

## ***Down With the Clerical Regime! No Support to “Reform” Mullahs!***

# Turmoil in Iran



AP

Iranian riot police assault protesters at Tehran University, June 14.

## **Imperialists Hands Off!**

JUNE 29—A few short months after celebrating the 30th anniversary of its bloody and oppressive rule, Iran’s Islamic Republic has been convulsed by the largest protests since the “Iranian revolution” of 1978-79. The massive demonstrations were sparked by the widespread belief that incumbent president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, supported by Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, had stolen the June 12 presidential election from opposition candidate Mir Hussein Moussavi. After a week in which hundreds of thousands filled the streets of Tehran and other cities chanting “Death to the dictator” and

“Allah Akbar” (“God is great”), the regime struck back. Scores of demonstrators were reportedly shot by the hated paramilitary Basij militias, linked to the elite Revolutionary Guard, as well as by police, while hundreds have been locked up in the notorious Evin Prison. The International Communist League, of which the Trotskyist League/Ligue trotskyste is the Canadian section, calls on the international workers movement to demand: **Free all anti-government protesters!**

The fraud surrounding Ahmadinejad’s re-election became a focus for the broad discontents felt across Iranian society, from women compelled to wear the *hijab* (veil) and youth punished for public displays of affection to widespread poverty and growing unemployment. Hundreds of thousands have taken to

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# September 1939: Canadian Trotskyists Against Imperialist War

Seventy years ago, on September 3, 1939, the second inter-imperialist World War began as the governments of Britain and France, led by Neville Chamberlain and Edouard Daladier respectively, declared war on Hitler's Germany after the latter's invasion of Poland. The Canadian government of Mackenzie King officially entered the war a week later. It had already invoked the draconian War Measures Act and other repressive legislation in order to suppress dissent at home.

The first victim of this crackdown was the Socialist Workers League (SWL), Canadian section of the Trotskyist Fourth International. Defying the patriotic fervour whipped up by the government and its labour lackeys, the small Canadian Trotskyist group stood alone in denouncing the war and calling for class struggle against the capitalist warmongers. The September issue of its paper *Socialist Action* was suppressed, while the police prevented an SWL public meeting in Toronto and arrested SWL supporter Frank Watson for his antiwar speech to a street-corner rally. The first person charged under the government's Defence of Canada Regulations, Watson was sentenced to a year in jail.

The Trotskyists then issued their paper in mimeographed form, distributing it clandestinely. The first mimeographed *Socialist Action*, datelined "Montreal, Sept., 1939," appeared just after Canada's entry into the war. Its editorial, which we reprint below, pointed to the example of Lenin's Bolshevik Party which, standing firm against the orgy of patriotism that accompanied World War I, led the workers of tsarist Russia to power in the October 1917 socialist revolution.

The Trotskyists' clear statement of revolutionary opposition to our "own" imperialist bourgeoisie stood in sharp contrast to the social-democratic Cooperative Commonwealth Federation (CCF—predecessor of the NDP) and the Stalinist Communist Party (CP) of Tim Buck and Stewart Smith. The CCF voted in parliament to support the war, while the CP initially took an even more fervent prowar stance in its paper the *Clarion*. A few weeks later—belatedly catching up to Stalin's foreign policy, which had produced a "non-aggression pact" with Germany—the CP did an about-face and opposed the war. Then when Hitler's armies invaded the Soviet Union

in June 1941, the CP flipped again, supporting the King government and its war effort and calling for no-strike pledges in the unions.

While the CP followed the twists and turns of its bureaucratic masters in Moscow, the Trotskyists maintained a consistently revolutionary stance against the capitalist ruling class. At the same time, they called for the unconditional military defense of the Soviet Union against imperialism, despite the crimes of the Stalinist bureaucracy. As the Canadian Fourth Internationalists wrote in a 1938 statement, issued while they worked as a revolutionary opposition in the CCF:

"The foreign policies of its totalitarian regime have only succeeded in weakening the international position of Russia. The Moscow Trials, the unceasing purges, the execution of the builders of the Russian Revolution and the leading men in every walk of life, including the general staff of the army, have emboldened its imperialist enemies. But despite the absolutist character of the regime, the socialized basis of economy established through the great October revolution of 1917, still remains. It is therefore the duty of all socialists to defend these gains against imperialist attack, while recognizing that the Stalinist leadership itself weakens and endangers this defence."

—"Bulletin on War" issued by the Socialist Policy Group, 15 April 1938

In reprinting the *Socialist Voice* editorial, we note a mistaken formulation, that capitalism "IS fascism." The triumph of fascism in Germany meant the crushing of all workers organizations and, later, the unparalleled horrors of the Holocaust. As the editorial elsewhere makes clear, the issue was not whether the imperialist regimes in the war were fascist or "democratic," but that their purpose was to further their own interests against rivals abroad, over the corpses of tens of millions. As Trotsky put it in "War and the Fourth International"

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# ***Racism, Capitalism and Public Health***

## **Swine Flu Ravages Aboriginal Population**

As of August 23, “Novel H1N1 Influenza A Virus” (swine flu) has killed more than 2,100 people worldwide and infected more than 200,000. These figures underestimate the sweep of the virus so far, as individual cases are no longer reported. Swine flu has already affected large numbers of otherwise healthy young people, but it is especially dangerous, and often fatal, to those with compromised immune systems, pregnant women and the poor. Aboriginal populations in Canada and Australia have been hit especially hard.

The epicentre of the initial outbreak in Canada was found in remote areas of northern Manitoba, where the infection rate among aboriginal people in July was 135 per 100,000—as opposed to about 20 per 100,000 for the general population. While Native people make up only 13.6 percent of the province’s inhabitants, they account for two-thirds of those needing intensive care for treatment of swine flu.

On the other side of the world, Australian Aborigines in the remote Northern Territory were also dramatically impacted by the first wave of infections. This grotesque symmetry is no accident of genetics. The ravaging effects of swine flu are a symptom of the profound racism of this capitalist society, and the cumulative effect of centuries of social destruction, desperate poverty and brutal state repression visited on aboriginal peoples in both countries.

### **Capitalism Fuels Pandemic**

Swine flu is a relatively new strain of the H1N1 virus containing a mixture of genetic material from human, pig and bird flu. The virus first appeared in Mexico, and some scientists believe its appearance is linked to the vast, low-wage hog production industry there. Workers on these factory farms face brutal conditions, including “lagoons” of untreated waste.

Little is “natural” about this pandemic, any more than the disproportionate death rates blossoming among populations that the capitalist rulers have deemed “expendable.” As with AIDS, which continues to ravage sub-Saharan Africa, or, on a much smaller scale, the SARS epidemic which claimed hundreds of lives in 2003, the inhuman incapacity of the system of production for private profit to rationally contend with pandemic illness is a modern manifestation of what revolutionary leader Leon Trotsky in 1938 already termed “the death agony of capitalism.”

As the World Health Organization issued warnings over rising pandemic levels during the spring and new cases appeared everywhere, several governments slapped irrational bans on imports of live pigs, or—as in Egypt—slaughtered entire herds en masse. But as the initial outbreaks passed and it was determined that the effects of H1N1 were relatively



Wadden/TheTye.ca

**Native youth at Grassy Narrows, near Kenora, Ontario. Canadian capitalism enforces brutal marginalization and poverty for aboriginal people.**

mild for most people, official panic promptly gave way to the dictates of medicine-for-profit. Ottawa awarded its huge contract for 50 million doses of vaccines to a single company, pharmaceutical giant GlaxoSmithKline. Citing “packaging” issues, GSK wouldn’t commit to begin deliveries until November, long *after* the predicted onset of a second wave of infections, which may hit as early as September.

As drug companies look to “make a killing” from this worldwide pandemic, the sheer irrationality of the bourgeois order stands starkly exposed. As we noted in “SARS: Capitalism, Racism and Public Health” (*SC* No. 137, Summer 2003):

“With its technological development, capitalism has knit all of the globe together by creating a world market. Yet this system, based on competition and production for profit, produces war, poverty and massive inequality, especially in the countries subjugated by imperialism. Even eminently practicable public health measures such as vaccines and clean water are unavailable to hundreds of millions.

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# Young Spartacus

## Pro-NDP Reformists Enter Québec Solidaire “Fightback” and the Quebec National Question

### Trotskyists Say: Independence for Quebec!

Last December's Quebec elections gave a first parliamentary seat to Québec Solidaire (QS), a petty-bourgeois nationalist formation posturing as a “left” alternative to the bourgeois-nationalist Parti Québécois. QS leader Amir Khadir's victory in Montreal's Mercier riding was feted by most of the reformist left, which in Quebec is largely buried within QS. Not even laying claim to working-class credentials (much less socialist ones), QS employs rhetoric about “social justice” to attract PQ supporters dissatisfied with the big-business policies of that party, keeping them firmly in the grip of bourgeois nationalism.

We Trotskyists call for Quebec independence in order to remove the roadblock of national antagonisms that divides the workers of English Canada and Quebec, poisoning prospects for united class struggle against capitalism. We agree with Bolshevik leader V.I. Lenin that “a proletariat that tolerates the slightest coercion of other nations by its ‘own’ nation cannot be a socialist proletariat” (*Socialism and War*, July-August 1915). First and foremost, we fight against the Maple Leaf chauvinism that dominates in the English Canadian working class. At the same time, calling for independence helps combat nationalism in Quebec by giving Marxists a hearing to win Québécois workers away from their nationalist misleaders.

In contrast, the reformist left groups adapt everywhere to their “own” bourgeois exploiters. In Quebec, the pseudo-socialists who support QS—Gauche Socialiste, Parti Communiste du Québec, etc.—betray the interests of the working class by propping up this would-be “left” instrument of the Quebec capitalists. These groups endorse Québécois nationalism outright as some kind of “progressive” force. For example, they support Quebec's restrictive language laws, which among other things force children of immigrants to attend the French-language school system in order to “preserve the culture.”

In English Canada, the same reformist groups back the social-democratic NDP, a party that due to its fealty to the Canadian capitalist rulers has always been hostile to Quebec's national rights. The NDP joined the forces of “Canadian unity” in the 1980 and 1995 Quebec sovereignty referendums and endorsed Ottawa's anti-democratic Clarity Act, which legally entrenches the denial of Quebec's right to self-determination. Back in 1972, then-NDP leader David



Maclean's

**Chauvinist 1995 “Canadian unity” rally in Montreal aimed at bullying the Québécois into voting No in sovereignty referendum. Fightback reformists ape Canadian rulers by opposing independence as “divisive.”**

Lewis applauded the jailing of union leaders during the semi-insurrectionary Quebec general strike, which saw workers take over and run whole towns.

Many left groups in English Canada at least try to mask their reformism by opposing the NDP's “national unity” chauvinism over Quebec. But the “Fightback” group, affiliated with Alan Woods' International Marxist Tendency (IMT), is an exception. While claiming to defend Quebec's right to self-determination, they *oppose* Quebec independence as “divisive.” Spouting rhetoric about the need to “unite and fight,” they intone condescendingly that “an independent capitalist republic” of Quebec “would only isolate the workers of Quebec further from the workers on the rest of the continent, and leave them more vulnerable” ([marxist.ca](http://marxist.ca), 1 November 2005). Such specious arguments in defence of “Canadian unity” could easily emanate from the English Canadian union tops (the Canadian Labour Congress also has a paper line for Quebec's right to self-determination).

Whatever the conjunctural sentiments, the Québécois have long asserted their national distinctness; they have compacted a distinct political economy with a francophone bourgeoisie that oppresses its “own” working class, one that also integrates new immigrants. The 1995 Quebec sovereignty referendum only lost (by less than one percent) due to military and economic intimidation and outright fraud by the “federalist camp” run by the government in Ottawa, “United Canada” has long been a poisonous, artificial construct that *exacerbates*

the divisions between English- and French-speaking workers, divisions that are further fuelled by the labour misleaders in both nations who rally the workers behind their “own” capitalists. Quebec independence would not, of course, put an end to capitalist exploitation. But it would remove a major obstacle to making the working class conscious of the need for struggle against their own exploiters.

Fightback’s purpose has nothing to do with furthering the class struggle, and everything to do with channelling workers’ struggles onto reformist shoals. In English Canada, their main activity is to call for the pro-capitalist NDP to take office “on a socialist program.” In Britain, the IMT’s parent group has long been buried in the ruling New Labour Party. In all cases, they look to the *capitalist state* as the instrument to bring about socialism. This flies in the face of the Marxist understanding of the bourgeois state as an organized instrument for the suppression of the working class. As Lenin explained, the workers cannot lay hold of the existing state apparatus and wield it for their own purposes, but must smash it and replace it with their own working-class state, the dictatorship of the proletariat. This perspective was vindicated when the Bolsheviks led the Russian workers to power through socialist revolution in October 1917, and it is what we fight for today.

**A Quebec NDP?**

Fightback was among the many groups who greeted Amir Khadir’s parliamentary victory with wild enthusiasm. At a QS congress in June, the spokesman for their Quebec affiliate around the newspaper *La Riposte* gushed that “the IMT considers the election of the first QS MNA as the biggest political event in Quebec since the Common Front general strike of 1972”! After this shameless (and historically demented) piece of flattery, *La Riposte* received formal status as a “collective” within QS.

In joining QS, Fightback (like Gauche Socialiste et al.) crossed the class line into an organization that stands outside the workers movement. This is hardly news nowadays when most of the left internationally, having hailed the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s, has accommodated itself to the “death of com-

munism” rhetoric of the imperialist ruling classes. The IMT is long practiced in overt class collaborationism: their affiliate in Pakistan is buried inside an outright bourgeois party, the Pakistan Peoples Party, while in Venezuela they enthuse over the bourgeois populist Hugo Chávez, a former military commander whose capitalist government they paint in “revolutionary” colours.

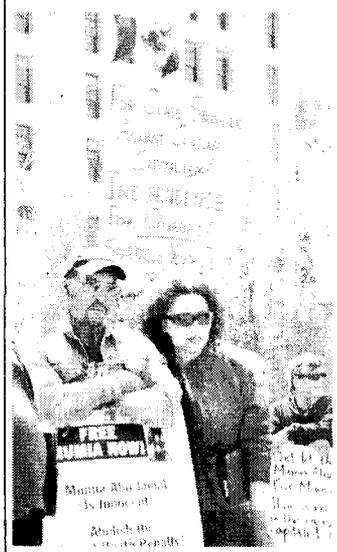
In an April 2007 web posting, Fightback wrote: “Solidaire cannot just be a party of the petit-bourgeois academic Montréal left with less than 6000 members—it must become a mass party of the Québec working class, based on the unions, that fights on the streets, on the picket lines, and in elections.” In other words, they want QS to become an NDP *à la québécoise*. This is made explicit in another Fightback statement, which calls on QS and the NDP to “unite together on a program demanding full employment, free education, better health care and an end to the war in Afghanistan” (marxist.ca, 10 October 2008).

In the past, all manner of small social-democratic groupings in Quebec have tried to cohere a mass reformist party based on the Québécois working class—and all have failed. With the national question weighing so heavily on all aspects of political life, the Quebec bourgeoisie has not felt the need for a social-democratic formation to mislead the workers. Supported by the union tops, the bourgeois *souverainiste* PQ, and later the Bloc Québécois, have done that job very well for decades (with the petty-bourgeois QS now available to lend a hand as well). Fightback’s particular twist is to call for “unity” with the chauvinist NDP, a party whose hostility to Quebec’s national rights has made it a virtual non-factor among Québécois workers.

More fundamentally, what distinguishes us Trotskyists from frauds like Fightback is that *we fight to build a revolutionary workers party, not a reformist one*. If a social-democratic formation rooted in the working class did emerge in Quebec, Marxists would have to work out policies and tactics to win workers from its pro-capitalist, social-democratic politics and leadership, much as we do with the NDP in English Canada today. But our purpose is to build a Leninist vanguard party that fights for the overthrow of the capitalist state and the

*(continued on page 6)*

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## “Fightback” ...

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establishment of a workers state; Fightback’s is the bankrupt perspective of reforming the existing state through the election of a “socialist” government in the bourgeois parliament. That is the crux of our differences, and it informs our diametrically different approaches to the Quebec national question.

### IMT Struggles Against “Separatism” and Slanders Lenin

In cozying up to the nationalist QS, Fightback/*La Riposte* wax on shamelessly about how they supposedly “fight against national oppression” and “defend all the democratic rights of the Québécois—including the right to self-determination, if the Québécois democratically decide on this question” (“Quebec: Whose sovereignty is it anyway?”, marxist.com, 10 June). They add that “the movement for national liberation must be led by the working class” and fault “the bourgeois and petty bourgeois of Quebec” for being “incapable of completing the tasks of the democratic revolution.” This pseudo-Marxist verbiage is written for the unwary. For one thing, far from being a semicolonial country of belated capitalist development (presumably in need of a “democratic revolution”), Quebec is part of the imperialist Canadian state, albeit nationally oppressed within it. More fundamentally, what Fightback is trying to do here is disguise its *opposition* to Quebec independence.

In English Canada, flag-waving jingoism is the habitual reflex of the NDP and labour tops, who deflect workers’ justified anger at the capitalists’ attacks on jobs and working conditions into chauvinist and protectionist campaigns against “foreigners.” The forced retention of Quebec within Canada is part of the bedrock of such Canadian “national” consciousness.

Fightback itself pushes Canadian nationalism of the purest water. During the recent B.C. provincial election, their leading Vancouver spokesman, Mike Palecek, chided the governing B.C. Liberals and the NDP tops for not being protectionist enough, while simultaneously embracing the rulers’ anti-Communist campaign against China. Palecek complained that premier Gordon Campbell allows “lumber companies to shut down mills and send raw logs to China where they are milled in sweatshops, while thousands of workers are laid off here” and that the NDP platform “instead of *banning* raw log exports,” “calls for *restricting* them” (marxist.ca, 8 May). This protectionist garbage is the logic of their embrace of pro-capitalist Canadian social democracy.

Fightback’s opposition to Quebec independence allows them to swim in the stream of the Anglo-chauvinist NDP, but it is also scripture from much higher authority. In 2000, the IMT founder-leader, the late Ted Grant, and his successor Alan Woods jointly penned a lengthy thesis on “Marxism and the National Question” in which they revise Leninism on the national question and explicitly take up the mantle against “Quebec separatism.” Bastardizing Lenin, they write: “The slogan of the right of self-determination, far from implying support for separation, was [for Lenin] *an integral part of the struggle against separation*”! In case any of their Quebec comrades might like to squirm away from this, Grant and Woods add immediately:

“Let us take a modern example. The French-speaking population of Quebec feel nationally oppressed by Canada. The Que-

becois nationalists are pressing for separation. A Marxist would say to the Quebecois: yes, you have the right to self-determination. We will defend that right. But we consider that separation will be to the detriment of the Quebecois and all the people of Canada. If there is a referendum we will certainly agitate and vote against separation. We stand for a socialist Quebec in a socialist Canada with full respect for national right [sic] as the only solution to our problems. This was approximately Lenin’s position on the national question.”

—marxist.com, 25 February 2000

Of course there *was* a referendum on Quebec independence some five years before this statement. Notoriously, those who did “agitate” “against separation” were the entirety of the Anglo-chauvinist Canadian ruling class, backed by most of the Quebec bourgeoisie, and of course Fightback’s beloved NDP. Calling for a No vote in 1995 was a straight capitulation to the Canadian capitalist class. (Fightback did not exist at the time; however a position for a No vote was taken by the grossly misnamed Bolshevik Tendency, who share Fightback’s “concerns” for the “isolation” that would befall the Québécois workers should they be foolish enough to break from the Canadian state. See our polemic, “Bolshevik Tendency: Still in the Camp of Anglo Chauvinism,” SC No. 120, Spring 1999.)

Moreover, Grant/Woods’ claim that Lenin was for a “struggle against separation” is a slander and a lie. Basing himself on the lessons of the class struggle, Lenin addressed instances of national oppression *concretely*, seeking to further the fight for proletarian unity and socialist revolution. Defending the right to self-determination did not necessarily mean calling for independence, but it by no means excluded calls to exercise that right when circumstances warranted. In his seminal 1914 article “The Right of Nations to Self-Determination,” Lenin cited the case of Norway’s secession from Sweden:

“The dissolution of the ties imposed upon Norway by the monarchs of Europe and the Swedish aristocracy strengthened the ties between the Norwegian and Swedish workers. The Swedish workers have proved that in spite of *all* the vicissitudes of bourgeois policy...they will be able to preserve and defend the complete equality and class solidarity of the workers of both nations in the struggle against both the Swedish and Norwegian bourgeoisie.”

Later in the same article, Lenin pointed to Marx’s support to Irish independence from Britain:

“...it is in the direct and absolute interest of the English working class to get rid of their present connection with Ireland.... The English working class will *never accomplish anything* until it has got rid of Ireland.... The English reaction in England had its roots...in the subjugation of Ireland.”

—Letter to Engels, 10 December 1869

This Marxist approach to the national question has direct applicability for proletarian revolutionists in Canada, where national animosities have long served to cripple working-class consciousness and struggle. Capitulating to Anglo chauvinism, hailing the petty-bourgeois QS, falsifying Lenin—the Fightback opportunists are certainly versatile. But there is one thing that they cannot do, and that is to provide revolutionary leadership to the working class. The Trotskyist League/Ligue trotskyste and the Spartacus Youth Clubs seek to expose such charlatans as part of our fight to forge a genuine Leninist vanguard party that will lead the struggle for North American socialist revolution. ■

## Defend Unions in the Construction Industry!

# Down With Chauvinist Campaign Against Foreign Workers!

The following article was written by our comrades of the Spartacist League/Britain, section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist). It was first published in Workers Vanguard No. 939, 3 July.

## Britain

LONDON, June 28—Powerful solidarity strikes of construction workers at many of Britain's power stations, oil and gas facilities over the past week have defeated a union-busting effort by the bosses and secured the reinstatement of some 647 construction workers at the Lindsey oil refinery in Lincolnshire, run by oil giant Total. These workers were fired on 18 June for having walked out on strike in protest when one subcontractor laid off 51 workers who, according to *Socialist Worker* [Britain] (20 June), were "stewards, activists or union members." At the same time, a different subcontractor hired a different set of roughly 60 workers who had almost identical skills as those who had been laid off. The sackings were rightly seen as an attack on the union and sparked sympathy strikes which spread to plants across England, Wales and Scotland in a show of solidarity that appears to have forced a complete climbdown by the bosses.

These sympathy strikes were necessary in order to defend the existence of the unions, and the outcome was certainly in the interests of the working class as a whole. But at the same time, the unions in these construction sites are spearheading a chauvinist campaign against foreign workers that can only fuel racist attacks on immigrants and is *poison* to class consciousness and working-class solidarity. Pitting British workers against their class brothers from other countries, this crusade undermines the fighting capacity of the unions and is detrimental to the interests of the multiethnic working class as a whole. The bosses will always seek to exploit every division among workers to go after all workers; this chauvinist campaign against foreign workers gives the bosses yet another means to attack the unions.

Beginning in January, construction workers at the Lindsey refinery staged a wave of reactionary strikes against Italian and Portuguese workers under the slogan "British jobs for British workers," a cry long associated with the fascists. Among the leaders of these strikes was Keith Gibson of the Socialist Party, who is a prominent member of the GMB (general union). The Socialist Party has tried to airbrush that slogan out of the picture. In the January strikes, the demand for "British jobs for British workers" became "local" jobs for "local" workers, but the content remained the same. The reactionary strikes and protests received enthusiastic backing from rabidly anti-union, anti-immigrant newspapers such as the *Daily Mail* and from the fascist British National Party (BNP). The outcome of the January strike at Lindsey says it

all: over 100 jobs that were expected to go to Italian workers were allocated to British workers.

From the outset we have insisted that the struggle against protectionist poison is vital to the interests of all working people. In contrast to the majority of the left, we opposed the January strikes at Lindsey, noting in "Down With Reactionary Strikes Against Foreign Workers!" (*Workers Vanguard* No. 930, 13 February): "The strikes were not intended to secure more jobs or indeed any gains for the working class as a whole, nor to defend existing jobs. They were about redividing the existing pool of jobs according to



Protectionist rally against foreign workers at Lindsey oil refinery in January.

the nationality of the workers. These reactionary strikes, pitting British workers against foreign workers and immigrants, are detrimental to the interests of the multiethnic working class in Britain and those of the workers of Europe as a whole." The reactionary politics of this crusade are shared by the Labourite leadership of the Unite and GMB trade unions, who embraced this patriotic crusade as naturally as they embraced Labour's racist "war on terror" that is directed against Muslims.

The bottom line for the trade-union movement must not be *who* the contractors hire, but at *what rate of pay* and under what conditions. The way to undercut attempts by the bosses to "level down" the wages and working conditions, including safety standards, of all workers by playing off one nationality against the other is for the unions to demand: Full union pay for all work at the prevailing rate, no matter who does the

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# ***Defend Chinese Deformed Workers State! For Workers Political Revolution!***

## **Communal Violence in Xinjiang**



AFP



Reuters

**Ethnic conflict in Xinjiang, July: Injured Han Chinese women in hospital (left); Uighurs behind roadblock in their neighbourhood (right).**

*The following article is reprinted from Workers Vanguard (No. 941, 28 August), newspaper of the Spartacist League/U.S.*

Early last month a violent national conflict erupted in Urumqi, the provincial capital of the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region in western China. It began on July 5 when hundreds of Uighurs—a Turkic-speaking, traditionally Islamic people—went on a murderous rampage against their Han Chinese neighbors. Han mobs then retaliated in kind. The Chinese government now sets the number killed at 197, most of them Han Chinese, while some 1,600 were injured. To halt the interethnic bloodletting the government authorities utilized massive police force with 20,000 troops patrolling both Han and Uighur neighborhoods.

From the outset the Beijing regime has claimed, without convincing evidence, that the riots in Urumqi were masterminded by the anti-Chinese nationalists of the World Uighur Congress (WUC), an imperialist-sponsored group based mainly in the U.S. and Germany. Needless to say, the WUC presents a completely different picture from that of the Chinese government of the events leading to the riots. It contends that on July 5, a peaceful protest by Uighurs, mainly university students, was set upon by the police who opened fire on the demonstrators without any provocation. For its part, the Chinese government says that the repressive measures it took were a response to, not the cause of, the violence. We are quite distant from

the situation, and each source—whether it's the Chinese government, the WUC or the imperialist media—has its own motive in presenting what happened. What is clear is that however the events on July 5 may have begun, they soon degenerated into communalist violence. Even the London *Economist* (11 July), a house organ for Anglo-American financiers, stated: "The violence in Xinjiang was crude, racist stuff on both sides, with the Han Chinese suffering the brunt of it."

The trigger for the riots in Urumqi was an event that occurred thousands of miles away in the southeastern Chinese coastal province of Guangdong. In late June, Uighur migrant workers living in a dormitory at a toy factory owned by Hong Kong



**Chinese troops on a main street in downtown Urumqi.**

AFP

capitalists were attacked by Han workers. At least two Uighur workers were killed and scores injured. The attack, which lasted for hours, was apparently provoked by a false rumor circulated by a disgruntled former worker that six Uighur men had raped two Han women. After news of what happened reached Xinjiang, Uighurs were enraged over inaction by Chinese authorities and demanded a full government investigation. These complaints against the Chinese government, which seem to be justified, in no way excuse the murderous rampage by Uighurs in Xinjiang against their Han neighbors.

Xinjiang, with its wealth of natural resources, especially large deposits of oil and natural gas, is of great strategic economic importance to China. The country's president, Hu Jintao, judged the communalist violence in Urumqi to be of such political importance and urgency that he cut short his participation in the G8 summit in Italy and returned to Beijing. What is the broad political significance of the national conflict between Uighurs and Han Chinese in Xinjiang? To answer that question it is necessary to understand the class nature of the Chinese state and its relationship to world imperialism.

### The Class Character of the Chinese State

The 1949 Chinese Revolution, marked by the military victory of Mao Zedong's peasant-based armies over Chiang Kai-shek's Guomindang, destroyed capitalist-landlord rule and liberated the country from imperialist subjugation. The revolution brought enormous social gains to China's workers, peasants and deeply oppressed women. However, the People's Republic of China, ruled by the Communist Party (CCP), emerged as—and continues to be—a bureaucratically deformed workers state patterned on the former Soviet Union under J.V. Stalin. A parasitic, nationalist bureaucratic caste rests atop a collectivized economy.

Like their Soviet Stalinist forebears, Mao and his successors, including the current regime, have preached the profoundly anti-Marxist notion that socialism could be built in a single country. Marxists define socialism as a classless, egalitarian society based on material abundance, which could be built only on the basis of international planning, crucially requiring the overthrow of capitalist rule in the advanced capitalist centers of North America, West Europe and Japan. In practice, the Stalinist dogma of "socialism in one country" has meant accommodation to world imperialism and opposition to the perspective of international workers revolution.

As Trotskyists, we stand for the unconditional military defense of the Chinese bureaucratically deformed workers state against imperialism and capitalist counterrevolution. In answer to the aspirations of the Chinese workers and rural toilers, and also national minorities like the Uighurs, for democratic rights and a government that represents their needs and interests, we stand for proletarian political revolution to oust the Stalinist bureaucracy and establish a government based on elected workers and peasant councils that is committed to revolutionary proletarian internationalism.

For the past several decades, the Beijing Stalinist regime has utilized extensive market mechanisms in the economy while encouraging large-scale investment by Western and Japanese corporations and the offshore Chinese bourgeoisie in Taiwan and Hong Kong. A sizable class of capitalist entrepreneurs—many of them former government functionaries and the children of current functionaries—has also developed on the mainland. As a consequence, there is now a widely held belief, across the entire political spectrum, that once-

"Communist" China has become capitalist or is rapidly and irreversibly doing so. That belief is false. The core of the Chinese economy continues to be based on collectivized property. In fact, the *non*-capitalist character of China has been clearly demonstrated during the current severe global economic downturn.

To see this, one can compare the effects of the economic stimulus programs in the U.S. and China. Despite the \$800 billion stimulus package enacted by the Democratic administration of Barack Obama, output and employment have continued to fall. The gross domestic product is nearly 4 percent below what it was a year ago, while industrial production has been cut by 13.6 percent over the same period. Official optimism that the economy is bottoming out, propagated by the Obama White House, points to the fact that in July employers eliminated "only" a quarter of a million jobs, somewhat less than the average job loss over the previous several months.

By contrast, China's stimulus program, centered on investment in infrastructure by state-owned enterprises and government bodies and expanding loans by state-controlled banks, has effectively offset the massive decline in export earnings. The annual rate of growth of gross domestic product increased to 8 percent in the second quarter up from 6 percent in the previous quarter. Richard McGregor, a China watcher for the London *Financial Times* (9 August), commented: "Beijing has managed to pull the Chinese economy out of a ditch with a massive fiscal and monetary stimulus."

Nonetheless, the global economic downturn has sharply worsened conditions for those migrant workers from the countryside who have toiled in factories owned by foreign and offshore Chinese capitalists producing light manufactures for export. Many have had to return to their villages, at least temporarily, including Uighurs from Xinjiang. Impoverished Uighur and also Han youth in the villages and cities and Xinjiang cannot now improve their conditions by securing employment in the capitalist-owned factories producing for export. In this sense, the basic contradictions of the world capitalist system and the accommodation to that system by the Beijing Stalinist regime have aggravated the national

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Sabrie/NY Times

**In the wake of communal violence, Uighurs and Han Chinese in mixed neighbourhood sign up for joint self-defense group.**

## China...

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conflict between Uighurs and Han Chinese in Xinjiang.

In their own way, the imperialist bourgeoisies recognize that China continues to embody the social and national gains of the 1949 Revolution. The country is not theirs as it was in the past. The ultimate goal of the U.S., European and Japanese imperialist powers is to restore capitalism in China and once again reduce the country to semicolonial subjugation. In pursuing that goal, the imperialists have encouraged and supported reactionary nationalist forces linked to religion among the non-Han peoples—Tibetans, Uighurs—in the western borderlands of China. Thus the national conflict between Uighurs and Han in Xinjiang must be viewed within the broad framework of imperialist hostility to the Chinese deformed workers state.

### Stalinist Misrule and the National Conflict in Xinjiang

The specific character of the national question in Xinjiang has significantly changed as a consequence of developments since the 1949 Revolution. At that time, 75 percent of region's population were Uighurs, less than 7 percent were Han Chinese. Today, of the 21 million people in Xinjiang, 45 percent are Uighurs and 40 percent are Han. Moreover, the Han population is concentrated in the cities and even in 1949 made up a majority in Urumqi, the provincial capital.

Initially, the migration of Han into the relatively impoverished backwater province of Xinjiang resulted from deliberate government policy and special incentives. However, for the past decade or so, Xinjiang had experienced an economic boom, even by China's standards, centrally based on the exploitation and development of its oil and natural gas fields. According to official figures, the region's gross domestic product doubled between 2004 and 2008 from \$28 billion to \$60 billion. This boom has attracted Han Chinese of all classes, from capitalist entrepreneurs to unskilled laborers, pursuing their own economic interests. That is, the changing demographics are not solely determined by the policies and

intent of the CCP regime, though Uighurs complain that they continue to be excluded even from unskilled work.

At the same time, the pervasive use of market relations in the economy and the large private sector have increased the gap between the growing number of Han Chinese and the indigenous peoples in the country's western borderlands. Especially in private enterprises, but also in the state sector, hiring often is based on nepotism, other personal connections or outright discrimination in favor of Han Chinese. But even if competition in the labor market were decided solely by individual capacity, Han Chinese would still have an advantage over Uighurs; they are far more skilled and literate, in particular fluent in Mandarin, China's *lingua franca*.

Thus, the past decade's economic boom in Xinjiang appears to have aggravated rather than lessened Uighur resentment against Han Chinese as a socially privileged and politically dominant nationality. Two China correspondents for the London *Financial Times* (7 July) report:

"The redevelopment of old towns and the influx of richer Han Chinese radically changed local economic structures, costing many Uighurs their traditional jobs....

"This has happened while Xinjiang's economy has been growing at more than 11 per cent a year for the past six years, above the national average. The wealth created by this rapid growth has been concentrated in the pockets of new immigrants, increasing the gap between rich and poor, Han and Uighur, some locals complain."

Enmity between Uighurs and Han Chinese has centuries-old, historical roots. But that enmity has been intensified by the effects of Stalinist bureaucratic misrule, particularly in the last two decades. At the same time, it is important to recognize that Uighurs, like other workers and rural toilers throughout China, have benefited enormously from the progressive social and economic development of the post-1949 People's Republic. Since the Revolution, infant mortality in Xinjiang has continually declined while life expectancy, less than 30 years in 1949, rose to 67 years by 2000.

However, today's young Uighur men and women are much less likely to compare their conditions of life to those of their parents and grandparents than to those of the Han newcomers. And by those standards they are clearly disadvantaged. To be sure, the Stalinist regime has made an effort to recruit more Uighurs and other national minorities into the higher reaches of the social order. Thus Uighur students are given additional points on the standardized examinations that are a screening mechanism for admission to university. But such measures have a tokenistic character given the reality that the mass of Uighurs are on the bottom of a newly reconfigured society in their own homelands.

The Chinese Stalinist leaders, who strive above all to maintain social "order," recognized the danger to themselves in the growing hostility of the poorer Uighurs toward the better-off Han. But instead of moving to raise the Uighur populace to the level of the Han *within* Xinjiang, the CCP regime had recourse to the safety valve of internal migration to the factories and construction sites of coastal China.

Beginning in 2002, the government instituted a labor export program for Uighur youth from low-income families. That program offered substantial advantages for those participating in it: incomes



Riboud/Magnum

Peasant denounces landlord at People's Tribunal following 1949 Chinese Revolution.

two or three times what they could earn at home, training in modern industrial equipment, Mandarin-language classes and free medical care. But state coercion in the form of stiff fines also was used against those Uighurs who, despite such material incentives, refused to leave their homes to work in strange cities thousands of miles away.

An estimated 1.5 million people from Xinjiang, mainly Uighurs, work elsewhere in China. But that safety valve is now being shut off by the effects of the global capitalist downturn. Reports indicate that both Uighur and Han perpetrators and victims of last month's riots in Urumqi were mostly unemployed or seasonal migrant workers.

What then is to be done? A workers and peasants government in China, issuing out of a proletarian political revolution, would establish a rationally planned and centrally managed economy based on state-owned enterprises. (This would not preclude the use of market mechanisms for certain purposes nor a limited role for the private, including foreign-owned, sector.) Only such a system would be able to narrow the present and widening socio-economic gap between Uighurs and Han in Xinjiang. What is required is expending and directing sufficient resources to educate and train Uighurs in the use of modern industrial technology on the same footing as Han Chinese. In the final analysis, however, to achieve a level of material abundance for the benefit of all of China's peoples requires aid from a socialist Japan or a socialist America, underlining again the need for international proletarian revolution.

Key to achieving genuine national equality in Xinjiang is reversing the Stalinist policy of forced Sinification, in particular the effort to marginalize the Uighur language in favor of Mandarin. The CCP boss of Xinjiang, Wang Lequan, declared that minority languages like Uighur are "out of step with the 21st century" (*New York Times*, 10 July). Wang is here speaking the language of the Mandarinate of old imperial China translated into the Stalinist nationalism and Han chauvinism of today. Since 2002, Mandarin has been the only language used in courses at Xinjiang University for at least the first two years of course work. At the same time, children from lower-class Uighur families have had little opportunity to achieve fluency in Mandarin. Under a workers and peasants government, there would be genuine bilingualism at all levels of education from pre-school to university. Uighurs would be able to use their own language as well as Mandarin in all economic and political institutions, whether dealing with factory managers or government officials.

Such a language policy is mandated by the principles of proletarian internationalism—i.e., equality of all peoples in all spheres of life. The example to which we look is that of the Bolshevik regime led by Lenin and Trotsky that issued out of the 1917 Russian Revolution. Tsarist Russia was aptly described by Lenin as a "prison house of peoples." Upon coming to power, the Bolsheviks implemented the policies for which they always fought: the equality of all peoples, ethnicities and languages, including the right of self-determination for the myriad nations oppressed under the tsarist empire.

In China, the Han majority comprises some 90 percent of the population. Only a Leninist-Trotskyist party committed to proletarian internationalism can effectively combat Han chauvinism, including by mobilizing the Han proletariat in the struggle for the equality of all of China's peoples. And only such a party can combat the efforts of reactionary Uighur nationalists and Islamicists, supported by the imperialists, to



Reuters

**World Uighur Congress head Rebiya Kadeer (left) at press conference in Washington, D.C., with Republican Congressman Dana Rohrabacher (centre) and Democrat William Delahunt, July 10.**

exploit the just grievances of the Uighur masses against Chinese Stalinist misrule for counterrevolutionary purposes.

### **World Uighur Congress: An Agency of Imperialism**

There is historical irony and deep political significance in the fact that both Uighur Islamicists and the leading figure in the World Uighur Congress were originally sponsored and promoted by the Chinese Stalinist leadership. In the 1970s and '80s, China was engaged in a strategic alliance with U.S. imperialism against the Soviet Union, a policy initiated by Mao Zedong. In the context of that reactionary alliance, the Beijing regime trained and dispatched religious-minded, young Uighur men (who were Sunni Muslims) to join the CIA-backed *mujahedin* cutthroats fighting Soviet troops in Afghanistan.

Thus, the Chinese bureaucracy criminally bolstered American imperialism in weakening and undermining the Soviet Union, thereby furthering imperialism's counterrevolutionary drive against the USSR. We Trotskyists hailed the Red Army's intervention into Afghanistan, not only as an elementary expression of our unconditional military defense of the Soviet degenerated workers state but also as the only means for social progress to be realized in benighted Afghanistan, not least for its horribly oppressed women.

Following the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991-92, the main body of militant Islamicists, represented by Osama bin Laden's Al Qaeda, turned against their former U.S. masters. Similarly, Uighur jihadists who had fought in Afghanistan redirected their fire at the Chinese Communist government. Following the 11 September 2001 attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon, *Jane's Security News*, which is linked to British intelligence, commented in this regard: "Chinese strategy on this front [Afghanistan], however, had a negative fallout for Beijing as the returning Uighur jihadis fuelled the already-simmering insurgency for an independent Muslim Eastern Turkestan in Xinjiang."

Most of the Uighur jihadists did not, in fact, return to China.

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## China...

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However, the exiled Islamicists may well have ties to small, shadowy Uighur terrorist groups like the East Turkestan Islamic Movement operating in Xinjiang. Indeed, the counter-revolutionary destruction of the USSR has led to a resurgence of Islamic fundamentalism throughout Central Asia. For its part, the Chinese Stalinist government has signed on to the global "war on terror," again emboldening the imperialists in Washington, who are now seizing on the communal riots in Xinjiang to promote their counterrevolutionary aims against China.

Far more important than the Uighur Islamicist terrorist groups is the World Uighur Congress because of the support it receives from U.S. and also German imperialism. The WUC receives funding from the National Endowment for Democracy in Washington, a notorious CIA conduit. The organization's leading light is one Rebiya Kadeer, who dubs herself "the Mother of the Uighur nation." Kadeer began her career in China as a successful and wealthy capitalist, becoming a member of the National People's Congress, the rubber-stamp parliamentary body of the CCP regime. However, in 1997 this poster girl for China's new capitalist class fell from political grace after her husband, who had fled to the U.S., made offensive broadcasts over the official government Voice of America radio station. Two years later, she was arrested and charged with "providing secret information to foreigners" as she prepared to meet a delegation of U.S. Congressional staff. She was imprisoned until 2005. After her release, she moved to Washington, D.C., operating in the bastion of world imperialism. On more than one occasion, Kadeer was granted an audience by George W. Bush, who duly called her an "apostle of freedom."

The communalist riots in Urumqi occurred a little over a year after Tibetan mobs, led by Buddhist lamas, engaged in murderous attacks on Han Chinese residents in the capital, Lhasa (see "Counterrevolutionary Riots in Tibet," *WV* No. 911, 28 March 2008 [also published in *SC* No. 157, Summer 2008]). Much of the Western bourgeois media has drawn a parallel between the two events, while hypocritically condemning the Chinese Communists for their brutality toward the country's national minorities.

There are similarities but also important differences between the anti-Han riots in Tibet last year and last month's communal violence in Xinjiang. The similarity lies in the reactionary, imperialist-backed nature of the exiled forces that claim to represent the Tibetan and Uighur peoples. The difference lies in the actual influence these forces exercise on the ground in the borderlands of western China.

The Dalai Lama fled to India in 1959 after the suppression of a lama/aristocrat uprising organized and armed by the CIA. Since then he has been elevated, so to speak, by his imperialist masters as the supreme incarnation of opposition to the Chinese Communist government. The Dalai Lama is a political personage of some importance on the international scene. The WUC's Rebiya Kadeer has made every effort to identify herself and her cause with Tibet's "living god," who contributed a brief introduction to her autobiography. Nonetheless, prior to last month's communal violence in Xinjiang, few people paid attention to Kadeer and her cohorts except for their CIA handlers.

In Tibet, the effect of the CCP regime's policies has been to reconstitute a numerically large and relatively wealthy Buddhist priest caste. The lamas are in the forefront of both internal reaction and imperialist provocations, such as last year's riots. By contrast, Beijing's policy in Xinjiang has been to suppress the emergence of a socially and politically influential Islamic clerical caste. Mosques must be registered with the state and imams require government approval. There does not now exist an organized network of Islamic clerics that could act as an effective link between the imperialist enemies of the People's Republic of China and the disaffected Uighur masses. On the available evidence, what happened in Urumqi last month was mainly a spontaneous eruption of ethnic hatred, fuelled by relative economic deprivation, on the part of Uighurs involved.

### Reformists and the Xinjiang Riots

Joining the imperialist drive for the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Chinese deformed workers state are reformist "socialists" such as the International Socialist Organization (ISO) in the U.S. The ISO claims China has never been a workers state but has been "state capitalist" since 1949. This "theory," which they also applied to the former Soviet Union, is a fig leaf for decades of anti-Communist practice on behalf of imperialism. The ISO howled alongside the imperialists against the Soviet intervention into Afghanistan. When Soviet forces pulled out of Afghanistan in 1988-89, in a futile attempt by the Kremlin bureaucracy to appease the imperialists, the ISO gloated: "We welcome the defeat of the Russians in Afghanistan. It will give heart to all those inside the USSR and in Eastern Europe who want to break the rule of Stalin's heirs" (*Socialist Worker* [U.S.], May 1988). Three years later, the British Socialist Workers Party (SWP), the ISO's former parent group, exulted: "Communism has collapsed.... It is a fact that should have every socialist rejoicing" (*Socialist Worker* [Britain], 31 August 1991).

More recently, in an article titled "The Changing Shape of Struggle in China" (*Socialist Worker* online, 9 July), the ISO painted the horrific communal bloodletting in Xinjiang as "class-infused protests," grotesquely enthusing that "the Urumqi revolt confirms that grassroots struggle continues to erupt on an expanding scale."

On the other side of the reformist spectrum is the Party for Socialism and Liberation (PSL). A 24 July article on its Web site,

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“Behind the Urumqi Riots in China,” while rightly denouncing the imperialists and their media for seizing on the riots in Urumqi, is essentially an apologia for the Chinese bureaucracy. Ever so gingerly, the PSL declares that “relations between the Han Chinese and Uyghur people are not perfectly harmonious.” While noting that the CCP’s “market reforms” have led to “nationalistic rivalries,” the PSL disappears any hint of Han chauvinism on the part of the Chinese bureaucracy. Indeed, it is to the Stalinist bureaucracy that the PSL looks as the key barrier to counterrevolution, writing in an earlier article (10 February): “The CCP government, in spite all of its contradictions, remains the most important obstacle to the return of China to its previous state of semi-colonial slavery.”

In reality, the continued rule of the CCP undermines defense of proletarian state power in China. Contrary to the PSL’s claims, the bureaucracy continues to preserve state property not out of a subjective identification with socialism but, as Trotsky wrote in *The Revolution Betrayed* (1936) in regard to the Soviet Union, “only to the extent that it fears the proletariat”—i.e., to protect its privileged position as a parasitic caste atop the workers state.

### For International Proletarian Revolution!

The CCP regime denounces the World Uighur Congress as “separatist.” Actually, Kadeer & Co. do not now openly call to detach Xinjiang from China and establish an independent state, though that is manifestly what they’re aiming for. The Uighur jihadists do call for an independent “Islamic East Turkestan.” As proletarian internationalists, we do not consider the present

state boundaries of China to be sacrosanct. But all of the forces advocating or supporting an independent Xinjiang today are in the camp of capitalist counterrevolution. Moreover, the demand for an independent Xinjiang, even if couched in the most “democratic” language, would be viewed by everyone in the region as a program to drive out the Han people.

One cannot envision a progressive solution to the national conflict in Xinjiang except in the context of a proletarian political revolution throughout China. This would open up historical possibilities that do not now exist: regional autonomy in some form, even an independent state allied to China.

The Chinese Stalinist regime of Hu Jintao declares a “harmonious society” to be the goal of its policies and practices. It is a fundamental premise of Marxism that a harmonious society can be achieved only through overcoming economic scarcity leading to material abundance. Despite China’s rapid economic growth since the 1949 Revolution, it is still a relatively poor country by international standards. Per capita gross domestic product is one-tenth that of the United States and one-seventh that of Japan.

Ultimately, the survival and advancement of China’s revolutionary gains hinge on the fight for socialist revolution in the advanced capitalist countries of Japan, North America and West Europe, the only road toward the all-round modernization of China as part of an international planned economy. A proletarian political revolution producing a China of workers and peasants councils would be a beacon for the oppressed working masses of Asia and the entire world. That is the perspective of the International Communist League. ■

## Canadian Trotskyists...

(continued from page 2)

(1934), “A modern war between the great powers does not signify a conflict between democracy and fascism but a struggle of two imperialisms for the redivision of the world.”

We have taken the text below from a facsimile reproduction on the rossdowson.com website. Editing has been limited to correcting typographical errors and standardizing punctuation.

## War Is Here—What Now?

Workers of Canada! Today, as in 1914, you have been betrayed into another useless world-slaughter.

Once more the Canadian capitalists, the high-salaried generals, the profiteering politicians, the hired press, the jingoists of all stripes are pouring out their lying propaganda, pretending that this too is “a war to save democracy,” a war to end war, “a just war.”

Once more the treacherous labor-leaders, the fake-Christian persons, the well paid old men in universities, the bourgeois women’s clubs, are joining in the hue and cry to get Canadian workers to die that they may keep their jobs and their profits.

Once more the social-democrats go over to the camp of the workers’ enemy. The CCF leaders support the war or take refuge in useless individualistic pacifism. This time they are joined in treachery by the bogus “communists,” the Stewart Smiths and other paid mouthpieces of the arch-traitor Stalin. Deserted by him they have become the chief defenders of the new imperialist war in the ranks of the workers.

But all is not lost. In 1914 one small workers’ party, the party of Lenin and the Russian Bolsheviks, stood true to the principles of international socialism. Out of their struggle came the first Workers’ State and a new movement of world revolt which eventually stopped the war. In 1939, the same principles are guarded by an even stronger force, the Fourth International, with sections in twenty countries, proudly acknowledging the theoretical leadership of Leon Trotsky, Lenin’s co-leader in the great Russian Revolution.

In Canada, we of the Socialist Workers’ League sound the call to all socialists to join with us in building, under the banner of the Fourth International, the anti-war party. We proclaim the necessity of a Workers’ and Farmers’ Government in Canada to end Canadian participation in the Second World War and to prepare the way for socialism here in Canada in our time.

### A War for Democracy?

Workers, this is not our war! The bosses lie; their new lackeys, the Stewart Smiths, lie; this is NOT “A WAR IN DEFENSE OF DEMOCRACY” (Clarion, Aug. 26). Even the limited democratic rights which the workers of Britain, France and Canada have secured by decades of struggle are gone now. Daladier months ago suspended the French parliament till 1942! Chamberlain rules by Cabinet decree and military law. In Canada we are already under the iron grip of the War Measures Act and other martial decrees which have wiped away the rights of free speech, press, and other organization. These liberties will never be restored by the rotting capitalist system.

The British and French empires are not democracies, but

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## Canadian Trotskyists...

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dictatorships over hundreds of millions of colonial serfs, black, brown and yellow. Their imperialist governments have gone to war because they want to stop rising German imperialism from grabbing back some of the spoils they took from it in the last World War; because they will lose profits if Germany extends her trade influence in Europe; and because they have no other way of ending mass unemployment and economic depression at home.

### A War to Defend Poland?

THIS IS NOT A WAR TO "DEFEND THE INDEPENDENCE OF POLAND" (Clarion, Aug. 26; Globe & Mail, Aug. 28; etc.). The Polish masses have never had independence. They are ruled by reactionary landlords, anti-Soviet army generals, and the like, who have deprived the millions of Ukrainians and other minorities of democratic rights, massacred Jews, and outlawed long ago the Communist Party and other working-class organizations. The independence of the Polish people can be secured only by the successful overthrow of the capitalist rulers in both Poland and Germany by the united action of the Polish and German workers and peasants.

### A War to End War?

THIS IS NOT A WAR TO "PRESERVE PEACE" (Clarion, Aug. 26) or "enforce peace," or etc. Like the last World War, it will result only in another straitjacketing of the defeated powers by the conquerors, as at Versailles, and so on to a Third World War or to the entire collapse of civilization—UNLESS THE WORKING CLASS OF THE WORLD OVERTHROWS THE WARMAKERS AND THE CAPITALIST SYSTEM WHICH INEVITABLY BREEDS WAR.

### A War to Stop Fascism?

Capitalism cannot stop fascism—it *IS* fascism. A victory for British-French imperialism might mean the end for Hitler but it will leave Germany (and probably Britain & France also) so broken and dismembered that the capitalists of each



September 1939 issue of Canadian Trotskyist press suppressed under War Measures Act on eve of World War II.

country will be compelled to set up fascist states everywhere to muzzle the wrath of war-torn workers. Fascism in Germany arose out of the last defeat of Germany. It will rise again unless the workers take power in Germany and are supported by the workers' struggle for power in the other warring countries. Finally, the War has already brought Britain, France and Canada immeasurably nearer to fascism through the military dictatorships already set up in these countries. Fascism is capitalism in decay and can be ended only by socialism. We will not help the German masses to overthrow Hitlerism by murdering them in the armies of British IMPERIALISM.

### How to Stop the War

Workers, do not under-rate your power! Without the mining of nickel and copper, the manufacturing of planes, or even simply without the means of transporting these death-dealing materials to the sea, Canadian capitalism can make no war profits, must fail to fuel the European furnace. Key strikes can hamper the war machine. Resistance to conscription, which occurred on a mass scale in Quebec in the last War, can be organized and extended across Canada. The Canadian people DO NOT WANT THIS WAR. They have had no voice in its declaration. They can be organized, on farm and in factory. A spark lighted here would be the signal for the resistance of our brothers in South Africa—whose reluctance to enter the war has already been shown—to our brothers in the other commonwealths and colonies, in the warring countries of Europe, in the United States—where Roosevelt daily prepares to drag more millions into war.

But resistance must be organized, must be led by an anti-war party which is also the party of socialism, which speaks with the voice of the masses.

**WORKERS JOIN WITH US TO BUILD THAT PARTY.**

**WORKERS OF THE WORLD UNITE!**

**ONLY SOCIALISM CAN END WAR!**

**THE FIGHT FOR WORKING-CLASS FREEDOM IS  
THE FIGHT AGAINST IMPERIALIST WAR! ■**

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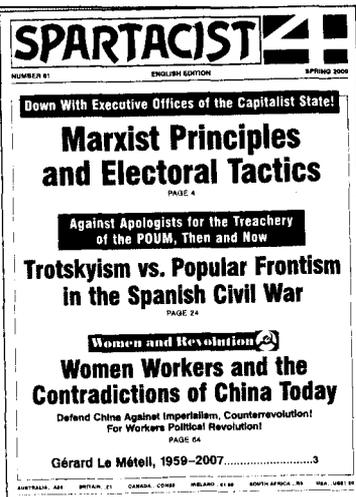
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## Iran...

(continued from page 1)

the streets demanding new elections. Certainly, plenty of signs indicate voter fraud. But the elections—vote-rigging or not—were themselves a fraud, controlled by the mullahs, who approved all candidates in advance.

Part of the basis of support for Moussavi is his call for vague “reforms” on women’s rights and other social questions. But Moussavi, one of the founders of the Islamic Republic, is no less a butcher than his opponents in the current regime. Under Moussavi’s reign as prime minister from 1981 to 1989, untold thousands of leftists, Kurds and women’s rights activists were slaughtered in Iran’s prisons and buried in mass graves. Hundreds of thousands more died in the bloody war with Iraq in the 1980s. In 1999, militant student protests were drowned in blood by the “reform” government of then-president Mohammad Khatami, a current ally of Moussavi.

While the forces demonstrating in the streets of Iranian cities are heterogeneous, they are politically subordinate to one side of what is essentially a falling out between rival factions within the ruling clerical elite. A key ally of Moussavi is the notoriously corrupt former president Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani; known as the “pistachio king,” he may well be the richest man in Iran. Moussavi and Rafsanjani have called to further “open up” the economy through privatizations and foreign investment. They have also sought to tone down the “anti-imperialist” demagoguery associated with Ahmadinejad. Abroad, the protests are being cheered by a spectrum of Iranian political forces ranging from royalists to bourgeois democrats and the remnants of the left. The workers and oppressed of Iran have *no interest* in supporting *either* of the cabals fighting over how best to pursue the mullahs’ bloody rule.

The U.S. and British imperialists have sought to intervene in the political turmoil, beefing up their radio broadcasts into Iran. Obama declared that he was “appalled and outraged” by the crackdown in Iran. Meanwhile, nearly 200,000 U.S. troops continue to ravage Iraq and Afghanistan on Iran’s eastern and western borders, while U.S. special forces carry out clandestine operations within Iran itself. After 30 years of the oppressive rule of the mullahs, there are doubtless many in Iran who have illusions in Western bourgeois democracy or see the “democratic” imperialists as a potential ally. Such illusions may have been further fueled by the initial softer (than the war-crazed Bush gang) tone adopted by Obama toward Tehran upon taking office.

Whether administered by Democrats or Republicans, U.S. imperialism is the deadliest enemy of working people around the globe. It was the CIA, in collaboration with the British, that organized the 1953 coup that overthrew then-prime minister Mohammad Mossadeq to reverse his nationalization of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company. The imperialists then reinstated the Shah into power and backed the tyrannical, blood-drenched Pahlavi dynasty until its overthrow in 1979. Down with the imperialist occupations of Afghanistan and Iraq! U.S. out of Pakistan and Central Asia! Imperialists hands off Iran!

The U.S. imperialists and their nuclear-armed Israeli allies have repeatedly threatened military action against Iran’s nuclear program. In the face of such threats, we say that Iran needs nukes to deter such an attack. Neighboring Iraq’s lack of “weapons of mass destruction,” including nukes, emboldened the U.S. to invade and occupy the country, leading to the horrific carnage and occupation of the last six years.

While calling for military defense of neocolonial countries like Iraq and Iran against imperialist attack, we do not give an iota of political support to their rulers, who lord it over their “own” oppressed masses. We say: Down with all the sheiks, colonels, mullahs and Zionist butchers! For a socialist federation of the Near East!

## Reformist Left Bowed to Mullahs

All sides in the tumult shaking Iran today hark back to the 1979 overthrow of the country’s despised autocrat, Shah Mohammed Reza Pahlavi, as a model for their political activity. At that time, the convulsive opposition to the monarchy included powerful workers strikes in the oil fields and throughout the country; Iran could have become the cockpit of proletarian revolution in the Near East. However, the mass mobilizations were channeled into a reactionary crusade for an “Islamic Republic,” with virtually the entire left in Iran and internationally cheering on the mullah-dominated opposition led by Ayatollah Khomeini. Uniquely on the left, we called for the proletariat to struggle independently of and against the Islamic hierarchy, to sweep away the Peacock Throne and establish a workers and peasants government.

The establishment of a Shi’ite theocracy following the overthrow of the Shah resulted in the savage repression of Kurds and other minorities; the execution of strikers, homosexuals, adulterers and others accused of “crimes against God”; the stoning of unveiled women, the slaughter of leftists and the suppression of all opposition parties and press. As we wrote in our International Declaration of Principles (*Spartacist* [English-language edition] No. 54, Spring 1998):

“The 1979 ‘Iranian Revolution’ opened up a period of ascendant political Islam in the historically Muslim world, a development which contributed to and was powerfully reinforced by the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union. Khomeini’s seizure and consolidation of power in Iran was a defeat akin to Hitler’s crushing of the German proletariat in 1933, albeit on a narrower, regional scale. The international Spartacist tendency’s slogan ‘Down with the Shah! No support to the mullahs!’ and our focus on the woman question (‘No to the veil!’) stood in sharp opposition to the rest of the left’s capitulation to mullah-led reaction.”

Today, much of the reformist left repeats the treacherous policies of 30 years ago by lining up behind one or another wing of the ruling clergy in Iran. The remnants of Tudeh, the pro-Moscow Communist party that supported Khomeini and then was crushed by him, called for a vote to “reformist candidates,” including Moussavi, whose hands are covered with the blood of their own comrades (*Tudeh News*, June 2009). Meanwhile, the fake Trotskyists of the Iranian Revolutionary Marxists’ Tendency (IRMT), associated with the International Marxist Tendency (IMT) led by Alan Woods, dimly appealed in a June 16 open letter to Moussavi ([www.Marxist.com](http://www.Marxist.com)): “You must either side with the people who voted for you or with the *vali-e faghih* [Supreme Leader] (and the repressive apparatus of the state). Being at the service of the people would mean that you should cut your links with the whole state apparatus.” The IRMT describes itself as descended from the Iranian Socialist Workers Party (HKS), which also supported Khomeini’s rise to power.

In the U.S., some left groups have sided with the pro-Ahmadinejad wing of the clerics against the protests, claiming that in this way they are opposing U.S. imperialism. A June 24

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## Iran...

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article posted on the Workers World Party (WWP) Web site declared, "Revolutionary socialists or communists sharply differentiate themselves from Ahmadinejad on many points. In the current conflict, however, his side is more anti-imperialist." After three decades of the mullahs' bloody rule, WWP still proclaims: "The Iranian people have benefitted enormously from their revolution and cannot easily be turned back" (*Workers World*, 17 June). Likewise, a June 22 article (pslweb.org) by the Party for Socialism and Liberation (PSL), a split-off from WWP, denounced the protests: "U.S. and British imperialism hope that a victory of this movement would result in the counter-revolutionary overthrow of the anti-colonial 1979 revolution."

Key to the future of Iran is the proletariat, the only class with the social power and objective interest to lead radicalized youth, women and oppressed nationalities behind it in an assault on the capitalist system itself. While individual workers have no doubt participated in the protest demonstrations, there is no sign as yet that any section of the powerful Iranian proletariat has intervened to assert its *independent* class interests against the Islamic regime. Two statements by workers groups in Iran have been widely posted on the Internet. One, signed by "Laborers of Iran Khodro" (the largest automotive company in the Near East) called for a 30-minute protest strike in "solidarity with the movement of the people of Iran." And in a statement by the Vahed Syndicate, representing Tehran bus workers, the union similarly expressed support for "the movement of Iranian people to build a free and independent civil society."

The fundamental question facing the Iranian proletariat today is the need to build a Marxist workers party that fights for the class independence of the proletariat—from the clerics, the nationalists and the pro-imperialist elements—and for working-class rule. A key difference between the situation today and that of 1979 is that, before the victory of the "Islamic revolution," significant sections of the proletariat were led by leftist parties, centrally Tudeh. That generation of left-wing worker cadres was wiped out by the very regime that the leaders of Tudeh and other left parties helped bring to power.

### For Permanent Revolution!

In 1978-79, the left in Iran and internationally supported the Khomeini-led forces of clerical reaction by claiming that they were leading an "anti-imperialist" revolution. The International Socialist Organization in the U.S. headlined an article: "The Form—Religious, The Spirit—Revolution" (*Socialist Worker* [U.S.], January 1979). The Socialist Workers Party (SWP) in the U.S. proclaimed "Victory in Iran: Iranian Masses Show the Way for Workers Around the World" (*Militant*, 23 February 1979). Brian Grogan, a leader of the British group of the fake-Trotskyist United Secretariat of the Fourth International (USec) of the late Ernest Mandel, even boasted that he had joined in chants of "Allah Akbar" during demonstrations in Tehran. The HKS, affiliated with the USec, went so far as to run in 1979 for election to the mullahs' Assembly of Experts—before joining the ranks of the mullahs' victims.

While we rushed to the defense of the HKS and other leftists victimized by the mullah regime, the American SWP and the USec, blinded by their grotesque opportunism, for months minimized the danger to their own imprisoned comrades. As we wrote in "SWP/USec Criminal Tailism: History Takes Its Vengeance" (*Workers Vanguard* No. 239, 14 Sep-

tember 1979): "USec, SWP, HKS—Ernest Mandel, Jack Barnes and the rest: you have committed a crime, for which you will be held responsible before the court of history. You must live with it because your own comrades may die for it."

The so-called "Islamic revolution" of 1979 represented a negative confirmation of Bolshevik leader Leon Trotsky's theory and program of permanent revolution. In the epoch of imperialism, all wings of the bourgeoisie in countries of belated capitalist development like Iran are too dependent on their ties to the imperialists and too fearful of independent working-class action to play any progressive role. They are incapable of solving the bourgeois-democratic tasks associated with the great European revolutions of the 17th and 18th centuries, such as agrarian revolution, national independence, democratic freedoms and women's rights.

The experience of the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution showed that it is only the proletariat, leading the peasant and urban plebeian masses, which can liberate the societies of countries of belated capitalist development. In the Near East, only the proletariat can break the chains of reactionary traditionalism and imperialist subjugation. As Trotsky declared in 1928: "The further East we go, the lower and viler becomes the bourgeoisie, the greater are the tasks that fall upon the proletariat" (*The Third International After Lenin*). In seizing state power and establishing the dictatorship of the proletariat, the workers of the backward countries will be compelled to institute socialist measures, such as the expropriation of the means of production and the establishment of a planned economy. However, these revolutions will survive and flourish only if they are extended to the advanced capitalist countries of the West and Japan.

Rejecting this Marxist perspective, Tudeh, following in the footsteps of the Stalinized Communist International (Comintern), insisted that because of Iran's economic and historical backwardness, the proletariat could not take power in its own name. Instead, they argued that there must be a "two-stage revolution," the first stage of which would be led by the "progressive" or "anti-imperialist" bourgeoisie and limited to solving democratic capitalist tasks. Socialist revolution, they claimed, would come in the distant, unspecified future. As always, the second, proletarian, stage of the revolution never came.

Tudeh and the rest of the Iranian left invested the Islamic clergy with "anti-imperialist" credentials, blinding their working-class base to the grave dangers they faced in the event of a mullah victory and setting the workers up for brutal suppression. In fact, in the early years of the mullah regime, Tudeh cadre went so far as to fight shoulder to shoulder with the murderous pasdaran and the fascistic hezbollahi thugs in killing other Iranian leftists. And during the Iran-Iraq War, which was reactionary on both sides, the Tudeh party told its members to report to their mosques (!) for military duty under the pasdaran.

In promoting the concept of "two-stage revolution," Stalin and his cronies could at least claim that they were giving support to modernizing bourgeois forces. For example, during the Chinese Revolution of 1925-27, the Chinese Communist Party was directed by Stalin and his henchmen to subordinate itself to the bourgeois-nationalist Guomindang led by Chiang Kai-shek. The Stalinists argued that this step toward consummating the supposed "first stage" of the Chinese Revolution was justified by the fact that Chiang opposed the decaying Manchu Dynasty and decried the binding of women's feet. Nevertheless, the result of this Stalinist betrayal was the slaughter of tens of thousands of Communists



Above: *Workers Vanguard* (17 November 1978) called for workers revolution in Iran, opposing both bloody Shah and Islamic reaction. Right: TL at July 1999 Vancouver protest in defense of Iranian students.



and militant workers who were disarmed by Chiang in the Shanghai massacre of April 1927.

What claim to modernism could the retrograde caste of mullahs in Iran possibly have had? The reactionary character of the Islamic opposition was manifest from the outset, above all by its position on the woman question. As we warned in "Down With the Shah! Down With the Mullahs!" (WV No. 219, 17 November 1978):

"The Muslims call for an *Islamic* republic. They support the Constitution of 1906 and particularly the added 1907 clause which explicitly guarantees clerical veto power over all legislation. The mullahs' opposition to the shah is a reactionary one, no matter how it plays on the crimes of the shah's dictatorship. The fanatical hatred of social advances since the time of the prophet Muhammed (the seventh century A.D.!) has its parallels in the military-based regimes of Pakistan or Libya and in the region-wide revival of religious obscurantism and its vicious oppression of women."

The Islamic Republic has been hell for women. After coming to power, Khomeini reimposed the *hijab* for women in public. Those who flouted the edict were subjected to 74 lashes or a year's imprisonment. Meanwhile, a man's testimony was deemed worth twice that of a woman. Lashings and amputations were applied by the courts, and women convicted of adultery could be subject to stoning. Child marriage was re-introduced, while laws encouraged polygamy and prevented women from leaving abusive husbands. The husband's right of unilateral divorce was reinstated.

Nevertheless, modern practices have seeped into Iran. While child marriage was reintroduced, the average age of first marriages for women has continued to rise from about 19 before 1979 to 24 today. According to the *New York Review of Books* (2 July), literacy rates exceed 95 percent for both sexes. Today, a majority of college students are women. But despite these trends, women constitute only 15 percent of the formal-sector paid labor force. The 2006 Iranian census revealed that only 3.5 million Iranian women were salaried workers, compared with 23.5 million men.

During a wave of protests in Iran six years ago, we laid out our perspective for women's liberation through socialist revolution:

"In the countries of the East, the question of women's oppression is one of the most powerful motor forces of socialist revolution. Indeed, when the Bolsheviks arrived in Central Asia in the years following the October Revolution, it was among women that they found the main point of support for their program and won their key cadres. The same holds true for Iran. A Leninist-Trotskyist party, championing women's rights against

the age-old stranglehold of religion and the family, will find its most loyal and courageous fighters among women."

—"For Workers Revolution in Iran!" SC No. 138 (Fall 2003)

### WCPI: Apologists for "Democratic" Imperialism

The Worker-communist Party of Iran (WCPI) has denounced both the Ahmadinejad and Moussavi wings of the clerical regime. However, in its opposition to the Islamic Republic, the WCPI has had a long history of appealing to the imperialist powers—far greater enemies of the world's oppressed than the ayatollahs of impoverished neocolonial Iran—as potential allies. Thus a WCPI representative wrote to the London *Evening Standard* (17 June) regarding the protests in Iran: "Now is the time for people in the west to exert pressure on western governments to politically isolate the regime rather than excuse and legitimise it." A June 22 Web posting boasts that WCPI leader Hamid Taqvaei "wrote to heads of states and the UN Secretary General on behalf of the people of Iran calling on governments 'to immediately break all political ties with the Islamic Republic of Iran, shut down its embassies and consulates and ensure its expulsion from the United Nations and other international institutions'."

The reactionary nature of the WCPI's appeals to "democratic" imperialism has actually played out in Iraq. In 2003 the WCPI's then-sister organization in Iraq *supported the imperialist occupation of that country*, calling only to replace the U.S./British occupiers with "the intervention of the United Nations." This was after a UN embargo of Iraq, imposed following the 1991 Gulf War, had resulted in the deaths of some one and a half million people.

At the same time, the WCPI stands out among Iranian left groups for prominently raising the key issue of women's rights and for opposing the veil. Yet following the Soviet Union's intervention in Afghanistan in 1979 against a CIA-backed Islamic fundamentalist insurgency, the WCPI viewed the Red Army as just as reactionary as the *mujahedin* holy warriors. They joined most of the left in refusing to support the Soviet intervention. This was justified by the WCPI's false claim that the Soviet Union became "state capitalist" by the mid 1920s.

We Trotskyists unconditionally defended the Soviet degenerated workers state against internal counterrevolution and imperialist attack, while calling for proletarian political

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## Iran...

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revolution to oust the parasitic Stalinist bureaucracy. We said "Hail Red Army in Afghanistan!" and called for extending the social gains of the October Revolution to the Afghan peoples. While warning that the Kremlin bureaucracy was capable of selling out to the imperialists, we pointed out that the Red Army intervention was objectively in defense of the Soviet Union and a blow against the Islamic fundamentalists who threatened to return women to virtual slavery. The Kremlin's withdrawal from Afghanistan led to the victory of the *mujahedin*, with today's hideous consequences for Afghan women, and gave a giant impulse to the forces of capitalist restoration that triumphed in the Soviet Union.

### Iran Needs Workers Revolution!

Iran today is a cauldron of contradictions and deepening tensions waiting to erupt. A new generation has grown up—as much as 70 percent of the population is under 30 years of age—that did not experience the 1979 "Islamic revolution" or the savage war with Iraq in the 1980s. These largely well-educated young people, their vision broadened by access to the Internet and other media, are smothered by the medieval strictures imposed by the clerical regime. Meanwhile, Iran remains a prison house of peoples in which Azeris, Kurds, Arabs, Baluchis and others oppressed by the Persian-chauvinist regime constitute nearly half the population.

The current protests have taken place in the midst of a severe economic downturn, made worse by the world financial crisis. Overwhelmingly dependent on oil, Iran's foreign exchange receipts plummeted as the price of oil fell from a high of about \$140 a barrel to around \$70 today. At the same time, the inflation rate is about 24 percent and official unemployment stands at 17 percent. More than 35 percent of the population under the



Amnesty International

**Iranian woman being buried to the neck for execution by stoning, 2004. Fake leftists hailed and continue to hail Islamic regime that carries out such barbaric practices as "revolutionary."**

age of 30 is experiencing long-term unemployment.

The only road to genuine social and economic modernization, to liberating Iran from imperialist subjugation, to freeing Iranian women from enslavement, to winning the right of national self-determination for the Kurds and the myriad other oppressed nationalities, lies in the smashing of capitalist class rule in Iran. The Iranian masses urgently need a working-class revolutionary party, capable of leading the struggle against the reactionary clerical regime. To forge such a party, leftist militants in Iran must understand the roots of the betrayals by those misleaders who in 1979 helped prepare a historic defeat by embracing the forces of Islamic reaction as a "progressive" alternative to the Shah.

—Adapted from *Workers Vanguard* No. 939, 3 July

## Britain...

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job! Equal pay for equal work! What's needed is to mobilise the multiethnic working class *against* Gordon Brown's Labour government in a fight for jobs for *all*, through a shorter workweek with no loss in pay, and to undertake a union organising drive to draw into their ranks all workers, including those in dangerous and low-paying jobs.

The chauvinist anti-immigrant campaign takes place in the broader climate of a worldwide economic recession in which virulent racism against immigrants is on the rise. A chilling example is the recent provocative attack by the state on immigrant cleaners at London's School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS). Outrageously, when the cleaners turned up to a 6:30 a.m. meeting on 12 June, ostensibly called to discuss working conditions, 40 immigration police in riot gear who had been concealed in the building descended on these low-paid, vulnerable workers. Many have since been deported or await deportation, mainly to Latin America. The real "crime" of these workers was that they had been organised into the Unison union.

Immigrants from East Europe in particular are being viciously scapegoated for the economic crisis that stems from the capitalist system itself. Thus in Belfast, over 100 Romanian immigrants, mainly Roma (Gypsies), were driven from

their homes this month by violent racist mobs, who also attacked a rally in support of immigrants. These atrocities show that there is a vital need for the unions to *defend immigrant workers!* To bring the unions' strength to bear in defence of immigrants means fighting for an end to the reactionary strikes against foreign-born workers on construction sites. We say: Down with racist attacks on immigrant workers! No deportations! Down with work restrictions on workers from EU countries in East Europe! Full citizenship rights for all immigrants!

Mobilising the working class in defence of immigrants requires a class-struggle leadership in the unions, forged as part of the struggle for a Leninist party that would act as a "tribune of the people." This party must be built in opposition to the existing trade-union bureaucracy and pseudo-socialists like the Socialist Party, which tries to claim that the original strikes were not aimed at foreign workers. But the truth is there for all to see. At a protest in Newark, Nottinghamshire, on 24 February against jobs being awarded to Spanish and Polish workers at the Staythorpe power station, a section of the demonstrators chanted "foreigners out." Last month in Milford Haven in South Wales, another anti-immigrant strike resulted in some 40 Polish workers losing their jobs. According to the London *Guardian* Web site (21 May), the strike was settled when "the Dutch-based employer, Hertel, agreed to withdraw 40 Poles and replace them with UK

staff at the terminal owned by ExxonMobil and Total.” While admitting that “Hertel faxed the media that the Polish workers [had] been removed from the site,” the Socialist Party dismissed this by saying merely that “this was never a demand of the union.” The Socialist Party proclaimed the outcome as another “victory” and blatantly admitted that the British workers “were not opposed to laggards from Poland getting work on the site as long as local laggards were given the opportunity of the work first as under the union agreement” (*Socialist*, 28 May-3 June).

Having embraced the reactionary campaign against foreign workers, the Unite and GMB union bureaucrats are now conducting a strike ballot that would bring future strikes within the provisions of the anti-union laws. The Unite statement motivating strike action repeats the claim that British workers are being discriminated against: “UK workers want fair access to UK construction projects” and alleges that “at a time when the engineering construction sector has the ability to be offering quality jobs to working people, UK workers are being excluded from these job opportunities” (unitetheunion.com). As we said regarding the January strikes, *no* British workers were fired at either Lindsey or Staythorpe. We also insist that until the workers take state power, the proletariat will not be in a position to worry about the ebbs and flows of labour migration, which is subject to the world economy more generally.

The prospect of continuing strikes has enraged the construction bosses, who are incensed that projects such as the de-sulphurisation plant at Lindsey are behind schedule, which means extra costs. Strikes could also disrupt major infrastructure projects such as new power stations and London’s Crossrail scheme. The *Financial Times* described the issues behind the construction strikes: “Unemployment is a big factor behind the disputes. This is a cyclical industry and 25-30 per cent of the 30,000 workers are jobless after projects dried up in recent months. There are more than 1,500 foreign workers on UK sites, which has fuelled the stoppages” (ft.com, 19 June).

### Unions Must Defend Immigrant Workers!

Our articles have warned that any mobilisation of workers on the basis of protectionism is poisonous to class consciousness and plays into the hands of the fascists. In the recent elections to the European parliament, the fascist BNP secured two seats, while the right-wing populist UK Independence Party beat the hapless Labour Party, which fell into third place. We said no vote to the No2EU campaign that was led by RMT rail union leader Bob Crow in alliance with the Socialist Party and others. No2EU was supposed to provide a “left” alternative to the BNP but was centrally based on support to the anti-foreigner Lindsey strikes—the “British jobs” crusade that the BNP was riding high on. A protest rally on 6 May at the 2012 Olympics building site in Stratford, London, addressed by Bob Crow and Keith Gibson, was an orgy of nationalist protectionism. Many protesters had been brought in from Lindsey and some sported signs saying “British Jobs for British Workers” and “Fairness for British Workers.” This is particularly provocative at the Olympics site where some 200 Romanian workers have been removed in a clamp-down on immigrants in recent months.

As Marxists we oppose the European Union, an imperialist trade bloc and a vehicle for European capitalist classes to cooperate against the working class and oppressed minorities of

each country. Our opposition is based on proletarian internationalism, which is counterposed to the “little England” nationalist opposition to the EU that is associated with Old Labour reformism, to which the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) [affiliated with the International Socialists in Canada] and the Socialist Party are wedded. Old Labour’s erstwhile claim to “socialism” amounted to nothing more than a commitment to nationalised industry under capitalism, which is inherently protectionist. The extensive nationalisations of industry carried out under Clement Attlee’s Labour government in the post-World War II period had nothing to do with socialism but were a “rescue package” for British capitalism, which was in profound decline against its rivals.

Compared to the Socialist Party, the SWP has taken a more critical stance on the anti-foreign-worker crusade. A recent headline says: “‘British Jobs’ Slogan Pushed Back but Its Argument Remains a Danger” (*Socialist Worker*, 27 June) and the article notes, “Socialist Worker has always firmly insisted that this is a divisive slogan that feeds racism and pits workers against each other.” This is a cover-up of the SWP’s actual support to the reactionary strikes, which is expressed in a petition being circulated by the SWP. On the one hand it says:

“The slogan ‘British jobs for British workers’ that has come to prominence around the dispute can only lead to deep divisions inside working class communities. The slogan, coined by Gordon Brown in his 2007 speech to Labour’s conference, is being taken up by the right wing press and the Nazi BNP. These are forces that have always been bitterly hostile to the trade union movement.”

But the petition also says clearly: “We support the demands of the Lindsey Oil Refinery strike committee” (“Unite to Fight for Jobs Petition” at petitiononline.com). Those demands include: “Union controlled registering of unemployed and locally skilled union members, with nominating rights as work becomes available,” which is merely another version of “British jobs for British workers.”

For the trade-union bureaucracy, the Socialist Party and the SWP, support for these “British first” strikes stems from their reformist program, which accepts the framework of nationalism as opposed to proletarian internationalism. They have no answer to the worldwide capitalist crisis other than to rally in defence of British capitalism. In virtually all major capitalist countries, the union tops have responded to mass job losses and unemployment with chauvinism and calls for increasing protectionism. As we wrote in “Down With Reactionary Strikes Against Foreign Workers!”: “For the bourgeoisie, ‘free trade’ and protectionism are options they can debate, but for the proletariat, protectionism is poison. It is a classic means of channelling discontent over job losses into hostility towards foreign workers and immigrants while building illusions in the benevolence of our ‘own’ capitalists.... There is no answer to the boom-and-bust cycles of capitalism short of proletarian socialist revolution that takes power out of the hands of the irrational capitalist ruling class and replaces it with a planned, socialised economy. Only the achievement of a world socialist order can eliminate the age-old problem of poverty, scarcity and want.”

We seek to build a multiethnic revolutionary workers party, forged in opposition to Labourism, to overthrow the bloodsoaked British capitalist order and replace it with working-class rule. Down with the reactionary “United Kingdom”! For a federation of workers republics in the British Isles! For a Socialist United States of Europe! ■

## Swine Flu...

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"An international planned economy would take immediate steps to direct the necessary resources to areas affected by dangerous viruses like SARS, not to mention AIDS, which is killing tens of millions. Free, quality health care for all is within the bounds of material possibility, but not under capitalism, where the availability and quality of health care for the masses of working people is subordinate to the drive for profit."

### Racist Canadian State Obstructs Anti-Flu Measures

In July, a photographer in Nunavut caught the image of two young Inuit children sleeping amid refuse on a street in the capital, Iqaluit. Picked up by major news media covering an official visit by prime minister Stephen Harper, the picture sparked outrage, much of it hypocritical. It was soon revealed that the mother of one of the boys had been ill with flu for several weeks, while at the same time having to care alone for five children.

Only rarely do the grotesque conditions endured by aboriginal peoples in Canada's far north make headlines: contaminated water, extreme poverty, crowding in inadequate unsafe housing, lack of access to decent food. Aboriginal households suffer rates of "severe food insecurity" over five times higher than non-aboriginal households. Such conditions, magnified by a serious lack of medical services, are a perfect vector for the spread of communicable diseases.

In every part of the country, the daily experience of life for aboriginal people is raw racism, homelessness, sky-high incarceration rates and police terror. Now the media are reporting a wave of murders of Native women in Manitoba, recalling the grisly killings of dozens of mainly aboriginal women in British Columbia several years ago. Suicide rates among Native youth are five to seven times higher than for the rest of the population. The very real social pathologies of domestic violence, abuse of children and drug addiction affect all capitalist societies, but are exacerbated by the brutal enforced marginalization and poverty of aboriginal people.

Outrageously, since the initial outbreaks of swine flu in May, Ottawa has time and again refused increasingly desperate appeals for help from Manitoba aboriginal leaders. Although at least 20 people had to be airlifted from Manitoba's remote St. Theresa Point First Nation 500 kilometres south to Winnipeg for treatment of the swine flu virus, the feds turned down Native leaders' requests for a field hospital to combat the infection. Health Canada officials instead announced they might have to *close* several nursing stations and medical centres in northern Manitoba due to lack of personnel.

Manitoba chiefs sounded the alarm by declaring a state of emergency in their communities and began a desperate effort to raise funds on their own for basic medical supplies and sanitary equipment for isolated communities ravaged by the first round of infections. Their efforts were met with bald-faced racism—even shipments of urgently needed hand sanitizer were held up by Health Canada, which professed "concerns" that these could be consumed for their alcohol content by the inhabitants of the flu-ravaged reserves! Residents of the St. Theresa Point First Nation visiting their sick relatives in Winnipeg hospitals were forced, on orders from Health Canada, to leave the St. Regis Hotel because they "could have been infected" with the virus.



Lyndon Mechielsen

**Aboriginal parents grieve over the death from swine flu of their four-year-old daughter in Doomadgee Hospital in Queensland, Australia.**

On August 20, David Butler-Jones, who heads the Public Health Agency of Canada, declined to help fund 15,000 emergency flu kits being organized by the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs. The kits include such items as thermometers, gloves, masks and Tylenol which are either unavailable or prohibitively expensive in remote communities. Offering nothing, Butler-Jones sneered that such measures were "unwarranted" and would create "a false sense of protection." Health Canada's website meanwhile advises to "wash hands frequently with soap and warm water"—a sick joke for people living in overcrowded, deteriorating homes on dirt-poor reserves without clean water or toilets.

Racist contempt for the rights, health and lives of Native peoples is not an aberration of this or that official or governing party, but is woven into the very fabric of the bourgeois state. Beginning with the smallpox, measles and typhus that exterminated up to 90 percent of the New World's indigenous inhabitants, disease has always been the handmaiden of fraud and brute force in the ruling class's theft of aboriginal lands and resources. The last great plague to decimate Canada's aboriginal peoples occurred with the 1918 Spanish flu epidemic, which wiped out entire villages. The death toll among aboriginal people during that outbreak was more than five times greater than the national average.

Canadian capitalism was founded on the destruction of the pre-existing aboriginal societies, beginning under French and later English colonialism. The survivors were thrown into reserves established to formalize their dispossession at the hands of a virulently bigoted Anglo-chauvinist ruling class. From the hanging of Métis leader Louis Riel nearly 125 years ago, to the assassination of Dudley George at Ipperwash, Ontario, to the military assaults at Gustafsen Lake, B.C. and Oka, Quebec, the price of resistance to this arrangement has been state violence and murder. Only a social revolution by the multiethnic working class, leading all oppressed minorities in the struggle to sweep away capitalist barbarism, will be able to redress the centuries of crimes inflicted on aboriginal societies by capitalist plunder and oppression.

### Australia—Racist Hellhole for Aborigines

Substitute searing heat for bitter cold and the pictures of state-sponsored anti-aboriginal racism, grinding poverty and exclusion in Australia and Canada become nearly identical. Aborigines, who make up only 2.5 percent of the Australian

population, have been hospitalized and are dying from swine flu at five times the national rate. Among the tiny and remote indigenous community of Palm Island, where unemployment is 90 percent and life expectancy only 50 years, one in ten residents were feared to have caught the virus. Elementary measures like quarantining patients are impossible on the island, where an average of 16 people are crowded into each house!

Palm Island epitomizes the brutal racism and social degradation imposed by the Australian rulers on Aboriginal people. It is also notorious for the brutal killing in 2004 of Mulrunji Doomadgee by the cop Chris Hurley. Hurley—the first cop ever to be charged for an Aboriginal death in police custody in Australia—was eventually exonerated, rewarded and promoted, while the leader of the Aboriginal protests over the murder, Lex Wotton, was sentenced to six years in jail.

On top of the permanent state of endemic poverty, malnutrition and chronic disease in Australia's "deep north," the current epidemic is hitting Aboriginal communities already besieged by a brutal police/military occupation. In 2007, the then Liberal/National government of John Howard sent cops and army personnel to invade and occupy 73 Aboriginal townships and communities on the pretext of stopping "child abuse," hypocritically banning alcohol and pornography. This occupation, a naked land grab, has been intensified by the current Labor government. When the state first launched this assault two years ago, our comrades of the Spartacist League of Australia immediately issued a protest statement, declaring:

"The working class has a direct interest in taking up the fight to defend Aboriginal people and all the oppressed. *For working class protests against racist state repression! Down with Howard's martial law! No to cop/military occupations of Northern Territory Aboriginal communities!*"

—"Australia: Racist War on Aborigines," SC No. 154, Fall 2007

A further anti-Aboriginal atrocity sparked outrage this June, with the release of a coroner's report from Western Australia. It described the death in police custody of an

Aboriginal elder who effectively "cooked to death" for hours in the back of a prison van without air conditioning as he was being transported. Guards who opened the van to find him near death, lying with third-degree burns on the burning-hot metal floor, would not even enter the van to help him, merely flicking water on him before driving on to a hospital.

Gruesome deaths in "police custody" are an all-too-familiar occurrence for Native people in both Canada and Australia, who know from daily experience that the greatest instigators of violence are the armed, uniformed gangs of the capitalist state.

### Labour Must Defend Native Rights!

Native people need jobs at union wages and massive education, health and housing programs, including the provision of clean water and electricity. For free quality health care and education for all! But basic justice for aboriginal people and all the oppressed and exploited will not come through any amount of pressuring the capitalist state for a few limited and ultimately reversible concessions, but by the expropriation of the capitalist class under a workers state.

To achieve this will require a revolutionary party of working people forged on an authentic Marxist program, a party of the Bolshevik type, fundamentally different from the parties of capital or the pro-capitalist social democrats of the NDP. Creating the nucleus of such a party, as part of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist), is the purpose of the Trotskyist League/Ligue trotskyste. As we state in our "Programmatic Theses":

"Only the destruction of capitalism can hold out the possibility of voluntary integration, on the basis of full equality, for those aboriginal peoples who desire it, and the fullest possible regional autonomy for those who do not...."

"The unremitting proletarian defense of Native people's lives and rights as equal citizens is part of the fight of the multiracial working class to overturn this whole brutal and violent capitalist system. Only an egalitarian-socialist society under workers rule will be able to redress three centuries of abuse and degradation."

—*Who We Are, and What We Fight For* (August 1998) ■

## Toronto Strike...

(continued from page 24)

30,000 workers in CUPE 416 and 79 threw down the gauntlet and walked off the job. As uncollected garbage mounted on the streets, so did the media's anti-union vitriol. Reviled as greedy, city workers—at least 10,000 of whom work part-time and have no paid sick days—were said to "enjoy perks that others can only dream of" (*Globe and Mail*, 26 June). Ontario's deputy premier, George Smitherman, put himself at the head of a gang of strikebreaking "volunteers" to clean up garbage, as did local councillor and former CUPE official Giorgio Mammoliti.

The capitalist economic crisis is destroying the lives and livelihoods of millions here and internationally as the ruling class seizes the opportunity to extract massive concessions from workers, all for the greater glory of profit. In Canada and the U.S., public sector workers are a major target. In California, hundreds of thousands of government workers have been handed unilateral wage cuts of 14 percent through mandatory three-day furloughs each month. From Chicago to New York, city governments are handing out layoff notices and savaging workers' gains.

In Canada, the ruling class is gunning for health care and other benefits, and above all pensions. Older workers are to be thrown on the scrap heap to retire on crumbs, while sick, disabled and pregnant workers are now targets for dismissal. Last November, postal workers in the Public Service Alliance of Canada struck for over a month, unsuccessfully, against the destruction of their sick plan. In Windsor, devastated by mass layoffs in auto, city workers struck in mid-April to defend retirement benefits for new hires but in the end yielded on this, starved out after nearly four months on the picket line.

But Toronto is not Windsor, an economic wreck. It is the largest city in Canada and when CUPE shut it down, the social power of the working class was shown for all to see. Without garbage pickup, clean water, safe roads, public health services and much more, Toronto cannot run. Instead of crossing each other's picket lines in the mutual scabbing deals that undercut past strikes, outside workers in CUPE 416 and inside workers in 79 struck together. IBEW electricians employed by contractors working on city projects honoured the picket lines.

Miller made elimination of the sick plan the central issue,  
(continued on page 22)

## Toronto Strike...

(continued from page 21)

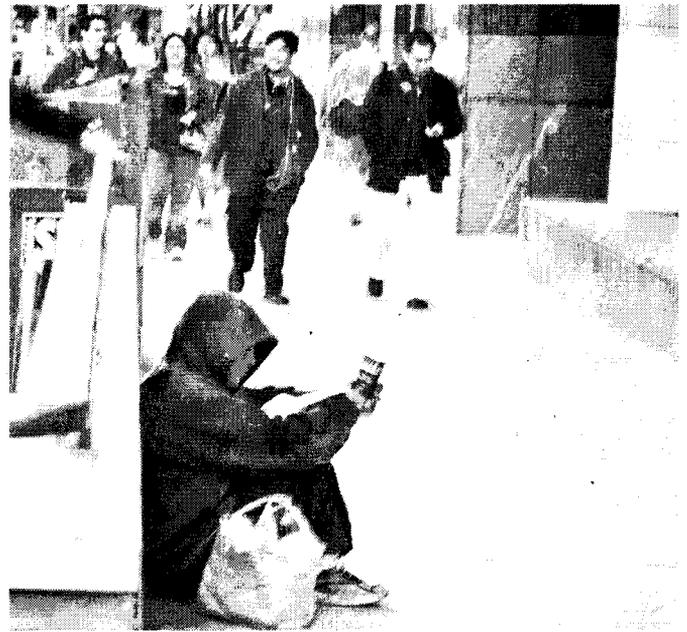
bragging that his predecessors “never had the guts to try and deal with this sick bank.” The plan allows full-time workers 18 fully paid sick days per year, and unused days are banked for future use or to be cashed in—to a maximum of six months—as a form of superannuation on retirement. The city’s “offer” was a naked cash grab which amounted to stealing workers’ banked time.

If the city had succeeded in its sweeping assault on seniority and other union rights, that would have been a body blow to the union. In the end, by standing firm on the picket lines for nearly six weeks, the unions succeeded in beating back most of the city’s attacks. The bosses’ medija howled in fury that Miller ended up giving away the store by keeping the sick plan intact for existing workers.

CUPE 416 president Mark Ferguson was hailed as a hero at the ratification vote by jubilant workers, but the outcome was far from an unalloyed victory. The new contract includes an inferior sick plan for new hires, a two-tier arrangement that sets the stage for dividing the workforce, pitting younger workers against older. Miller gloated that the deal would save the city “millions and millions and tens of millions of dollars.” It must be recognized that this concession will open the door to further incursions against this workforce and others. We are opposed to all such two- or multi-tier schemes. The unions should fight for equal pay for equal work and equal benefits, including full pay for all sick time, for all workers.

### Undermining Workers Struggles

The city strike showed graphically that looking to NDP social democrats or other “friend of labour” politicians as allies is a dead end for workers. The NDP is what we Marxists call a bourgeois workers party. Linked to the unions via the labour bureaucracy, it has a thoroughly pro-capitalist program of maintaining the present system. In power, the NDP has always administered capitalism with a vengeance. The war on the city unions by the present NDP-dominated city



SC photo

### Homelessness and poverty in the streets of Toronto.

council is but the latest in a long history of such attacks. In Ontario under Bob Rae in the 1990s, the NDP imposed across-the-board pay cuts on government workers; in B.C., they sent the army and police against Native protesters. Out of power, the NDP seeks to direct social anger into the safe channels of parliamentarism.

In the 2003 and 2006 mayoral elections, the CUPE union tops corralled these powerful civic unions behind David Miller, then an NDP member. The pro-NDP reformist left happily joined the “it’s Miller time” bandwagon. The International Socialists (I.S.) were among the most enthusiastic, urging in 2003, “It is vital that Miller’s campaign be backed” because he was “completely opposed to privatization.”

But Miller was and is Bay Street’s man. From the moment he stepped into the mayor’s chair, he has necessarily run this city for the capitalist class. In 2006 when transit workers staged a wildcat strike, Miller joined the anti-union hysteria, demanding massive fines from the union. Two years later when they struck again, the city demanded that the province enact strikebreaking legislation—for which the provincial NDP caucus voted unanimously.

Under Miller, the cops have carried out massive “anti-gang” raids in black and Asian neighbourhoods like Jane and Finch, where unemployment and poverty are rampant. “Toronto Anti-Violence Intervention Strategy” cops act as an occupying force, hassling and detaining black youth at will, part of the bogus “war on crime” which has given the police licence to kill, beat and brutalize young black men. And for this they are handsomely rewarded: the police budget has swollen to a massive \$855 million—25 percent of the city’s budget!

Obscenely, the union misleaders of CUPE 416 and 79 embraced the cops as allies, welcoming a police association spokesman onto a June 24 strike rally platform. Meanwhile, the cops were enforcing the city’s edicts, including, outrageously, arresting the chairman of the Emergency Medical Services unit of Local 416, Glenn Fontaine, who still faces trumped-up charges and remains suspended from work. When the CUPE tops cited wage increases given to “other unionized City workers,” they included the cops. Echoing this, the I.S. pleaded that

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the largely female workers of Local 79 “deserve the same respect as the primarily male cops” (*Socialist Worker*, 8 July). For their part, the Fightback group kept a stony silence about the cops, an issue of vital importance to the working class.

Consistent with their reformist views of the state, both groups hold that cops are part of the working class. Last year, Fightback’s British co-thinkers backed cops demanding better pay, headlining “Bolshevik Bobbies” ([marxist.com](http://marxist.com), 29 January 2008). On the contrary, the cops are a core part of the capitalist state, and along with the army, courts and prisons serve to protect the private property of the capitalist class. Racist, corrupt, violent to the core, professional strike-breakers, the police are the sworn enemy of the working people, a truth which Fightback and the I.S. hide because they believe that this state can be pressured to serve the interests of working people and the oppressed.

### For a Class-Struggle Leadership!

The city strike was a test for the labour movement, and while the unions largely beat back the city’s offensive, the broader interests of labour were sacrificed by a pro-NDP leadership that is ultimately loyal to the capitalist system. To seize the strike as an opportunity to push back the ruling class’s across-the-board attacks required a fighting, class-struggle leadership rooted in the understanding that the interests of labour and capital are counterposed and irreconcilable.

A class-struggle leadership would have rallied all workers and the oppressed, explaining that an attack on these unions was an attack on all and on the services upon which millions rely. Against the city’s attempt to mobilize the poor and unemployed against the strike, such a leadership would have raised demands for jobs, free quality health care and 24-hour child care for all and for greatly increased unemployment benefits for everyone who cannot find work. A struggle to organize the unorganized would revive a union movement that gets smaller and weaker every year, while a massive program of public works at union wages would go far in providing desperately needed housing and repairing the city’s rotting infrastructure. Such demands are inseparable from the struggle to overthrow this bankrupt and decaying system of exploitation.

It was the social democrat Miller, not some reactionary Tory, who launched the assault on the unions. Yet the CUPE tops alibied Miller and even now push the line that things would have been much worse with a right-wing mayor. In May, a 1,600-strong Stewards’ Assembly organized by the Toronto Labour Council—ostensibly devoted to resisting “the pressure to accept concessions on wages, benefits and pensions”—featured Miller as a “surprise guest” along with other social-democratic luminaries such as NDP leader Jack Layton.

The quest for “unity” with the capitalists—and their social-democratic frontmen—can only bring defeat to the struggles of labour and the oppressed. Last December, Layton’s federal NDP joined with the Liberal Party in a short-lived coalition that was heavily backed by the labour tops. We denounced this coalition, declaring that it was “an enemy of the interests of the working class.” Meanwhile Layton called on workers to have the “courage” to “take a pay cut so your friends at the plant can keep their job” (*Toronto Star*, 23 January).

### Those Who Labour Must Rule!

The NDP-loyal left answers David Miller’s perfidy as they answer every betrayal of social democracy: by pressuring the NDP and its brethren in the trade-union bureaucracy to

become reliable champions of workers struggles. Fightback calls on the NDP class traitors and union tops to “launch a campaign right now to raise class consciousness”! Meanwhile in B.C. this group is campaigning to “Take Back the Party” in a move to bolster the NDP’s fortunes after its defeat in the May provincial election.

The I.S. compares Miller’s attacks to Bob Rae’s brutal anti-working-class austerity, asking “What lessons must we draw from this seeming repetition of history?” In fact their call, “Time to challenge Miller from the left,” is precisely a program to repeat the cycle of betrayal at the hands of yet another, supposedly “left-wing,” NDP politician. The I.S. laments that Miller withdrew from the NDP, “choosing the mayor’s office over the workers’ movement.” The idea that Miller’s anti-labour attacks were some kind of misguided “choice” reflects their reformist framework. Far from a potential instrument for socialism, the NDP is an obstacle to workers struggles.

More broadly, the mayor is the central administrator of the capitalist state at the municipal level, and no different than any other executive office, be it president or prime minister. Revolutionaries would not hold such positions—to do so means taking responsibility for running the capitalist state and all its oppressive machinery. Similarly, to run for such offices is to deepen illusions, peddled by the I.S. et al., that the state can be reformed.

The Trotskyist League/Ligue trotskyste is fighting to build a multiracial revolutionary workers party—and that party must be built in struggle against the social-democratic NDP and union tops. As long as capitalism exists, the working class will be exploited. As Marx explained in *Value, Price and Profit* (1865), in their defensive struggles working people:

“ought not to forget that they are fighting with effects, but not with the causes of those effects; that they are retarding the downward movement, but not changing its direction; that they are applying palliatives, not curing the malady.... Instead of the conservative motto, ‘A fair day’s wage for a fair day’s work!’ they ought to inscribe on their banner the revolutionary watchword, ‘Abolition of the wages system!’”

The only way to smash the assault on the working class, the only way to combat racist police violence and bigotry against minorities, is to rip the productive forces from the hands of the capitalist class through socialist revolution and put them in the hands of those whose labour makes society run. ■

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# Toronto City Workers Beat Back Anti-Union Offensive



Redman/National Post

**CUPE pickets at Toronto City Hall during six-week strike. Inset: Social-democratic mayor David Miller, backed by capitalist media frenzy, tried to force massive concessions.**

On July 31, Toronto city workers in Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) Locals 416 and 79 returned to work after a bitter 39-day strike in defense of union gains won over decades of struggle. Their partial win against a massive anti-union assault, coming in the most severe economic downturn since the Great Depression, was a welcome break in an almost unbroken pattern of grim working-class defeats.

Calling the city's outrageous demands—118 pages of give-backs—"fair and reasonable," Toronto's social-democratic mayor David Miller led the charge to destroy sick benefits

and gut seniority rights. Right-wing politicians and media commentators salivated over a golden chance to greatly weaken the unions, a prelude to further privatization and further shredding of government and social services. The attack on the city unions was meant to serve as a wedge to divide working people, pitting better-paid unionized city workers against the poor and unemployed, dividing younger against older workers and driving down conditions for all.

Instead of rolling over in the face of the city's demands,

*(continued on page 21)*

## NDP, Union Tops: Obstacles to Class Struggle