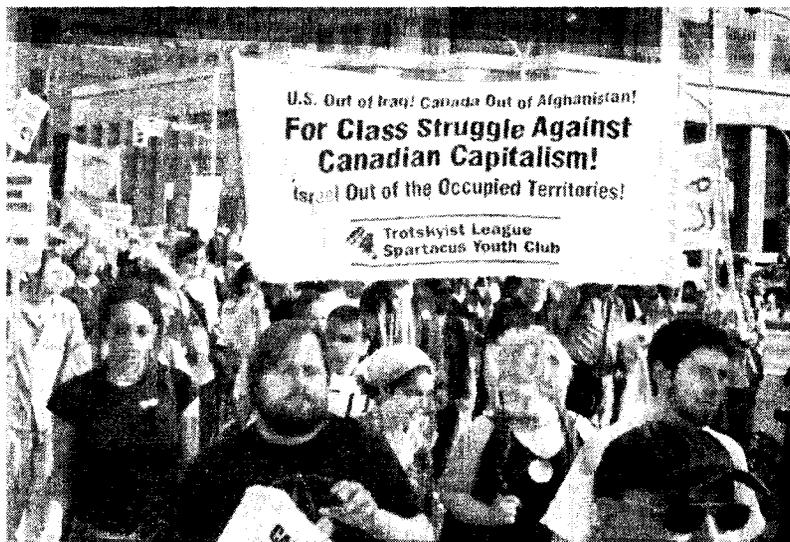
Members of the Trotskyist League/Ligue trotskyste and the Spartacus Youth Clubs gathered in Toronto in late summer for our Eleventh National Conference. The national conference, the highest body of the TL/LT, assessed our work since our last conference in 2004, resolved some outstanding disputes and laid out some future perspectives. The delegates discussed, amended and adopted unanimously a main document submitted by the outgoing Central Committee (CC), and elected a new CC to lead the organization until the next conference.

This conference came several months after the Fifth International Conference of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist), of which the TL/LT is the Canadian section. The ICL conference included a critical reconsideration of the Marxist movement's earlier practice of running candidates for executive offices like mayor or president (as opposed to running for legislative or parliamentary office), and resolved that we categorically oppose running for executive positions in the capitalist state.

The wide-ranging discussion on this question made clear that this is not simply a matter of electoral tactics but goes to the root of the Marxist view of the bourgeois state as an instrument of class oppression. The understanding that the proletariat cannot lay hold of the capitalist state and wield it for its own class interests is the dividing line between Marxism and reformism. A comprehensive report on this and other subjects addressed at our international conference has since been published in the English edition of *Spartacist*, the ICL's theoretical journal (see "Maintaining a Revolutionary Program in the Post-Soviet Period," No. 60, Autumn 2007).

The deliberations of the ICL conference necessarily shaped those leading up to and at the TL/LT national gathering. As our conference document stressed, the political context in which we intervene as a revolutionary propaganda group continues to be shaped by the devastating effects of the 1991-92 capitalist counterrevolution that destroyed the Soviet Union, the world's first workers state. At the crucial hour, in sharp contrast to most of the left, the ICL stood at our post in defense of the remaining gains of the 1917 October Revolution. But the destruction of the USSR was an unparalleled defeat for working people that has decisively altered the political landscape on the planet. As the *Spartacist* article explains:

"The bourgeoisie's ideologues seized on the collapse of the Soviet Union to proclaim the 'death of communism' and to pronounce Marxism a 'failed experiment.' These falsehoods were parroted by the former Stalinist bureaucrats whose betrayals and misrule had paved the way for capitalist restoration, as well as by the many reformist leftists in the West who had aided and abetted the imperialist-led drive for counterrevolution. That world-historic defeat led to a profound retrogression in proletarian consciousness, albeit uneven in its impact around the world: today,



SC photo

Toronto 2004 antiwar demonstration: TL/LT raises unique program for working-class struggle against the capitalist ruling class at home.

even more politically conscious workers in the capitalist countries by and large no longer identify their struggles with the ultimate aim of achieving a socialist society."

Accepting the "death of communism" proclaimed by the bourgeoisie, most of the "left," in Canada as elsewhere, barely even gives lip service to socialism. In practice, groups like the International Socialists (I.S.), Socialist Action, Fightback et al. function as left appendages of the pro-capitalist NDP and trade-union bureaucracy. In his seminal 1924 essay *Lessons of October*, Bolshevik leader Leon Trotsky characterized the politics of reformism as "oppositional activity within the framework of bourgeois society...i.e., the actual training of the masses to become imbued with the inviolability of the bourgeois state." Such accommodation to capitalist class rule by organizations nominally claiming to be Marxist is even more pronounced today in a world defined by the final undoing of the October Revolution. There is a huge gulf between such opponents of revolutionary Marxism—and the radical-liberal youth they may attract—and our program of proletarian revolution.

Trotsky stressed that in a reactionary period, "the task of the vanguard is above all not to let itself be carried along by the backward flow: it must swim against the current. If an unfavorable relation of forces prevents it from holding the positions that it has won, it must at least retain its ideological positions, because in them is expressed the dearly purchased experience of the past" ("Stalinism and Bolshevism," August 1937). Thus the most crucial task we face today is the maintenance of our programmatic integrity. At the same time, as the TL/LT conference document noted, we are a *fighting* propaganda group. Defending our program also means figuring out its application and

extension to new situations, testing it in active polemical engagement and exemplary intervention.

The conference discussed the key issues around which we polemicize and intervene: from our defense of China against imperialism and counterrevolution, to our fight against the reactionary Maple Leaf nationalism that pervades this society and our advocacy of independence for Quebec. We agreed on some overarching priorities for the next period: youth and campus work, assisting our Vancouver branch in consolidating its layer of new members, a continued focus on propaganda—centrally the quarterly *Spartacist Canada*—and cadre education. Noting our increased attention to class-struggle defense work, the conference affirmed that this will continue to center on the fight to free U.S. death-row political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal.

Revolutionary Internationalism

The opening session featured greetings from other ICL sections, followed by an international report by comrade D. Ames of the ICL's International Executive Committee (IEC). Much of this focused on South Africa and Mexico, where the level of social struggle has been greater than most other countries where we have sections. The reporter emphasized the centrality of the fight for proletarian class independence against all manner of class collaboration. The latter is expressed in Mexico chiefly as bourgeois populism, and in South Africa through support to the bourgeois Tripartite Alliance government, a nationalist popular front led by the African National Congress that includes the South African Communist Party and COSATU union federation.

Subreports were given by two members of our outgoing CC. Comrade John Masters addressed the new issue of *Spartacist*, then in production, and ongoing discussions regarding China. The conference document affirmed the centrality to our work of our stance of unconditional military defense of China—by far the strongest of the remaining bureaucratically deformed workers states—combined with proletarian political revolution to oust the ruling Stalinist bureaucracy.

The stakes in China are high. Capitalist counterrevolution would have a devastating impact on China's workers and peasants and would further embolden the imperialists in their attacks on working people worldwide. Conversely, a political revolution by the Chinese proletariat, which has engaged in a high level of struggle against the ravages of the bureaucracy's "market reforms," would extend the gains of the 1949 Revolution and provide a beacon for revolutionary struggle by workers throughout Asia and beyond. As the document noted, defense of China against imperialism and counterrevolution is "crucial for highlighting opposition to our 'own' capitalist rulers and their labour lieutenants," who push anti-China protectionism while whipping up an anti-Communist hue and cry over "human rights." It is also key in our political combat with those reformist "socialist" groups who have written China off as capitalist as part of their accommodation to the bourgeois order.

The other subreport summed up the extensive discussions at the ICL conference and in the TL/LT locals on our intervention

into the unfolding workers political revolution in the East German (DDR) deformed workers state in 1989-90. This was the most sustained intervention in the history of our tendency, showing powerfully the impact that even a small revolutionary organization can have in a situation of mass social upheaval.

The power of our program was particularly evident in the 250,000-strong demonstration on 3 January 1990 against the fascist desecration of a monument in East Berlin's Treptow Park honouring the Soviet soldiers who died liberating Germany from the Nazi scourge in 1945. We initiated the call for that mobilization, which was then taken up by the ruling Stalinists because they feared how much our program resonated among East Berlin workers and felt compelled to mobilize their base. Despite the disproportion of forces, there was a real contest in the DDR between the ICL's program of workers political revolution and the Stalinists' program of capitulation and counterrevolution.

The conference document cited a motion passed by the ICL's International Secretariat earlier this year: "We learned through our intervention that we alone were unequivocally opposed to capitalist reunification and alone fought against it, which underscored that we are the only organization on the globe with the program to fight for new Octobers." At the same time, our ongoing assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of our intervention is vital to preserving our revolutionary purpose and arming us for future struggles.

Fighting Menshevik Adaptation, Forging a Marxist Vanguard

The main report on the draft conference document, given by comrade Miriam McDonald, addressed some of the debates in the TL/LT in the period since our Tenth National Conference. She noted how during and immediately after the 2004 conference we tended to identify our errors as flowing in the main from sectarian withdrawal from struggle. In fact, as discussions throughout the ICL have shown clearly, the main danger we face in this period is not sectarianism but *Menshevism*—opportunist accommodation to the prevailing bourgeois liberalism.

One of the most clarifying discussions concerned our attitude to the World Social Forum and its regional offshoots, which have been championed by a host of reformist left groups

(continued on page 10)



Homeless people in Moscow, 2006. Destruction of Soviet workers state was an unparalleled defeat for working people worldwide. 1991 ICL leaflet calls to defeat Yelstin-Bush counterrevolution.

AFP

Conference...

(continued from page 9)

including in Canada. Prior to 2005, we had failed to characterize the social forums as *popular-frontist*—i.e., class-collaborationist—alliances run by bourgeois liberals and pro-capitalist social democrats and directly funded by capitalist governments and institutions. Correcting this stance, the IEC adopted a memorandum that made clear that any political interventions into such events must be from the standpoint of forthright and irreconcilable opposition. The Spartacist League/Britain then produced a sharp polemical article, “Social Forum Con Game,” which we reprinted in SC No. 146 (Fall 2005).

This assisted us in pursuing parallel fights in the Canadian section. The most important concerned the anarchoid “direct action” milieu, specifically its “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” immigrant rights campaign. We adapted to this milieu by endorsing its campaign to lobby the Toronto mayor to defend immigrants, a campaign that promoted base illusions in the bourgeois state. After a clarifying discussion on this and related issues we published a letter in SC No. 145 (Summer 2005) that corrected our stance and reaffirmed our perspective for the independent class mobilization of the integrated labour movement in defense of immigrants and minorities.

Discussion on the conference document ranged from the imperialist occupation of Afghanistan to developments in Quebec and the current state of working-class struggle. We affirmed that our interventions around Afghanistan and Iraq will continue to center on calls for all U.S. and Canadian forces to get out now and for class struggle against the capitalist rulers at home. While giving not a shred of political support to the reactionary “resistance” forces, we assert that military blows against the imperialist occupiers coincide with the interests of the working class. As the document noted, “This is the polar opposite of the ‘antiwar movement’ who show their loyalty to the capitalist order in Canada with social-patriotic slogans such as: ‘Peace is Patriotic—Support our Troops: bring them home’.”

The conference affirmed the continued importance of advocating independence for Quebec. This is vital for advancing the class struggle in a country where Anglo chauvinism, and the Quebec nationalism that it generates and reinforces, has deeply divided the working class on national lines. As the document explained: “In advocating independence we seek to lay the basis for the workers in both English Canada and Quebec to see that the enemy is their own exploiters, not ‘the French’ or ‘les anglais’.” Advocacy of independence is equally important at times like the present when active enthusiasm for it in Quebec is at a relatively low ebb. As the document noted:

“From the late 1960s to today there have always been ebbs and flows in active support for sovereignty, and we should avoid impressionism about the durability of the current conjuncture. The national question continues to inform and shape virtually every political question in this country—it will not go away. Harper will make deals with Quebec in order to get votes and stay in office, but he is an Anglo chauvinist who would not hesitate to use the sword against the Québécois attempting to exercise their legitimate national right to separation. His current gambit of ‘concessions’ to Quebec will backfire at some juncture, just as it did for the Mulroney Tories in 1989-90.”

Since the TL/LT is currently based in English Canada, our propaganda necessarily emphasizes opposition to the dominant Anglo chauvinism. Within Quebec, while still advocating independence, we stress opposition to the bourgeois nationalists of

the Parti and Bloc Québécois. Our “left” opponents, in contrast, embrace the Maple Leaf chauvinists of the NDP in English Canada while, in the main, tailing the nationalists in Quebec. The conference reaffirmed our political opposition to Québec Solidaire, the petty-bourgeois populist party that is championed by just about every Quebec “left” group.

The most sustained labour struggle in the country in the recent period has been in B.C., including strikes by teachers, hospital, city and forestry workers. While in Ontario and Quebec hundreds of thousands of industrial jobs have been axed, contributing to the further weakening of the unions, in Alberta the oil industry has undergone massive expansion and the B.C. Lower Mainland has seen a pre-Olympic construction boom. This has generated a certain sense of social power among sections of organized labour in Western Canada. Interventions by our Vancouver local have stressed the need for political struggle against the NDP social democrats, whose attacks on workers and the poor while ruling B.C. for the capitalists in the 1990s paved the way for the austerity onslaught of today’s provincial Liberal government.

The conference reasserted our understanding that the NDP is a bourgeois workers party—thoroughly pro-capitalist in program but with organic links to the unions via the union bureaucracy. This had earlier been questioned by some comrades, who posited that the NDP was “severing its remaining ties with labour.” Several documents, including a particularly useful one by a leading Vancouver comrade, showed how this argument was impressionistic and superficial. Its ultimate logic—that the bourgeoisie has no more need for social democracy as a mechanism to divert and betray the class struggle—would serve to politically disarm us. The conference document noted:

“Insofar as there have been ruptures between the NDP and sections of the union bureaucracy, it has been the latter who have taken the initiative, notably in the CAW tops’ embrace of the bourgeois Liberal Party. Our strategic task regarding the NDP remains unchanged: we seek to break workers from the politics of social democracy as part of the necessary fight to split the working-class base of the NDP from the pro-capitalist leadership and forge a revolutionary party.”

A Leninist “Tribune of the People”

We fight to forge a party that acts, in Lenin’s words, as a “tribune of the people”—fighting against all manifestations of capitalist oppression and state tyranny, from police repression of black youth to the “war on terror” attacks on Muslims and more. Comrades addressed particular proposals for further propaganda on the fight against Native oppression, as well as on the struggles for gay rights and women’s liberation.

The document noted how the latter questions “get less and less attention from the fake left,” and affirmed that “for us such social questions form a vital part of our liberating Marxist outlook.” The rulers’ anti-sex witchhunt is a particularly explosive issue, especially where it intersects youth. Our opposition to state interference in consensual sexual relations—a stance that should be elementary for Marxists—has brought howls of outrage from reformist “leftists” whose hysteria dovetails perfectly with the bourgeoisie’s moral crusade to reinforce the family, the central instrument for the oppression of women and gays.

The work of the Partisan Defense Committee, the legal and social defense organization associated with the TL/LT, has expanded in the past period, and the conference took steps to

further strengthen it. The PDC's annual Holiday Appeal for class-war prisoners has been held publicly in Toronto since 2004 alongside more informal events in Vancouver. Representatives of unions and black and Native rights groups have addressed these events, which have focused on the fight to free Mumia Abu-Jamal. Our efforts have resulted in a number of unions, other groups and prominent individuals adding their names to a widely circulated statement initiated by the PDC in the U.S. that demands "the immediate freedom of Mumia Abu-Jamal, an innocent man."

Throughout, we have emphasized how Mumia's case exemplifies the oppressive racism and national chauvinism of capitalist North America. In Canada, we fight for the working class to take up the cause of immigrants and minorities, Native people and the Québécois, and stress that only workers revolution can create an egalitarian socialist society. In the U.S., the fight for Mumia's freedom is part of our struggle for black liberation through socialist revolution. The Spartacist League/U.S. fights for *revolutionary integrationism*—the full integration of black people, an oppressed race-colour caste segregated at the bottom of society, into an egalitarian socialist America.

The conference document noted how, as in other ICL sections, reviving systematic defense work "required a political struggle against a tendency to denigrate it as not political or as a species of liberal social work." In fact, Mumia's case poses point blank the character of the capitalist state and the need for class-struggle defense, as opposed to the reformist program of reliance on the courts expressed in the calls for a "new trial" that are the stock-in-trade of reformist groups like the I.S. and Socialist Action.

In this regard, the document noted the role of the "International Bolshevik Tendency" (BT), whose longest-standing operation is in Toronto:

"The BT remains what it has always been: a walking anti-Spartacist provocation whose occasional 'left' pretensions mask typically social-democratic politics, notably their opposition to independence for Quebec. The BT assiduously retails its slanders against us as an entrée to other milieus. This is crystal clear in their role around the Mumia Abu-Jamal case. From Oakland to Toronto to London, the BT works to build unity with the liberals and reformists who call for a new trial, thereby building illusions in the 'justice' of the capitalist courts which have upheld the racist frame-up of Mumia for a quarter of a century."

The Logan Dossier, a newly published ICL bulletin, documents in detail the crimes against communist morality of the BT's central international leader, Bill Logan, which led to his expulsion from our international tendency at our First International Conference in 1979 (see article, page 6).

Steeling Our Cadre for Struggles Ahead

Two educational sessions were held during the conference. One was a panel discussion on the impact of significant immigration over the past few decades and its intertwining with prospects for proletarian struggle against North American capitalism. An overarching theme was that defense of immigrant rights is key to the unity and integrity of the working class as a whole. This is further elaborated in the front page article of this issue.

The other educational dealt with the early years of the Communist Party of Canada, based in large part on Ian Angus' excellent 1981 book *Canadian Bolsheviks*, which has recently been republished. The preparations for this educa-

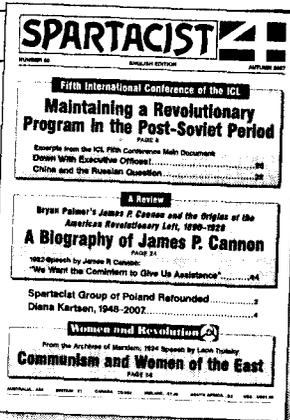
tional paralleled broader discussion in the ICL around Bryan Palmer's valuable new biography of founding U.S. Communist leader James P. Cannon, which laid the basis for a review in the new *Spartacist*.

In his presentation, comrade Andrew Shilling noted that many lessons, positive and negative, can be drawn from the work of our revolutionary forebears of the 1920s for the forging of a communist vanguard today. These range from the need for a programmatic *split* with the reformists, to the need for class opposition to bourgeois Canadian nationalism, to policies for communist work in the trade unions, and much more.

A Nominating Commission was appointed to solicit opinions on the composition of a new Central Committee and recommend a slate to the conference. The reporter for the commission noted the challenge we face in developing a new generation of party leaders. While comrades at the conference spanned several political generations, our evolved leadership is largely composed of older comrades with 25 and more years of political experience. We are proud to have a number of women cadre, including from non-European backgrounds, playing a central role throughout the organization. TL/LT cadres also play important roles internationally, especially in the generation of propaganda for *Spartacist* and for the SL/U.S. biweekly paper, *Workers Vanguard*, which plays a politically cohering role for the entire ICL. The new CC, elected by secret ballot, includes a component of younger comrades who have come forward to lead areas of work.

Since the last TL/LT conference, we have made progress in recognizing and fighting against the pressures to adapt to liberal-bourgeois consciousness and in maintaining a proletarian revolutionary perspective. Nonetheless, as the document from the ICL Fifth International Conference soberly noted, "We need to do a lot better when it comes to instilling a sense of purpose that our small forces through the power of our program have an impact on social struggles, and that we are the only ones with a program for abolishing capitalism, the source of exploitation, imperialist wars, racist discrimination and women's oppression."

The challenge ahead is to continue the struggle for authentic revolutionary Marxism—through external intervention and polemical engagement, internal political struggle and clarification, and not least, systematic cadre education to instill and critically review the lessons of historical experience. Our conference marked our commitment, alongside our comrades throughout the ICL, to reforge a Trotskyist Fourth International to lead the struggle for communism worldwide. ■

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Logan

(continued from page 7)

practice in Wellington, New Zealand, as a professional “celebrant”—a New Age version of evangelical preacher and spiritual healer. As detailed below in the section titled “A Postscript on Bill Logan and the BT: Garbage Doesn’t Walk by Itself,” various public accounts by former members of the PRG and BT attest that Logan has continued some of the same kinds of practices for which we expelled him 28 years ago. For more on the question of the BT’s peculiar political physiognomy, we refer readers to the above-cited bulletins; several editions of *Hate Trotskyism, Hate the Spartacist League*, our bulletin series consisting mainly of reprints of anti-Spartacist polemics by our opponents; the ICL pamphlet, *The International Bolshevik Tendency—What Is It?* (August 1995) and numerous articles dealing with the BT in our indexed bound volumes of *Workers Vanguard* (see, for example, “Kneeling Before the Body of General Wolfe on the Plains of Abraham,” *WV* No. 827, 28 May 2004).

In publishing the documentary record of the Logan trial, we aim to make clear to a new generation of leftists that the likes of Logan have no place in the workers movement, to expose his opportunist “Bolshevik” Tendency for the suspect outfit it is and to demolish its lying smears and slanders against our party. Hopefully, the belated release of this bulletin will serve a broader purpose as well. In braying over the alleged “death of communism” in the years since the counter-revolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union in 1991-92, the very same bourgeois propagandists who apologize for a system of imperialist mass murder denounce those who seek to liberate humanity from class exploitation as evil incarnate—power-hungry, corrupt, pathologically violent and hostile to

all human sensibilities. As this record of our fight to rid the workers movement of Logan shows, such attributes are inimical to the very essence of authentic communism.

But the features that made Logan the repulsive creature he is are not unusual in *bourgeois* society. The accumulation of wealth and the administration of power necessary to maintain and perpetuate that privileged status often attract people who have qualities like Logan’s. The British ruling class, particularly in its Tory embodiment, has long been notorious in its appetite for blood sports, capital punishment (most recently mere hanging), corporal punishment in its schools and associated sado-masochistic sexual proclivities. All these things, taken together, serve an important social purpose. They outfit the rulers of the country and the late empire to properly administer their holdings, both in regard to the downtrodden and exploited, and in defense against imperialist rivals.

Logan was a product of this system in the small, neo-Victorian dominion of New Zealand. His political origins, amid the radicalization of the 1960s, lay in the right wing of New Zealand bourgeois politics, the then ruling National Party (see Bill Logan, “Never Exactly One of the Lads...,” ed. Michael King, *One of the Boys?* [Auckland, New Zealand: Heinemann, 1988]). His social and educational background lay in New Zealand’s English-style “public school” (elite private school) culture, steeped in imperialist elitism and misogynist sadism. Numerous people have revolted against such backgrounds to become Communists, not least heroic Soviet spies like Kim Philby. But even as an avowed communist, Logan boasted of clinging to “the style of a New Zealand private schoolboy who was almost always a class captain, cub-scout sixer or school prefect” (“Personal Notes in Preparation for a Discussion re the Sharpe Problem,” 23 August 1978, “On the Logan Regime,” Part I). He relished the low cunning and quiet self-confidence that enabled him to play on the vulnerabilities of others.

We strive for a society in which all forms of social oppression, exploitation and degradation—the warped byproducts of material scarcity—will be things of the past. To this end, we seek to make the proletariat—though shaped by the deformities of capitalist class rule—conscious of its historic role as the gravedigger of the capitalist system, and of class society as a whole. Power politics, lying and sexual manipulation are antithetical to this purpose. The Leninist party demands a monopoly on the *political* activities of those who join our movement. All the more so do we draw a hard line against interference in comrades’ personal lives. Driven by considerations of power and control, Logan was a malicious puppet-master who was sadistically destructive of people’s personal lives—making people live together who did not want to do so, causing people who did want to live together to break up. There is no place for the likes of a William King Logan in our movement. ■

Bolshevik Tendency: Kneeling Before the Body of General Wolfe on the Plains of Abraham

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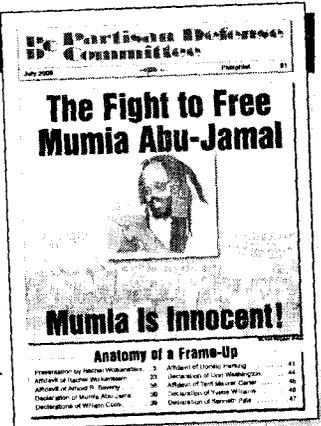
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Spread the word! Contact the PDC for copies of *The Fight to Free Mumia Abu-Jamal—Mumia Is Innocent!* This pamphlet arms activists in the struggle for Mumia's freedom by presenting the political basis of the state vendetta against Mumia and the explosive evidence which completely destroys the more than two-decades-long frame-up of this eloquent fighter for black freedom. It is available for \$1. Get the PDC button: "Free Mumia Abu-Jamal! Abolish the Racist Death Penalty!"—\$1 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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Mumia...

(continued from page 5)

1981 there were at least three ongoing federal probes of the Philly cops including mob links. The targets included the entire chain of command for the "investigation" of Faulkner's shooting: the head of Homicide, the Central Division commander and the ranking officer at the scene of the shooting, Alfonzo Giordano. A longtime henchman of Rizzo, Giordano targeted the Black Panther Party and oversaw the 1977-78 police siege of MOVE's Powelton Village house. He knew exactly who Mumia was and had both motive and opportunity to frame him up. But despite the widespread evidence supporting Beverly, court after court has refused to hear his testimony. Evidence of Mumia's innocence continues to grow. In the past year, German radical-liberal writer Michael Schiffmann has publicized newly unearthed crime scene photos showing that police tampered with much of the evidence of Faulkner's killing in order to prosecute Mumia.

Schiffmann, however, has undermined the evidence of Mumia's innocence by joining those who claim that it is "incredible" that a cop would hire a hitman to kill another cop. In 1999, when Beverly first confessed, Mumia's lead counsel at the time, Leonard Weinglass, and his co-counsel Dan Williams suppressed the evidence. Then, in 2001, Williams published a book, *Executing Justice*, as a "pre-emptive strike" against Beverly's account, which he declared was "bona fide lunacy." This was seized upon by the prosecution to keep the testimony out of court. For this betrayal, Mumia fired Weinglass and Williams, and his new legal team brought the Beverly confession forward.

In response, liberal writer Dave Lindorff popped up as a self-appointed Mumia "expert" and launched his own attack on Beverly's confession. A central point of Lindorff's 2003 book, *Killing Time*, was to trash Beverly's testimony. Lindorff has never offered a single fact to refute Beverly and even acknowledges the widespread Philly police corruption and that cops sometimes kill other cops. Instead, Lindorff argues that hiring hitmen is not the "standard modus operandi for police executions" and that it "seems improbable that they would involve so many people in

the carrying out of such a heinous plot." Echoing Lindorff, Schiffmann contended in a November 2006 interview that the Beverly account involves "too many people in the know, too many imponderables in its planned execution."

That the cops would work hand in hand with gangsters is common knowledge, except perhaps for those blinded by illusions in the police as "public servants." On the heels of highly publicized cases of collusion between cops and/or Feds and mobsters in Boston and New York, just this September Chicago cop Jerome Finnigan was indicted on charges of plotting, with fellow police officer Keith Herrera, to hire two street gang members to murder another cop whom they correctly suspected of working for the Feds in a police corruption probe. Finnigan has been at the center of federal and state criminal cases charging Special Operations cops with shaking down "drug suspects" for hundreds of thousands of dollars through home invasions, false arrests, robbery and kidnapping. In August, he told Herrera that the hit was "all taken care of," and in September he said that they "might as well take care of all the witnesses against them" (*Chicago Sun-Times*, 27 September). What Finnigan did not know was that in the meantime Herrera had started working for the Feds and was wearing a wire.

In our article "Class-Struggle Defense vs. Faith in Capitalist 'Justice'" (*Workers Vanguard* No. 892, 11 May), we wrote: "Why would Lindorff and Schiffmann, two self-proclaimed advocates for Mumia, follow Williams by tearing at the Beverly confession, doing the prosecutors' work for them? At bottom, it is because the Beverly evidence shows that Mumia was the victim not of a rogue cop, bad prosecutor or racist judge but of an entire 'justice' system in which the cops, prosecutors and courts act to uphold the class interests of the capitalist rulers."

What is crucially needed is mass protest on Mumia's behalf, centered on the social power of labour. If undertaken with a mobilization of the union movement, the fight to free Mumia and abolish the racist death penalty would be a first, giant step toward infusing workers with the consciousness that the whole system of capitalist repression must be smashed through socialist revolution.

—Adapted from *Workers Vanguard* No. 903, 23 November

Cop Taser Killing...

(continued from page 3)

representatives of the ruling class, and perhaps recommending token punishment for someone involved. The more thorough the investigation appears, the better it serves its ideological purpose: to prove that the system works, that the state is accountable to the 'will of the people,' and that justice has been served."

Grotesquely; while calling for a "temporary moratorium" on taser use, B.C. NDP leader Carole James urges "proper training" so the cops can use tasers "in the protection of themselves and the public" (November 16 statement). It was the B.C. NDP government that introduced tasers in the province in 1999. Then attorney-general Ujjal Dosanjh (now a federal Liberal) called the taser an "effective alternative to lethal force" (*Province*, 18 November). And this was *after* a string of taser-related deaths in the U.S. In power, the NDP has not hesitated to unleash the full force of state repression as they did in 1995 in launching one of the largest RCMP operations in history against Native protesters at Gustafsen Lake.

Canadian Press reported that in 2002-2005 there were 230 tasing "events" in B.C., by far the highest incidence of any province. Unsurprisingly, a large number of the victims were Native people. Humiliation and intimidation by the cops is a daily reality for Natives and others in Vancouver's destitute, crumbling Downtown Eastside. Emblematic of this was the death of Frank Paul. Nine years ago police tossed this Native man like so much garbage into a Downtown Eastside alley where he died of hypothermia. Today his death, too, is the subject of what will certainly be a whitewash government inquiry.

On every level, Robert Dziekanski's fate stands as an indictment of the ruinous, violent capitalist system. The Solidarność capitalist counterrevolution in Poland destroyed the bureaucratically deformed workers state in 1989, bringing mass unemployment and poverty. Dziekanski and his mother, Zofia Cisowski, from the devastated mining region of Silesia, were part of a mass exodus of some two million Poles who have emigrated in recent years in search of jobs and better lives. She had been a

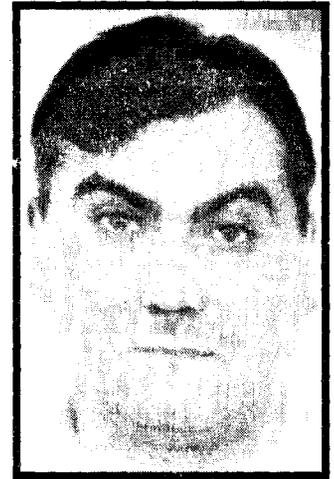
carpenter, while he had worked in construction. Whether in Canada or in now-capitalist Poland, bourgeois rule means untold misery.

In recent years in B.C. there have been numerous strikes, as workers fight back against the attacks of the bosses and attempt to get a piece of the vast profits that the capitalists are raking in during the present Olympics-fuelled boom. The social power of the multiethnic working class needs to be mobilized in struggle on behalf of all the many victims of capitalist oppression.

The NDP social democrats, along with the trade-union misleaders, are obstacles to such struggle, standing in defense of the capitalist system.

Similarly, the NDP-loyal left acts to foster deadly illusions in the capitalist state. In a November 21 statement, the Communist Party of Canada added its voice to the pleas for inquiries and moratoriums on tasers, declaring that it "supports these demands, as part of a wider range of measures to establish full civilian oversight and control of police forces." The idea that the police can be "controlled" by "civilian oversight" under capitalism is a reformist lie, as shown by the entire history of working-class struggles. We say: Cops, prison and border guards and private security guards have no place in the unions.

The bourgeoisie wants to dissolve the anger over the cop murder of Robert Dziekanski into the hot air of a public inquiry. What is needed is the formation of a revolutionary vanguard party that lays bare the source of police violence in the capitalist system, and fights to sweep way the entire machinery of bourgeois state repression in a socialist revolution. ■



Perrin/Vancouver Sun

Robert Dziekanski.

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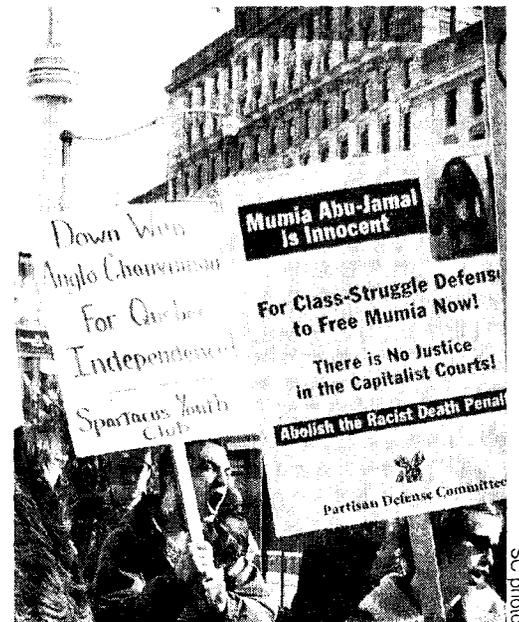
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Defend Quebec Students...

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one of the bedrocks of class-divided capitalist society, where manual labour is degraded as cheap and unworthy. While this division cannot be fundamentally overcome short of socialist revolution, the Cégeps—which nominally have no tuition fees—have nonetheless enabled working-class youth in technical programs to rub shoulders, including in struggle, with university-bound petty-bourgeois students, often to the benefit of both. Cégep du Vieux-Montréal, for example, is known both for its humanities programs and for the teaching of trades such as mechanics. Tellingly, the current capitalist onslaught to roll back many gains from the Quiet Revolution has included schemes to disband the Cégep system.

Quebec's tuition fees have remained unchanged since 1994. In 1996, Lucien Bouchard's PQ regime made moves to raise them, but backed off in the face of a widely-supported student strike, leading to the still-current tuition freeze. After the defeat of the 1995 referendum on sovereignty, Bouchard & Co. had no stomach for a major confrontation with student protesters. But the same PQ government—with current PQ leader Pauline Marois as a central figure—soon began its assault on social programs and public-sector workers under a “zero deficit” program of sweeping budget cuts. The PQ government's defeat of a widely popular strike by the nurses union in defense of the health-care system in 1999 helped to pave the way for the even more savage attacks of the Charest Liberals.

The capitalists everywhere are on the rampage against the rights and gains of workers and the oppressed. Defeating these attacks requires united class struggle. But the workers of English Canada and Quebec are deeply divided on national lines. In English Canada, the trade-union bureaucracy and NDP push the lie that the workers have a common interest with the Canadian capitalists. This includes flagrant chauvinism against Quebec, shown for example in the NDP's support to the Clarity Act, anti-democratic legislation that denies Quebec's right to national self-determination. For their part, the pro-capitalist Québécois union tops push support to their own bourgeois nationalists, represented by the PQ and Bloc

Québécois. We Marxists advocate independence for Quebec, seeking to get the national question “off the agenda” and thereby make clear to the workers in both English Canada and Quebec that their “own” capitalists are the enemy, not each other. This is the road to forging fighting anti-capitalist unity among Québécois and English Canadian workers, including their key immigrant/minority components.

Dissatisfaction with the PQ has led in recent years to the formation of a putatively more “left-wing” nationalist-populist party, Québec Solidaire. But while QS occasionally poses as a defender of labour and the oppressed, it is unambiguously wedded to the capitalist system of exploitation and oppression. While calling to “progressively” reduce tuition fees and expressing “concern” over police repression, a recent QS communiqué solidarizes with the campus administrations by noting, “These institutions are of course protecting the security of their personnel and property” (quebecsolidaire.net, 16 November)!

Unlike QS, ASSÉ correctly calls for the immediate abolition of tuition fees and generally speaks in favour of full accessibility to higher education. But the anarchist-influenced ASSÉ simultaneously promotes utopian hopes for a “just” education system under “democratic” capitalism. For instance, in a 14 November statement responding to the recent police repression, ASSÉ quotes one of its spokesmen: “This disproportional repression is unworthy of a democratic society: police brutality has no place in silencing those who dare to call for social change.” In fact, repressing social protest is exactly the job of police under capitalism!

To fully open universities to workers and the oppressed, and to give a modicum of independence to youth, the Spartacus Youth Clubs call for free tuition, open admissions and a living stipend for all students. Only the overthrow of the capitalist state, in this country and internationally, and the establishment of a global planned economy, can lay the basis for an end to class elitism, enforced ignorance and oppression everywhere. Achieving this requires forging a revolutionary workers party that can win workers and the oppressed to an understanding of the need to sweep away the entire oppressive capitalist system through socialist revolution. ■

Immigration...

(continued from page 1)

many years the Jane-Finch corridor has been in the gun sights of the racist cops. Basic democratic rights have been shredded in the name of a racist anti-gun, anti-drug hysteria that targets primarily black youth. In June, 700 cops converged on this area—one of several police raids over the past year. Doors were kicked in and families were terrorized. Ninety-five people were carted off to the lockups, all on the vaguest suspicions or for merely being in a particular place at a particular time.

With the massive attacks on industrial jobs, especially well-paid union ones, there has been a sharp spike in unemployment among black youth in this city, now an astronomical 32 percent! To the capitalist class and its armed fist the cops, much of the second- and third-generation offspring of African and Caribbean immigrants are a surplus population, and racist terror and scapegoating is on the order of the day. In many ways, these ghettoized inner suburbs in Toronto resemble the Paris *banlieues* (suburban ghettos) where youth of North African origin are subject to intense state terror and police violence.

In spite of factory closures and layoffs, black and Asian workers remain key components of the powerful unions in the city, such as the transit union. Union protests against the outrages carried out by Mayor David Miller's cops would give pause to the thugs in blue. Struggling against racial oppression requires unleashing this social power against the capitalists. The rulers' attacks on minorities can be combated effectively only from the perspective of class vs. class, pointing to the need to overthrow the capitalist system and replace it with an internationally planned, collectivized economy.

Our starting point as communists is the interests of the working class in the struggle against capital. Yet in fighting for socialist revolution, we are confronted by a hard reality: the enormous gulf between the current consciousness of the working class, and the need for workers to take state power, expropriate the bourgeois class and commence the socialist construction of society. Bridging that gulf requires addressing the roadblocks to class struggle the rulers place in our way. That's really what this forum is about.

The Canadian working class is decisively multiracial.

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Immigration...

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Today in cities like Vancouver and Toronto, immigrants and minorities—second- and third-generation Canadians—comprise close to half of the population and they are fast on the way to becoming majorities. Toronto is one of the most diverse cities in the world. The immigration rate per capita in Canada is one of the highest in the world.

The capitalists seek to modulate the flow of immigration to suit their labour requirements. In boom times, immigrants are encouraged, and when the bust comes, they are scapegoated for “stealing jobs.” And the bosses always foment anti-immigrant racism to poison workers’ struggles. The desperate efforts of people from much of Asia, Africa and Latin America to get to Canada or another advanced capitalist country by any means reflect the systematic imperialist looting and impoverishment of vast swathes of the Third World.

Immigrant workers often bring with them militant traditions of social struggle and can thus form a human bridge linking the struggles of working people internationally. The Brooks strike is one example of the way in which minority and immigrant workers have been and will continue to be catalysts for class struggle. In Ontario, too, minority workers were prominent in the recent plant occupations in Scarborough and Hamilton that won severance pay and unpaid wages in the face of plant closures. In Vancouver in summer 2005, 1,200 mainly Punjabi port truckers shut down much of the port. The collective action of this small number of workers had a huge impact, showing the strategic weight of immigrant labour. 25,000 containers piled up on the docks in Vancouver, costing the bosses some \$75 million a day! Only a third of these workers were unionized—organizing all the port truckers would greatly strengthen the waterfront unions and undercut divisions between immigrant and Canadian-born workers.

Marxism and Immigration

The task confronting communists—us—is to forge a leadership that can tap into this powerful proletarian army in the struggle to overthrow the capitalist system. Our Marxist program speaks directly to the burning needs of immigrants and minorities. We demand full citizenship rights for everyone who has managed to get here. We are unalterably opposed to the bourgeoisie’s anti-immigrant laws and regulations. Against the capitalists’ attempts to use low-wage, often undocumented workers as a club against the unions, we seek to mobilize the unions to fight deportations through class-struggle means, reaching out to organize such workers into the unions with full rights.

Worldwide, the imperialist rulers have perfected the art of playing upon national, ethnic, religious and sexual divisions to perpetuate their barbarous rule. Their weapons of mass deception include their press, political parties and preachers. Above all, they have their state and its cops, courts and prisons, which exist to protect the capitalists’ “right” to exploit and live off the labour of the working class. The bosses also have at their disposal the pro-capitalist union misleaders and social democrats of the NDP, who push the nationalist lie that Canadian workers have a common interest with Canadian capitalists.

Our program flows from the reality of the world capitalist economy. Imperialism, the highest stage of capitalism, is not a “policy choice” for the capitalists, but the inevitable product of the constant search for cheap sources of labour and raw materials, including in competition with other capitalists



Battistoni/CP

2004 strike by multiracial B.C. Hospital Employees’ Union against pay cuts, longer hours and privatization.

domestically and globally. This has twice resulted in bloody inter-imperialist wars for the division and redivision of the globe. On the world stage, the Canadian capitalists serve as junior partners to the U.S. imperialists. Today we again see growing inter-imperialist rivalries, for example, between the U.S. and Europe. There is a huge contradiction between the U.S.’s enormous military might and its declining economic weight, symbolized best by the hollowed-out auto and steel industries of the American Midwest. This makes for a deeply unstable and unpredictable world. Everywhere the capitalists are ratcheting up national antagonisms while attacking social programs, workers rights and minorities.

As communists, whether it’s immigration or trade policy, we don’t seek to tell the bourgeoisie how to run their system. Unlike liberals and the reformist left, we don’t think there can be a fair or non-racist immigration policy under capitalism. There is no answer to the immiseration produced by the boom-and-bust cycles of capitalism short of proletarian socialist revolution that takes power out of the hands of the irrational ruling class. Basing ourselves on the lessons of history—in particular the victorious October 1917 Russian Revolution—we understand that workers cannot achieve emancipation through a futile quest to reform the capitalist system.

The counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet bureaucratically degenerated workers state and the East European deformed workers states in the late 1980s and early 1990s was an unprecedented defeat for the international proletariat. It has produced a retrogression of political consciousness, uneven to be sure. It means that in general the proletariat today does not view its struggles through the prism of the fight for socialism. The bourgeoisie lies that communism is dead. They want workers to believe that they cannot fight in their own interests. In spite of this, the class struggle continues, convulsively in some places. It is the task of communists to give leadership to the struggles of the proletariat.

Maple Leaf Chauvinism: Poison to Working-Class Struggle

There is an emerging economic divide in this country with a capitalist boom in the West and major deindustrialization in

Ontario and Quebec. The capitalists are in a plunder mode. All of Alberta's crude oil exports go to the U.S., where they are considered a reliable alternative to Near Eastern oil. These vast riches are being taken in the most short-sighted and destructive way possible, at tremendous environmental and human cost.

This has also changed the face of Alberta, literally. No longer a lily-white bastion of ranchers and oil magnates, a vast expansion of the working class has produced a growing minority population which includes, for example, some 50,000 Muslims. With a labour shortage, many workers have been able to wrest higher wages from the bosses—but they face an exorbitant cost of living. You *might* get \$30 an hour but you'll have to pay a fortune to live in a trailer in Fort McMurray.

In line with the capitalists' demand for labour, and to drive down labour costs, the government has expanded the Temporary Foreign Worker program, providing fast-track approvals for employers in Alberta and B.C. In Alberta, foreign-born temporary workers now exceed immigrants. They come from Poland, Mexico, Venezuela, the Philippines and China. All immigrants face discrimination. Immeasurably worse, however, is the situation of the temporary and migrant workers. Without civil or legal rights, mostly without union representation, bound to their employer, fearful of deportation, with no hope of permanent residency let alone citizenship, these workers are to be thrown aside if they become injured or unruly, for example by organizing a union.

In B.C., construction workers from Costa Rica, Colombia and Ecuador employed by SNC-Lavalin SELI Canada in a rapid-transit tunnel project were getting \$10.43 an hour, while domestic workers got \$20-25. A complaint lodged by the Construction and Specialized Workers' Union stated bluntly that these temporary workers were drastically underpaid because they were "dark-skinned, Spanish-speaking foreign nationals." A union organizing drive, with special attention to minority and immigrant workers and demanding equal pay for equal work, could turn this around. Such a fight would go a long way toward revitalizing the labour movement.

The Alberta Federation of Labour has created a "temporary foreign worker advocate," but these union misleaders have also responded to temporary foreign-born workers with

vile nativist reaction. Targeting Chinese workers hired to work on the Horizon project north of Fort McMurray, the head of the Alberta Building Trades Council wrapped it in the Maple Leaf: "We're talking about replacing Canadian construction workers," he said. "This is not a union issue anymore. This is a Canadian issue" (Canadian Press, 27 April 2006).

In B.C. there have been similar outbursts. A proposal to hire 400 Chinese workers to work in an underground coal mine in northern B.C. sparked howls from the B.C. Federation of Labour. Jim Sinclair, the B.C. Fed president, captured how the pro-capitalist union bureaucracy views the world through the prism of the capitalist class: "The government and this company have lost sight of the idea of Canada—how this country grows," he said, "Most of our wealth comes from the ground, and the way we share that wealth is that we do the work" (*Northern Miner*, 11-17 June).

Well, "we" indeed do the work. As to "sharing the wealth," that is a capitalist myth. The wages workers earn are simply enough to reproduce their labour—what is socially necessary for a worker to exist in the given place and time. There is no "fair day's work for a fair day's pay." Here's what Karl Marx said in *Wage Labour and Capital*:

"To say that the most favourable condition for wage labour is the most rapid possible growth of productive capital is only to say that the more rapidly the working class increases and enlarges the power that is hostile to it, the wealth that does not belong to it and that rules over it, the more favourable will be the conditions under which it is allowed to labour anew at increasing bourgeois wealth, at enlarging the power of capital, content with forging for itself the golden chains by which the bourgeoisie drags it in its train."

The point, as Marx said, is to struggle for the complete abolition of the wages system.

Protectionism Fuels Racist Reaction

The capitalists have but one goal: to maximize their profits. To appeal to the rationality or humanity of this class, or to see an identity of interest, is a dead end. In the last five years close to 300,000 manufacturing jobs have disappeared, largely in Southern Ontario. As the capitalists try to bolster their profits, production is shifted offshore, increasingly to Asia and especially China. The union bureaucracy answers the resulting job losses with nationalist protectionism. That is, they appeal to one wing of the capitalists, looking to strengthen them against their competitors.

In the agitation against the "free trade" FTA and NAFTA pacts in the 1980s and early 1990s, protectionism in Canada was mainly defined by anti-Americanism. There was also strong anti-Japanese sentiment, still prevalent today. This is all toxic to the working class. Some of you may recall the murder of Vincent Chin, a Chinese American man, in the 1980s. Taken to be Japanese American, he was beaten to death by an auto foreman. This crazed racist blamed Vincent Chin for the mass layoffs ravaging Detroit at the time.

Today protectionism in this country is overwhelmingly directed against workers in Asia including, increasingly, China. The union misleaders have been pounding their protectionist "Made in Canada Matters" campaign, and this was again the theme of Labour Day as Canadian flags fluttered everywhere. On my way to the Labour Day parade, as the streetcar passed through Chinatown, I overheard some functionaries from the

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CAW

Union bureaucrats push chauvinist "Made in Canada Matters" campaign at June 2006 Toronto press conference. Protectionism sabotages working-class struggles and international solidarity.

Immigration...

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Steelworkers union who declared, as if on cue: "We're not supposed to be buying Chinese." Blaming Chinese workers for job losses is an expression of the hysteria against anything Chinese, whether it's a Barbie doll from Mattel or a miner from China, and on the street and the shop floor it translates into racist poison.

Instead of lining up with the bosses here at home against workers abroad, we counterpose the international collaboration of workers against the common class enemy. For the bourgeoisie, protectionism and "free trade" are options that it can debate. For the proletariat to choose protectionism is to reject the program of internationalism, to renounce the struggle for socialist revolution. The solution to the crises of capitalism can only be an international socialist planned economy.

Protectionism *weakens* the position of workers in their struggles against the capitalists. The union tops' calls for protectionism are doubly pernicious when directed against China, a bureaucratically deformed workers state. Capitalist rule was overthrown by the 1949 Revolution, leading to the building of a collectivized economy, a huge victory and gain for the working class internationally. The Chinese Revolution was of world-historic significance, laying the basis for an enormous leap in social progress.

The gains of the Chinese Revolution have, however, been undermined from the start by Stalinist misrule. The bureaucracy that rules in China is not a class but a privileged caste that sits atop the workers state. Following the Stalinist dogma of "socialism in one country" and its corollary, "peaceful coexistence," the Chinese Communist Party regime, from Mao Zedong through to today, conciliates imperialism, not least through selling out revolutions abroad. Since Mao's death, his successors have embarked on a program of "market reforms" whose impact has been quite contradictory. While penetration by offshore Chinese and imperialist capital strengthens internal counterrevolutionary forces, increased trade and investment have also led to a marked increase in development, including through the importation of industrial machinery. We fight to defend and extend the gains of the 1949 Revolution, and to forge a Leninist-Trotskyist party to lead the Chinese working class, at the head of the peasants and urban poor, to sweep away this bureaucracy through *proletarian political revolution*.

Particularly since the destruction of the Soviet Union, the U.S., Canadian and other imperialist powers have had as a central goal the destruction of the Chinese workers state. They aim to restore capitalist rule in order to turn the Chinese mainland into a gigantic sweatshop. Just as workers in Canada and the U.S. must defend their unions against the bosses despite the sellout labour leadership, it is the duty of the international working class to *defend China unconditionally against imperialism and internal counterrevolution*.

The anti-Communist union bureaucrats in Canada and the U.S. have a long record of dirty work on behalf of the imperialist rulers. As in East Europe and the former Soviet Union, these misleaders are abetting the imperialist drive for capitalist counterrevolution in China. The Canadian Labour Congress has joined with openly pro-imperialist outfits like the Falun Dafa religious sect, the Canada Tibet Committee and others in an anti-Communist "human rights" crusade against China. In this same spirit, in the 1980s these union mislead-

ers championed Polish Solidarność, a reactionary movement masquerading as a trade union that was in the forefront of the drive for capitalist restoration in East Europe.

They speak hypocritically about the rights of Chinese workers. But genuine solidarity with the embattled Chinese worker and peasant masses must be based on opposition to the rapacious imperialist rulers and defense of the gains of the Chinese Revolution. Working-class struggle must be consciously waged as an *international* fight. In Canada that means breaking workers from the flag-waving chauvinism and China-bashing pushed by the labour tops and the NDP.

Labour Must Fight "Anti-Terror" Repression

I spoke earlier of the capitalists' "weapons of mass deception." Among the deadliest for the proletariat is the "war on terror." Internationally, the imperialists are engaged in bloody occupations in Afghanistan and Iraq. We demand that Canadian and all imperialist troops get out of Afghanistan, and that the U.S. get out of Iraq. We fight for class struggle at home, and we link that to opposition to the racist anti-terror hysteria. Muslims are the immediate target, but a more fundamental purpose is to intimidate and constrain the working class and its struggles. The kinds of conspiracy charges wielded against "terror" suspects in Canada and the U.S. have long been used against the left and labour movement. In fact, such charges are the state's last refuge when they want to get someone in the absence of a shred of evidence.

We have opposed every repressive law, witchhunt and sting. The Canadian rulers have yet to find anyone guilty of anything, yet people have been detained on security certificates for years without charge. In the case of the Toronto 17—a massive police sting in which the cops' own agent says many of the young Muslim men charged are innocent—many of the charges have already been dropped. Criminally, the NDP's Jack Layton hailed the raids.

On both sides of the border, the rulers are using this repressive climate to target trade unionists, leftist university professors, foreign leftists and more. Port and transportation workers have been singled out especially. Port workers in Canada have been targeted with repressive new regulations that require immigration checks, CSIS checks, criminal record checks, even background checks of your spouse and your former spouse!

The International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) opposed this from the start and they noted that these regulations would target minorities and union activists. But they did so within the framework that port workers should collaborate with the employers and government in the name of "port security." Even now, the ILWU leaders' response to the new regulations is that they are "window dressing" and fail to address "a host of other serious security gaps." In a 2004 submission to the Canadian government, the Canadian ILWU tops quoted and endorsed their American counterparts' statement to a congressional committee:

"Longshore workers are the front-line defense to terrorism in our ports.... The government should, therefore, enlist these dedicated workers as partners rather than as suspects in the efforts to secure our national ports."

—"Submission to Transport Canada," 21 October 2004

To enlist workers as "partners" in the capitalists' "anti-terror" hysteria endangers the labour movement, disarming workers in the face of their class enemy.

What the capitalists can get away with in the "war on terror" is conditioned by the level of labour and social struggle.



Didlick/National Post

April 5 Vancouver rally to commemorate victims of anti-woman violence. Racist capitalism reinforces oppression of immigrant women.

Mobilizing workers against this racist hysteria is central to our struggle to build a revolutionary workers party, a party that will be a real tribune of the people, fighting all manifestations of capitalist violence and barbarism and exposing the workings of the capitalist system for all to see.

When we are able, we put our program in action. In February 2002, soon after the September 11 attacks, when the terror hysteria was at its peak, the Partisan Defense Committee and the Labor Black League for Social Defense organized a labour-centered mobilization against the USA Patriot Act and Maritime Security Act in Oakland, California. This protest drew on a core of mainly black longshoremen from ILWU Local 10 in Oakland. This action was small but significant, showing how the multiracial workers movement can be organized in its own class interest.

Imperialist Subjugation and Women's Oppression

When we speak of immigrants and minorities and overcoming the roadblocks to class struggle, combating anti-woman bigotry and addressing women's oppression is central. That the reformist left rarely addresses the often explosive questions of women's oppression is a measure of how far back political consciousness has been thrown in this post-Soviet period.

At over 250,000 the Canadian Tamil population, concentrated in Toronto, is the largest outside South Asia. Like Muslims, Tamils are also on the government's "anti-terror" hit list. The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) were banned by the Harper government in 2006. This has led to a series of arrests and crackdowns. We are virtually alone among self-described leftists in defending the Tamil nationalists against state repression. In this context I want to note with pride that our organization was invited to address an International Women's Day gathering of over 900 Tamils in Scarborough earlier this year. Our comrade's speech was a model of communist intervention: she defended the Tamil Tigers against the Canadian government crackdown, noting

that it dovetailed with a stepped-up military drive by the Sri Lankan government against the Tamils. She declared our Marxist opposition to the nationalist politics of the LTTE while underlining our defense of the Tamils against the murderous state pogromist violence that has sent hundreds of thousands of Tamils into exile. And she staked out our ground as Bolsheviks in the fight for women's liberation.

The state-backed furor against Muslims has been devastating for Muslim women. The all-party outcry against letting fully veiled Muslim women vote in federal elections without lifting their veils was an instance of gratuitous racism. Voting rules don't require photo ID—no-one saw the faces of the 80,000 people who cast mail ballots during the last federal election. Yet Muslim women were singled out following a similar anti-Muslim backlash in the March Quebec election. To even pose the question, as do the current hearings in Quebec, of how far "reasonable accommodation" of religious minorities should extend is to invite a racist backlash.

These attacks on the voting rights of a minuscule number of Muslim women reek of the anti-Semitic laws and quotas that once barred Jews from attending universities or visiting beaches. This should have met with an outcry of protest from the labour movement. Instead, Jack Layton and his NDP joined in the racist outcry, showing in a chemically pure way how the pro-capitalist social democracy transmits bourgeois reaction into the working class.

The increased prevalence of the Islamic veil on the streets of Toronto, Montreal and elsewhere is in part due to the rise of political Islam internationally. It is also a result of the relentless racism and poverty suffered by Muslim immigrants and their descendents in the imperialist centers. As fighters for women's liberation, we oppose the veil in all its forms as a symbol and an instrument of women's oppression. But we also oppose state bans on the veil and any other religious symbol as racist and discriminatory.

The "multiculturalism" policies promoted by the Canadian rulers serve to reinforce the cultural and racial segregation of minority communities. Hated by right wingers because of its mask of feel-good "tolerance" and "anti-racism," multiculturalism serves to obscure the fact that minority communities, like the rest of society, are *class-divided*. The struggles of immigrant and other minority workers for jobs, unions and equal status requires breaking the grip of religious and other so-called "community leaders."

For the ruling class there is no contradiction between smearing Muslims as "terrorists" while promoting at the same time the most retrograde elements among the Muslim clergy. It all serves to reinforce the grip of capitalism—scapegoating minorities, on the one hand, regimenting them on the other. In 2004-05, we opposed the Ontario Liberal government's plan to allow *sharia* courts to function as part of the state-run arbitration system. We regard all modern religion as an instrument of bourgeois reaction that defends exploitation and befuddles the working people. In contrast, the International Socialists are

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partaking heavily of religious opiates. They backed *sharia* courts, and today pander to the most right-wing forces among Muslims.

Murders of Sikh Women in B.C.

Over the last year there have been protests in the B.C. Lower Mainland that have thrown a spotlight on the intense oppression experienced by South Asian women of Sikh background. In October 2006, the charred remains of Manjit Panghali, an elementary school teacher, were found near a busy ocean port terminal in Surrey. Her husband and brother-in-law have since been charged in her murder. Around the same time, a woman was shot in the face, blinded by her husband before he killed himself, and yet another woman was stabbed to death—her husband is charged with her murder.

These horrific crimes are part of a series of murders of Sikh women in B.C. by their relatives. These killings occur against a backdrop of longstanding racism against people from the Indian subcontinent. The racist backlash which held that the murders reflect Indian people bringing “their problems” here, unable to adapt to the “North American way of life,” was predictable.

Shock and anger rippled through the Punjabi community and beyond, and at the anguished protests in fall 2006 and last April the question of *why* these murders were happening was posed. Violence against women crosses class and ethnic lines with brutal indifference. But these murders are something else. Like so-called “honour killings” among Muslim immigrant families that have taken place in Germany, Britain and other imperialist centers, these murders reflect at bottom the condition of women as property. One pattern among the B.C. Sikh women was their relative economic independence: most of them had good jobs as teachers, school principals, software engineers and so on. In traditional Sikh society—where arranged marriages and dowry are still the norm, including among immigrants in Canada—such independence clashes with traditional culture, especially marriage.

The institution of the family is the main source of women’s oppression. That’s true in the advanced and neocolonial worlds alike. The family is also the main vehicle for the transfer of private property and the regimentation of society. Independence or some form of defiance of parental or spousal control is what sparks “honour killings,” which have also occurred in Canada. In addressing the murder of an immigrant Turkish woman by her family, our German comrades explained: “The concept of ‘family honor,’ i.e., control of the sexuality of women by their family, is not exclusively Islamic, but rather connected to a mode of production where a clan—a series of related extended families—holds and works the land in common” (“‘Honor’ Killings in Germany,” *Workers Vanguard* No. 850, 20 June 2005). As Friedrich Engels put it trenchantly in *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* (1884):

“Such a form of the family shows the transition of the pairing family to monogamy. In order to guarantee the fidelity of the wife, that is, the paternity of the children, the woman is placed in the man’s absolute power; if he kills her, he is but exercising his right.”

Imperialist penetration in the colonial world blocked the path of social and economic development, and to this day it

reinforces all that is backward and retrograde as a prop to bourgeois rule. It is this fact which is central to explaining the underlying causes of such brutal crimes as the murder of wives or “honour” killings. Today among concentrations of immigrants in the Western imperialist countries, capitalist rule continues to reinforce anti-woman practices, from the barbarism of female genital mutilation to veiling to arranged marriages.

However, it would be false to portray minority women as helpless victims. When we speak of immigrants and minorities as catalysts for class struggle, we needn’t look far to see that women workers play a crucial role in such struggles. In the forefront of the militant HEU hospital workers strike of three years ago in B.C. were Filipino, Chinese and other minority women. Unions like UNITE HERE are heavily female and minority. These overworked and underpaid workers have waged many struggles for their rights, often with great élan and courage.

Against the “divide and rule” policies that are intrinsic to a society based on brutal exploitation, we fight for the voluntary integration of all minorities based on full equality. Eradicating racism, women’s oppression and all forms of discrimination requires a revolutionary struggle, mobilizing the working class to uproot capitalism.

No One Is Illegal: Liberalism, Reformism and Immigrants

This is not, however, the approach of the reformist left and of immigration advocacy groups such as No One Is Illegal (NOII). At its most left-sounding, NOII’s Vancouver group opposes protectionist calls to “defend Canadian jobs.” But they really just advance a program of liberalism as applied to workers, calling to “give voice to their struggles for dignity and justice” and to “re-envision a labour movement based on a globalized solidarity that recognizes the expansionist nature of capital” and “unmask the legacy of colonialism and racism and place migrant workers at the centre....” Not much there about workers as a *class* with social power.

Even more blatantly liberal in its appeals to the capitalist class is NOII’s “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” campaign. This campaign is meant to protect undocumented workers from being picked up and deported merely because a city official tells them to reveal their immigration status. Now, if any serious reforms are on offer that assist immigrants, we support that. But lobbying the powers-that-be is the alpha and omega of NOII’s program. Their crowning achievement has been to get the Toronto police chief to agree to a “don’t ask” policy. The entire campaign is predicated on building illusions in the capitalist state, especially in the cops, who could care less and openly shake their fists at such initiatives while waging murderous state terror against immigrants. The cops are a central part of the apparatus of state repression that “serves and protects” the private property of the capitalists against the working class.

Some anarchists and reformist left groups also raise the utopian call for “open borders.” This implies a belief that there can be the abolition of national states under capitalism, and further implies that the state—whose function is the suppression of the working class in the interests of the capitalist class—can be reformed away or be made to serve our interests. It can’t; it must be overturned and a workers state established.

“Open the borders,” if applied to a small, neocolonial or underdeveloped country, can be downright reactionary. Should Jews, for example, have been allowed unlimited immigration following World War II and the Holocaust into the Palestinian



Workers Vanguard

PDC-initiated labour-centered protest against U.S. rulers' repressive anti-immigrant "terror" legislation, Oakland, California, February 2002.

protectorate of British imperialism (a "right" opposed by Palestinian Trotskyists before the formation of the state of Israel)? Applied to the imperialist powers, which are the only ones really capable of defending their borders, it is fatuous utopianism. Capitalism cannot provide economic well-being and freedom for the people of the world. If you call for abolishing the border cops, why not call for abolishing the cops and army? After all, policing its borders is just as vital to the existence of the Canadian capitalist state as having a cop force to break strikes and attack Native peoples, and an army to occupy Quebec, as it did back in 1970. The destruction of national frontiers will become a reality only under socialism, as a result of the abolition of material scarcity.

Another way in which class lines are blurred is seen in the popular "people of colour" designation. In denying the distinct histories and present realities of the diverse ethnic populations that make up this country, the view that race or skin colour is the primary divide is a denial of class differences. Behind this is a presumption that all non-white people have common interests against all whites. The idea that a Mexican agricultural worker has more in common with a Chinese Canadian real-estate mogul or South Asian doctor than with an auto worker of European background underscores how absurd this program is. Large sections of the working class buy into the racism of this society, often because it is transmitted through the union bureaucracy. But the notion that white workers and bosses are supposedly united in "white skin privilege" is a truly toxic conception that will undermine class struggle.

Neither NOII nor the fake left that slavishly tails the NDP regard the working class as a social class that uniquely has the social power to defend itself and all the oppressed, and do away with this entire system. Non- or anti-revolutionary, seeing workers as just another pressure group, they are incapable of fighting to mobilize workers independently of the capitalist exploiters.

Forge a Multiracial, Revolutionary Workers Party!

Embracing the immigrant, the native-born, the migrant worker, labour must demand: Full citizenship rights for all immigrants! Asylum for refugees! No deportations! Jobs for all through a shorter workweek at no loss in pay! A fighting union

movement would organize the unorganized, drawing in workers in the most dangerous, low-paid and menial jobs. Combating the bosses' racist union-busting schemes, the unions should fight for union control of hiring, including the aggressive recruitment of women, minorities, Native people—those historically discriminated against by the capitalist system.

This perspective poses the need for a new, revolutionary leadership built in a political struggle against the pro-capitalist, pro-imperialist misleaders in the unions and in the NDP. Pushing the lie that Canadian workers share a common national interest with their bosses, these misleaders shackle workers to their exploiters. When in power, the New Democrats pursue their own racist crackdowns on immigrants and minorities as in B.C. in the 1990s, when they were in the vanguard of a racist hysteria against Chinese immigrants.

And the NDP always promotes Maple Leaf Anglo chauvinism against Quebec, thereby inflaming nationalist animosities. The national subjugation of Quebec is a central pillar of Canadian capitalism. In English Canada, the workers must understand that

defense of Quebec's national rights is key to any perspective of struggle against the capitalist rulers. We advocate independence for Quebec as the best means of getting the national question off the agenda, and of winning Québécois workers away from their nationalist misleaders.

As revolutionary leader V.I. Lenin wrote in an article titled "Capitalism and Workers' Immigration" in 1913:

"There can be no doubt that dire poverty alone compels people to abandon their native land, and that the capitalists exploit the immigrant workers in the most shameless manner. But only reactionaries can shut their eyes to the *progressive* significance of this modern migration of nations. Emancipation from the yoke of capital is impossible without the further development of capitalism, and without the class struggle that is based on it. And it is into this struggle that capitalism is drawing the masses of the working people of the *whole* world, breaking down the musty, fusty habits of local life, breaking down national barriers and prejudices, uniting workers from all countries in huge factories and mines in America, Germany, and so forth."

The working class is the only revolutionary class. In emancipating itself, it emancipates all the oppressed. By expropriating the capitalists, a workers government can begin to eliminate scarcity and hunger, laying the material basis for eradicating racism and women's oppression. Our model is the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917, which uniquely made a law giving citizenship rights to the foreign-born workers there, giving life to Karl Marx's statement that the working people have no country.

The capitalist system brings war and occupation abroad—and at home, anti-immigrant racism, the destruction of jobs, health care, education and infrastructure alongside attacks on unions and basic rights. The capitalists are ruining the lives of workers and the oppressed. Only class struggle can beat back these attacks. And only the destruction of the entire capitalist system through workers revolution can open the road to genuine human freedom. We communists look forward to a socialist future where racism and national animosity will be supplanted by the mutual voluntary assimilation of cultures and nations. In the immortal words of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels: "Let the ruling classes tremble at a Communist revolution. The proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to win." Workers of the world: unite! ■

Iran...

(continued from page 24)

maintain their dominance in the world.

The latest round of sanctions against Iran comes after two prior rounds imposed last December and this spring by the United Nations Security Council demanding that Tehran halt its uranium enrichment program. But this time, while Britain and France have supported the U.S., there has been opposition by China, a bureaucratically deformed workers state and one of Iran's main trading partners, and by Vladimir Putin, the president of capitalist Russia, who accused the U.S. of running around "like a madman waving a knife."

Imperialist Madmen on the Loose

In his 2002 State of the Union address, Bush labeled Iran, along with Iraq and North Korea, part of an "axis of evil." This was accompanied by a declared policy of "pre-emptive" nuclear attack against any country the U.S. deems a "threat," with Iran, North Korea and China among the countries listed as potential first-strike targets. Last year, Bush delivered an ultimatum to Iran: "Your desires for a weapon are unacceptable."

There have been numerous reports of new plans for U.S. air strikes. In the *New Yorker* (8 October), Seymour Hersh details how the current emphasis "is on 'surgical' strikes on Revolutionary Guard Corps facilities in Tehran and elsewhere, which, the Administration claims, have been the source of attacks on Americans in Iraq. What had been presented primarily as a counter-proliferation mission has been reconceived as counterterrorism." According to Hersh, this plan "is gathering support among generals and admirals in the Pentagon." Israeli air strikes in September against what the Israeli rulers claimed was a partly constructed nuclear reactor in Syria could be in line with what the U.S. imperialists seek to do in Iran. The Bush administration has announced plans to provide additional billions in weaponry for Saudi Arabia, Israel and Egypt to beef up regional bulwarks against Iran.

Speaking for Democratic Party strategists, liberal columnist Frank Rich noted in a *New York Times* (4 November) column:

"The reason so many Democrats believe war with Iran is inevi-

table, of course, is that the administration is so flagrantly rerunning the sales campaign that gave us Iraq. The same old scare tactic—a Middle East Hitler plotting a nuclear holocaust—has been recycled with a fresh arsenal of hyped, loosey-goosey intelligence and outright falsehoods that are sometimes regurgitated without corroboration by the press."

The U.S. attacked Iraq precisely because it knew it had no "weapons of mass destruction"—i.e., a means to defend itself. Iran is a larger and far more populous country that sits on 10 percent of the world's oil reserves. And, as Hersh notes, "the crux of the Bush Administration's strategic dilemma is that its decision to back a Shi'ite-led government after the fall of Saddam has empowered Iran, and made it impossible to exclude Iran from the Iraqi political scene." Any attack on Iran would further enrage Iraq's Shi'ite majority. Moreover, with Iraq in ruins, the threat of a Turkish invasion to go after Kurdish fighters can only serve to destabilize Iraq's Kurdish north, the one relatively stable region in the country.

Meanwhile Pakistan, a key U.S. ally in the "war on terror" and in supporting the occupation of Afghanistan, is in a major political crisis, with military strongman General Pervez Musharraf having declared a state of emergency on November 3 and arresting up to 2,000 political opponents. On November 5, Pakistani police bloodily attacked thousands of demonstrators who had gathered in Lahore and other cities to protest the imposition of martial law. The Bush administration, while expressing "concern" over the situation, has made clear that billions in aid will continue to flow to the Musharraf regime, particularly funds slated for "counterterrorism."

While the Democrats (and some Republicans) criticize the Bush administration for its handling of the Iraq occupation, there is bipartisan consensus to go after Iran, though with some falling out over the details. Senator Hillary Clinton, the leading Democratic presidential candidate, voted in September to declare Iran's Revolutionary Guard a foreign terrorist organization, for which she was condemned by rivals John Edwards and Barack Obama, who accused her of giving Bush a "blank check" against Iran. Obama, interviewed by the *New York Times* (2 November), declared that if elected president he "would offer economic inducements and a possible promise not to seek 'regime change' if Iran stopped meddling in Iraq and cooperated on terrorism and nuclear issues." It takes some chutzpah for U.S. politicians to complain about Iranian "meddling" in Iraq when U.S. troops have devastated that country in enforcing a vicious occupation. Meanwhile, both Obama and Edwards have emphasized that they would keep "all options," including the threat of military attack, "on the table" in dealing with Iran.

Widespread sentiment against the Iraq occupation in the American populace redounded to the benefit of the Democratic Party during last year's midterm elections, in part thanks to the services of the reformist left, which tried mightily to build an "antiwar movement" premised on pro-Democratic Party "Anybody but Bush" politics. Now, however, even mainstream Democratic voters are bitterly complaining that electing Democrats has not made a dent. The Democratic Party is the *other* party of blood-drenched U.S. imperialism. During his presidency, Bill Clinton oversaw the murderous sanctions against Iraq and bombed Serbia into submission in 1999 while conducting the same type of bloody "surgical strikes" in Afghanistan, Sudan, Iraq and the Balkans that the Bush gang is planning against Iran. The Canadian government, then run by the Liberals, fully backed the bombardment of Serbia while joining in the sanctions against Iraq. The NDP social democrats, who today pos-



ISNA

Iran, July 2005. Youth executed for "crime" of homosexuality. While defending Iran against imperialism, Marxists fight for workers revolution against clericalist regime.

ture as opponents of the Iraq and Afghanistan occupations, also backed these starvation sanctions and cheered on Canada's participation in the NATO terror war on Serbia.

In no small part, the Democrats and other opponents of Bush's policies worry that the Iraq debacle has damaged U.S. imperialism's interests in the Near East and beyond, including by overstressing the military, which continues to have trouble finding new recruits. The Iraq occupation has diverted the U.S. rulers' attention from more strategically important areas, in particular China, the largest and most powerful of the remaining bureaucratically deformed workers states and the imperialists' key target for capitalist counterrevolution. We stand for the unconditional military defense of the Chinese, North Korean, Cuban and Vietnamese deformed workers states against imperialism and domestic counterrevolution. We support North Korea's testing and development of nukes as a deterrent against imperialist blackmail.

Defeat Imperialism Through Workers Revolution!

The U.S. and Canadian governments both portray Iran's Islamic regime as a bunch of demented fanatics, and Bush has even ludicrously accused the Shi'ite government in Iran of arming Sunni fighters in Iraq. According to Frank Rich's *New York Times* column, some 52 percent of the U.S. population now supports a "pre-emptive" strike on Iran. But the real nuclear crazies are the U.S. imperialists, who have not only acquired the means to destroy the world many times over but have actually carried out nuclear terror, incinerating some 200,000 Japanese people in the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945. The true enemy of working people, minorities and the oppressed in the U.S. is the U.S. bourgeoisie. The ruling class that is today threatening Iran is the same capitalist class that has slashed the pensions, health care and jobs of America's working people while shredding democratic rights through the reactionary "war on terror."

As for Islamic reaction, the U.S. rulers fostered its growth for decades as a bulwark against "godless" Communism and even secular nationalism. In 1950, John Foster Dulles, who was later Secretary of State during the Eisenhower presidency, wrote: "The religions of the East are deeply rooted and have many precious values. Their spiritual beliefs cannot be reconciled with Communist atheism and materialism. That creates a common bond between us, and our task is to find it and develop it." This policy found its highest expression in the funneling of vast quantities of arms and money to the Islamic fundamentalist terrorists fighting Soviet troops in Afghanistan in the 1980s.

At the request of a modernizing nationalist regime in Afghanistan besieged by fundamentalist forces, the USSR intervened in 1979 to defend its southern border. The Soviets intervened on the side of social progress in Afghanistan in the only civil war in history in which the question of the rights of women played a central role. While most of the international left howled along with the imperialists against the Soviets, we said, "Hail Red Army in Afghanistan! Extend social gains of October Revolution to Afghan peoples!"

U.S. policy has been to back the forces of Islamic reaction, except when these forces have been arrayed against America's client regimes, like the Shah of Iran, who was overthrown in 1979. What culminated with an "Islamic Revolution" in fact began with a major proletarian upsurge that in particular involved Iran's heavily Arab and strategic oil workers. But the prospect of workers revolution, which would have radically changed the political terrain in the Near East and beyond, was

betrayed as most of the left in Iran and internationally lined up behind the reactionary Islamic forces of Ayatollah Khomeini in the name of "anti-imperialism."

In contrast, the International Communist League (then the international Spartacist tendency) gave no political support to Ayatollah Khomeini's forces. We said: "Down with the Shah! Don't bow to Khomeini! For workers revolution in Iran!" We warned that absent a decisive break by the working class with the Islamic forces, the 1978-79 upheaval would have a disastrous outcome. And indeed, after taking power, the mullahs enslaved women in the veil, slaughtered thousands of leftists and trade unionists and intensified repression against Kurds and other minorities.

Today, Iran is a cauldron of discontent. The regime of reactionary president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad is increasingly unpopular. Fanatical decrees against "Western haircuts," music and culture continue to stifle social life, especially for the country's women and youth, while repression against opponents of the regime and trade unionists intensifies. The *New York Times*, cognizant of the restlessness in Iran, warned in an October 29 editorial that an American bombing campaign would more likely result in the mullahs and Ahmadinejad being "turned into national heroes than hung from lampposts." Students, women, trade unionists and national minorities in Iran must have no illusions that their liberation will come from a "regime change" engineered by the imperialists. The multinational Iranian working class, leading all the oppressed behind it, must overthrow the Persian-chauvinist, clericalist regime. Key to this perspective is the forging of a Leninist workers party. Such parties must be built throughout the Near East—forged in struggle against all forms of fundamentalism and nationalism—to unite the proletariat in struggle against the imperialists as well as the region's capitalist rulers. For a socialist federation of the Near East!

In the U.S., Canada and other advanced capitalist countries, the rapacious imperialist rulers must be swept away through workers revolutions. Imperialist war is not an issue of narrow policy concerns of one capitalist politician or another, but rather the function of the capitalist system in its decay. The struggle against imperialist war must be part and parcel of a struggle against the entire system of exploitation and oppression. This requires a fight to build multiracial workers parties by breaking the political chains tying the working class to its capitalist class enemy, particularly through the labour bureaucracy's support to the Democrats in the U.S. and the NDP social democrats in Canada. Alongside our comrades of the Spartacist League/U.S., the Trotskyist League/Ligue trotskyste is committed to forging the revolutionary workers parties needed to lead the struggle for workers power to victory in the heartland of world imperialism.

—Adapted from *Workers Vanguard* No. 902, 9 November

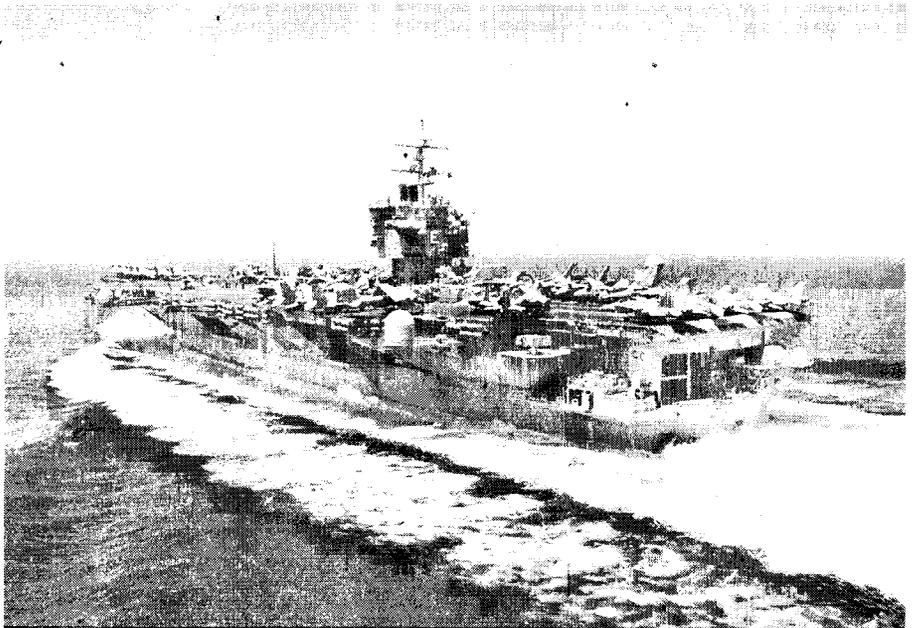
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Down With Imperialist Sanctions! **U.S. Hands Off Iran!**



Young Spartacus/Workers Vanguard



U.S. Navy

Spartacist placard at February 15 New York rally against Iraq occupation. Right: U.S. aircraft carrier *Enterprise* in Persian Gulf, August 17.

On October 25, the Bush administration announced new unilateral sanctions against Iran, targeting the regime's Revolutionary Guard Corps and in particular the Quds division, which Washington accuses of "supporting terrorism." The sanctions also include four state banks. The sanctions against the elite Revolutionary Guard, which has 125,000 active troops and controls key sectors of the Iranian economy, mark the first time that the U.S. has taken such steps against the armed forces of another government.

As revolutionary opponents of U.S. imperialism and its Canadian junior partner, the Trotskyist League/Ligue trotskyste opposes any economic sanctions against Iran. The 2003 war against Iraq, which has led to the death of upwards of a million Iraqis while unleashing communalist slaughter on a mass scale, was prepared by UN-imposed sanctions that killed 1.5 million people. Sanctions are an act of war and a step toward a full-fledged conflagration. Indeed, nearly half of the U.S. Navy's 277 warships, including two aircraft carrier groups, are in waters near Iran, with new military exercises already underway. A Canadian warship, HMCS Charlottetown, has been dispatched to join one of the U.S. carrier strike groups in the Persian Gulf, part of Ottawa's ongoing support to U.S. war moves in the region.

We say that in the event of military attack against Iran by the U.S. or by Israel—the only nuclear-armed country in the

Near East—operating on behalf of the U.S. imperialists, it is in the interest of the international proletariat, not least the working class in the U.S. and Canada, to stand for the military defense of Iran without giving an iota of political support to the reactionary Tehran regime. Every victory for the imperialists in their military adventures encourages more predatory wars; every setback serves to assist the working people and the oppressed the world over. *U.S. hands off Iran! All U.S. and Canadian troops out of Iraq and Afghanistan now!*

In the U.S., the Democrats as well as the Republicans, with their kept media in tow, are straining every nerve to foment hysteria over Iran's nuclear energy program. The Iranian government says that it does not plan to develop the bomb. In fact, given the threats by the imperialists, it would be perfectly reasonable and necessary for Iran to pursue getting nuclear weapons and adequate delivery systems to deter attack. In today's world, possession of nukes has become a necessary means of maintaining national sovereignty. The counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet degenerated workers state in 1991-92 removed the primary military and political counterweight to U.S. imperialism. Since then, the U.S. rulers have ever more openly wielded their military might, which dwarfs that of their rival imperialist powers, to

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