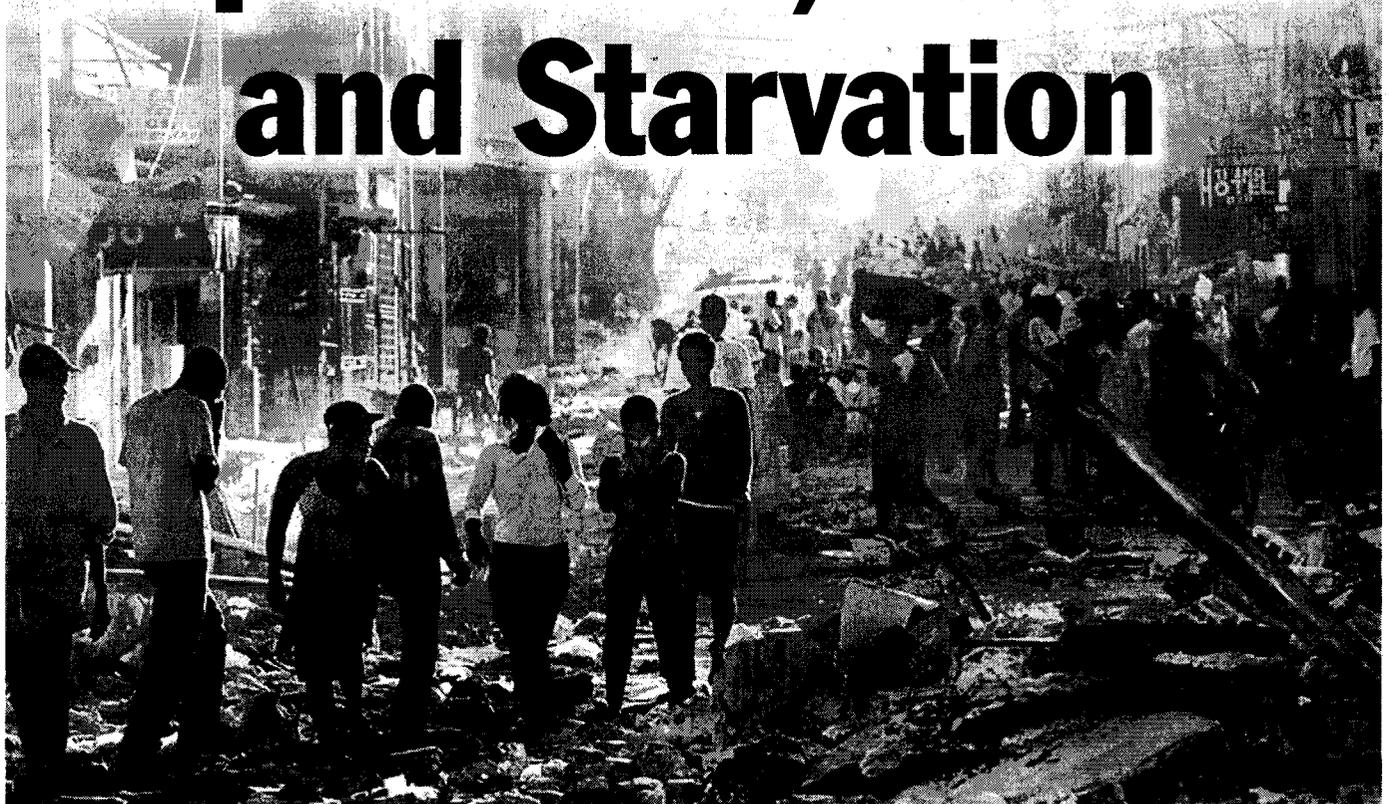


Haiti Earthquake Horror: **Imperialism, Racism and Starvation**



AP

Port-au-Prince on January 16, four days after the earthquake.

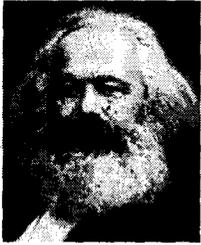
The following article is reprinted from Workers Vanguard No. 951 (29 January), newspaper of the Spartacist League/U.S.

JANUARY 25—Any country whose capital was struck by an earthquake registering 7.0 on the Richter scale would suffer grave damage, but Haiti's unimaginable toll of death and destruction is a measure of the poverty inflicted upon it by the racist imperialist overlords. Upwards of 200,000 are believed to be dead and many more die every day from lack of food and clean water and untreated infections. Up to three million people are rendered homeless, trying to survive on the streets amid the rubble. Doctors and nurses who flew in to aid in the relief effort are performing operations in makeshift open-air "hospitals," often without anesthetic or even material to sterilize their equipment. The ramshackle state administration, such as it was, has collapsed, with the government now operating out of a police outpost at the airport.

The poorest country in the hemisphere, Haiti was totally exposed to the earthquake's impact. Even before the earthquake struck, the unemployment rate was as high as 80 percent, more than half the population lived on less than one dollar a day and nearly one out of every two Haitians had no regular access to drinking water. With little in the way of an indigenous working class, many Haitians rely on remittances from Haitian workers in the U.S., Canada and elsewhere, which amount to nearly a quarter of the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Many people lived in tin shacks that collapsed when the quake hit, and many of the concrete buildings were constructed so shoddily that they simply "pancaked."

Given the impoverishment and lack of infrastructure, the Haitian population now finds itself totally reliant on international aid efforts. Thousands of medical and search-and-rescue volunteers from many countries rushed to Haiti to provide

(continued on page 14)



Marx



Lenin



Trotsky

The Deception of Bourgeois Democracy

In his classic work, The State and Revolution, written on the eve of the 1917 October Revolution, Bolshevik leader V.I. Lenin explained that capitalist democracy is nothing but a fig leaf for the class dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. Pointing to the lessons drawn by Karl Marx from the experience of the 1871 Paris Commune, when the proletariat briefly held power, Lenin argued that only under the dictatorship of the proletariat would the state serve the interests of the working masses on the road to a classless world communist society.

In capitalist society, providing it develops under the most favourable conditions, we have a more or less complete democracy in the democratic republic. But this democracy is always hemmed in by the narrow limits set by capitalist exploitation, and consequently always remains, in effect, a democracy for the minority, only for the propertied classes, only for the rich. Freedom in capitalist society always remains about the same as it was in the ancient Greek republics: freedom for the slave-owners. Owing to the conditions of capitalist

exploitation, the modern wage slaves are so crushed by want and poverty that “they cannot be bothered with democracy,” “cannot be bothered with politics”; in the ordinary, peaceful course of events, the majority of the population is debarred from participation in public and political life....

Democracy for an insignificant minority, democracy for the rich—that is the democracy of capitalist society. If we look more closely into the machinery of capitalist democracy, we see everywhere, in the “petty”—supposedly petty—details of the suffrage (residential qualification, exclusion of women, etc.), in the technique of the representative institutions, in the actual obstacles to the right of assembly (public buildings are not for “paupers”!), in the purely capitalist organisation of the daily press, etc., etc.—we see restriction after restriction upon democracy....

Marx grasped this *essence* of capitalist democracy splendidly when, in analysing the experience of the Commune, he said that the oppressed are allowed once every few years to decide which particular representatives of the oppressing class shall represent and repress them in parliament!

But from this capitalist democracy—that is inevitably narrow and stealthily pushes aside the poor, and is therefore hypocritical and false through and through—forward development does not proceed simply, directly and smoothly, towards “greater and greater democracy,” as the liberal professors and petty-bourgeois opportunists would have us believe. No, forward development, i.e., development towards communism, proceeds through the dictatorship of the proletariat, and cannot do otherwise, for the *resistance* of the capitalist exploiters cannot be *broken* by anyone else or in any other way.

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

Correction

Our introduction to the reprint of a leaflet issued by our German comrades in November 1989 (“East Germany 1989: The Trotskyist Struggle Against Capitalist Counter-revolution,” *SC* No. 163, Winter 2009/2010) contains a flawed formulation concerning the unravelling of Stalinist bureaucratic rule in the German Democratic Republic (DDR). The introduction states: “By the end of that month [October] the ruling bureaucracy had collapsed and Erich Honecker, head of the Socialist Unity Party (SED), had fallen from power.” In fact, while hardline ruler Honecker was removed from power, the ruling bureaucracy as a whole did *not* collapse. The equation of Honecker’s ouster with the collapse of the bureaucracy obliterates the fact his

successors in the DDR—Egon Krenz, Hans Modrow and Gregor Gysi—were also Stalinist bureaucrats.

This formulation could imply a number of wrong things, including the idea that the East German workers state had ceased to exist by October 1989. The disintegration of the DDR Stalinist bureaucracy did not occur at once but came in a series of stages over a number of months under the impact of widespread social turmoil. As we wrote in the same introduction: “The choices posed for the workers of the DDR were proletarian political revolution—i.e., the working class ousts the bureaucracy and takes political power into its own hands—or capitalist counterrevolution, i.e., the West German bourgeoisie takes over the DDR.”

A fuller analysis of these developments is contained in the main document adopted at the Second International Conference of the International Communist League in 1992 (see “For the Communism of Lenin and Trotsky!” *Spartacist* [English-language edition] No. 47-48, Winter 1992-93). As it states:

“...from the beginning we were in a political struggle with the abdicating Stalinist regime over the future of the DDR. While we were calling for a government of workers councils, the Stalinists were consciously acting to prevent a workers insurrection by demobilizing all army units that had formed soldiers councils as a result of our early propaganda. Although shaped by the disproportion of forces, there was in fact a contest between the ICL program of political revolution and the Stalinist program of capitulation and counterrevolution.” ■

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Haiti, Somalia, Afghanistan Canada: Junior Partner of U.S. Imperialism



Randall White

Canadian cops in Haiti, 2006.

The Tory government has seized on the Haiti earthquake disaster to refurbish Canadian capitalism's threadbare "humanitarian" pretenses. Ottawa sent 2,000 troops together with relief supplies, while prime minister Harper blew into the largely destroyed town of Jacmel for a photo-op. The reality is that, by helping subject the Haitian masses to brutal poverty and neocolonial oppression, the Canadian imperialist rulers have *contributed* to the devastation wreaked upon that country.

In 1993, Canadian troops and RCMP officers were among the forces dispatched to "retrain" the blood-soaked Haitian police and army. Two years later, Canada joined the U.S.-led military intervention that had returned former president Jean-Bertrand Aristide to power. Then in January 2003 Canada hosted a secret meeting of senior U.S., Latin American and European officials, dubbed the "Ottawa Initiative on Haiti," where a "consensus" was reached that Aristide must now be ousted.

More than 500 Canadian troops joined in the February 2004 kidnapping of Aristide, aiding the U.S. in whisking him out of the country. Right-wing paramilitaries with links to the former death-squad regime then went on a killing spree, massacring thousands of poor peasants and slum dwellers. Hundreds more were later murdered by the RCMP-trained Haitian National Police. The commander of the Canadian forces in Haiti at the time publicly acknowledged in July 2004 that at least 1,000 bodies had been buried in a mass grave within three weeks of the coup. He went on to defend the slaughter of dozens of civilians by United Nations troops on 12 March 2004, an atrocity known locally as the Belair Massacre. Ever since, Haiti has been occupied by UN "peacekeeping" forces including Canadian troops and police.

The history of Canadian imperialist depredations in the guise of "peacekeeping" by no means began with Haiti. In the 1950s, more than 20,000 Canadian troops joined the U.S./UN war against the North Korean and Chinese bureaucratically deformed workers states. A decade later, Canadian "UN peacekeepers" were sent to the Congo to help protect its vast mineral wealth for imperialist exploitation. Helping to overthrow Patrice Lumumba's radical-nationalist government, they set the stage for his murder. During Washington's long, losing war against the Vietnamese Revolution in the 1960s and '70s, Canadian "peacekeepers" and "observers" served as spies for the U.S., while Canada supplied the U.S. war machine with \$1 million a day in arms shipments.

In the 1990s, Canadian UN troops tortured and killed civilians in Somalia, including the gruesome murder of Shidane Arone by the fascist-infested Canadian Airborne Regiment. Canada joined in the bloody U.S. neocolonial war on Iraq in 1991. From 2001 on, Canadian troops have been part of the

U.S.-led occupation of Afghanistan, killing large numbers of civilians and handing over prisoners to the notoriously corrupt Afghan regime for torture. Canada also provided substantial covert military support to the second U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003, while successive Liberal and Conservative regimes seized the opportunity to push through unprecedented increases in military spending. In this, they had the fulsome backing of the pro-imperialist social democrats of the NDP who in 2005 backed the Liberals' \$13 billion increase in military spending.

The pro-NDP reformist left fosters the deadly illusion that the Canadian imperialist rulers can be pressured into playing a "progressive" role internationally. This is exemplified by the International Socialists (I.S.), whose response to the Haiti disaster has been to beg the rulers to send "Aid Not Troops," while the Canadian Peace Alliance pleads for "humanitarian aid, not militarization of aid." As for the Canada Haiti Action Network (CHAN), their alternative is to promote the return of Aristide, who was propped up by the very imperialist forces they claim to oppose. A few years ago, CHAN organized a speaking tour for Haitian politician Patrick Elie, who served as Aristide's anti-drug czar from 1991-94, and was Secretary of State for National Defense in 1994-95, when he was instrumental in creating the National Police. During his tour, Elie publicly defended the presence of the UN troops in Haiti as providing a stabilizing role.

While acting as Washington's junior partner in the region, Canadian capitalism has long had its own predatory interests, especially in the English-speaking Caribbean. This is particularly notable in the financial sector where the assets of Canadian banks dwarf those of locally-owned institutions. At home, the Canadian ruling class and its state machine are the class enemies of the workers and the oppressors of Native people, immigrants and the Québécois.

This system cannot be reformed. Imperialism is not a "bad policy" of the rulers, who cannot be "pressured" into serving the needs of the workers and oppressed. In his 1916 pamphlet *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*, Bolshevik leader V.I. Lenin exposed this conception as pushing "a more subtle and more disguised (and therefore more dangerous) advocacy of conciliation with imperialism, because a 'fight' against the policy of the trusts and banks that does not affect the economic basis of the trusts and banks is mere bourgeois reformism and pacifism...." The imperialist order that has unleashed barbarism on the peoples of the world from Iraq to Afghanistan, Haiti and beyond must be swept away through international proletarian revolution, the only road to the liberation of humanity. ■

U.S. Supreme Court of Death Rules Against Mumia Abu-Jamal

Mumia Is Innocent— Free Him Now!



COC Productio

Mumia Abu-Jamal.

The following statement was issued by the Partisan Defense Committee in the U.S. on January 24.

On January 19, the U.S. Supreme Court took a clear step toward the legal lynching of Mumia Abu-Jamal. The Court vacated a 2001 decision by federal district court judge William Yohn overturning Mumia's death sentence. Yohn's decision had been previously upheld by the U.S. Third Circuit Court of Appeals. The new ruling by the Supreme Court underscores our insistence that fighters for Mumia's freedom must place no faith in the courts, which, at every level, have colluded with the police and prosecutors to see through the execution of this innocent man.

Mumia was targeted by the police and FBI in his teenage years as a Black Panther leader and later as a journalist and MOVE supporter renowned for his searing exposés of cop brutality and racist oppression. In a blatantly racist and political frame-up, Mumia was railroaded to death row in 1982 on false charges of killing Philadelphia police officer Daniel Faulkner. Without a shred of actual evidence against him, he was convicted on the basis of phony ballistics and other manufactured "evidence," a "confession" concocted by cops and prosecutors, massive police intimidation of witnesses and racist jury rigging. His trial was overseen by "hanging judge" Albert Sabo, who was overheard saying he would help the prosecution "fry the n---r." To secure the death sentence, prosecutors pointed to political statements issued by Mumia as a 16-year-old Panther.

Since his trial, the courts have repeatedly tossed aside massive evidence of Mumia's innocence, not least the confession of Arnold Beverly that he, not Mumia, shot and killed Faulkner. Yet Mumia remains unbowed, speaking out for the oppressed and the impoverished through his death row commentaries. The Partisan Defense Committee—a class-struggle, non-sectarian legal and social defense organization associated with the Spartacist League/U.S.—calls on trade unionists, death penalty abolitionists and all opponents of racist injustice to make their voices heard in demanding: Free Mumia now! Abolish the racist death penalty!

The Supreme Court moved against Mumia with cold calculation. Last April, it turned down Mumia's petition to overturn his frame-up conviction. At the same time, the

Court held in abeyance the arguments of Pennsylvania prosecutors to reinstate his death sentence, which had been overturned by Yohn on the grounds that Mumia's trial jury had been given faulty sentencing instructions. The Supreme Court waited to rule against Mumia until after it reinstated the death sentence for Ohio neo-Nazi Frank Spisak, which had been overturned on similar grounds of faulty jury instructions. In effect, the high court gave the Third Circuit their marching orders to uphold Mumia's death sentence. Alternatively, the Third Circuit could send the case back to Yohn for a hearing to consider other still-pending claims by Mumia or, less likely, reaffirm its prior decision.

The Supreme Court cynically tied together the Spisak and Mumia cases, not despite but because of their glaring differences. Spisak is a sociopath who admitted to killing his victims and made no secret of his admiration for Adolph Hitler. Mumia has always maintained his innocence and won acclaim as the "voice of the voiceless" for his powerful commentaries. The Court is consciously manipulating abhorrence of the fascist Spisak's crimes to set a precedent for the legal murder of Mumia, a man whose "crime" was to stand up to the racist capitalist rulers. Noting how his case differed from Spisak's, Mumia aptly told Free Speech Radio News, "The law is the tool of those in power, so how they use it doesn't depend on the law; it depends on power." The Supreme Court ruling will touch off new rounds of perhaps lengthy legal proceedings. But even if Mumia wins his battle against execution, the "alternative" offered by the courts is a life sentence with no possibility of parole, which, as Mumia noted in one of his prison writings, "is merely slow death."

The court's linking of the two cases highlights yet again how the fight for Mumia's freedom is inseparable from the struggle to abolish the death penalty. The PDC opposes the death penalty on principle and everywhere—for the guilty as well as for the innocent. We do not accord any state the right to determine who lives and who dies.

Capital punishment is a barbaric relic of ancient codes of justice and, in the U.S., of chattel slavery. Where in medieval times those who ran afoul of Crown and Church were put to the rack or burned at the stake, today's representatives of bourgeois

(continued on page 13)

Parliamentary Cretinism and Class Collaboration

A Prorogue's Gallery

On January 23, more than 20,000 people in many Canadian cities protested against the suspension (prorogation) of parliament by governor-general Michaëlle Jean at the behest of Tory prime minister Stephen Harper. These protests, called in the name of "Canadians Against Proroguing Parliament" (CAPP), were backed by the capitalist Liberal Party of Canada, the NDP social democrats and a variety of reformist left groups. Prominent among the latter were the International Socialists (I.S.). They helped organize and build the Toronto demo and one of their leading members made CAPP's money pitch from the platform. While Liberal heavies like Bob Rae worked the Liberal/NDP crowd in Toronto, the Ottawa rally was addressed by both Liberal leader Michael Ignatieff and NDP leader Jack Layton.

A central demand of these protests was that parliament "get back to work." But the "work" of parliament is to ensure the continued exploitation of the working class and the supremacy of private property. Job one when parliament does "get back to work" will be to continue making the working class pay for the capitalist economic crisis; the Tories are planning massive spending cuts, including an expected assault on the pensions of government workers.

Unlike our reformist opponents, we Marxists do not uphold the "sanctity" of parliament, though we certainly oppose its arbitrary curtailment by the executive power of the capitalist state. We also call for the immediate abolition of the monarchy, the governor-general and the unelected Senate—no mere relics but rallying points for social reaction.

The fake left's embrace of this "movement" to recall parliament reflects their deeply reformist view that the capitalist state can be administered in the interests of the workers and oppressed, especially if the NDP is helping to run it. In contrast, we recognize that the capitalist state must be smashed through proletarian revolution and replaced with workers councils (soviets), organs of working-class power.

Our defense of bourgeois-democratic rights is closely linked to combatting illusions in the "democratic" trappings of this unjust social system. V.I. Lenin, leader of the 1917 Russian Revolution, captured the essence of capitalist democracy in a scathing attack on the reformist enemies of Soviet Russia, the world's first workers state: "The working people are *barred* from participation in bourgeois parliaments (they *never* decide important questions under bourgeois democracy, which are decided by the stock exchange and the banks) by thousands of obstacles" (*The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky* [1918]).

We thus do not, on principle, run for or accept executive offices, from mayor to president. In parliaments and other legislative bodies, communist deputies can, as *oppositionists*, serve as revolutionary tribunes of the working class. But assuming executive office or gaining control of a bourgeois legislative or municipal council, either independently or in



SC photo

January 23: Toronto protest against suspension of parliament. Reformist left blocked with bourgeois Liberals and NDP social democrats, breeding illusions in capitalist "democracy."

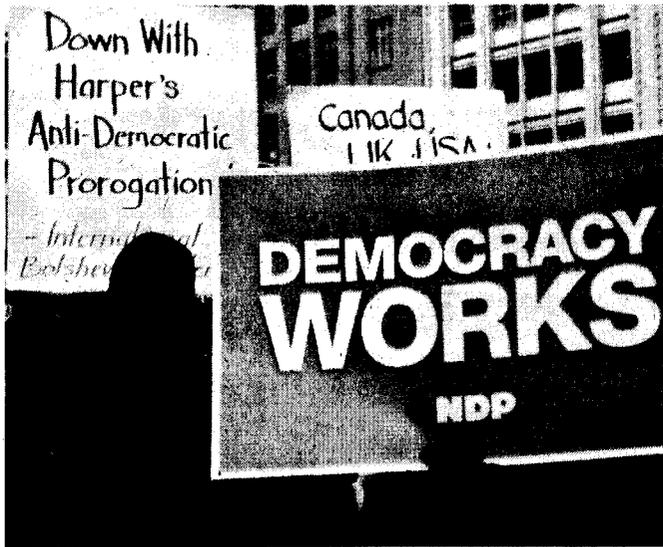
coalition, requires taking responsibility for the administration of the machinery of the capitalist state, including its corrupt, violent, racist police forces (see "Down With Executive Offices of the Capitalist State! Marxist Principles and Electoral Tactics," *Spartacist* [English-language edition] No. 61, Spring 2009).

The Harper government's latest suspension of parliament is a very real violation of bourgeois-democratic norms. But consider the history of the parliamentary parties that paraded in the streets. It was the Liberal government of Mackenzie King that interned Japanese Canadians during World War II, a racist atrocity backed by the NDP's predecessors, the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation. Pierre Trudeau's Liberals imposed martial law in Quebec in 1970 and Jean Chrétien's Liberals, backed by the NDP, imposed the Clarity Act, which effectively bans Quebec from exercising its democratic right to self-determination. Federally or provincially; Tory, Liberal or NDP: the bosses' parliamentary governments wage incessant attacks on workers and the oppressed on behalf of the exploiters.

When Chrétien prorogued parliament (four times), the fake left raised no hue and cry. Now, mired in their typical "fight the right" opportunism, the reformist Communist Party (CP) declared that "this movement to 'get Parliament back to work' can help spark a powerful campaign to block and defeat the Harper Tories" (January 7 statement). The CP's "anybody but Harper" sentiment—shared, if expressed less crudely, by the entire reformist left—can only be read as an endorsement of the bourgeois Liberals or at best the NDP.

In that same "fight the right" spirit, the I.S. begged the NDP to "step it up" so as "to make a difference to the outcome

(continued on page 6)



SC photo

Bolshevik Tendency (left) blends seamlessly into "get Parliament back to work" rally, Toronto, January 23.

English Canada and Quebec against one another instead of the capitalist rulers. As we recognized prior to the 1995 referendum, the only foreseeable way forward is for revolutionaries to advocate Quebec independence. By getting the national question off the agenda, workers of both nations will see more clearly that their true enemies are their "own" capitalist bosses, and not one another.

The English Canadian union tops and NDP have long been virulently hostile to Québec's national rights. They have lined up behind the Canadian ruling class whenever the Québécois seriously tried to assert their right to self-determination, including in the 1995 referendum. Such Anglo chauvinism has served to drive the once-militant Québécois working class into the arms of their "own" national exploiters, represented by the Bloc and Parti Québécois.

The reformist left capitulates to the Anglo chauvinists of the NDP in English Canada and, in some cases, to the bourgeois nationalists in Quebec, depending on where their immediate opportunist appetites lie. The Communist Party and Fightback oppose independence outright and cover their

straight capitulation to Anglo chauvinism with empty "unite-and-fight" rhetoric (see "'Fightback' and the Quebec National Question," SC No. 162, Fall 2009). Others, such as Socialist Action, favour Quebec independence, but only as a means to ingratiate themselves with "left" Québécois bourgeois nationalists. Today their chosen vehicle for this is the left-nationalist Québec Solidaire, a petty-bourgeois formation that does not even pay lip service to socialism.

Along with Fightback and the CP, the grotesquely misnamed Bolshevik Tendency is another staunch "left" defender of "Canadian unity." In line with their sneering contempt for all forms of special oppression, the BT openly opposes independence for Quebec. Notoriously, the BT has the dubious distinction of being *the* "socialists" officially invited to a Montreal "Canadian unity" rally organized by business groups on the eve of the 1995 referendum on Québec sovereignty! More recently, a BT contingent blended right into the flag-waving January prorogation protest in Toronto—none of their placards breathed a word of criticism against the ruling-class Liberal Party, let alone the social-democratic NDP. The BT is an integral part of the syphilitic chain of pro-capitalist reformism.

While workers and the oppressed must oppose ruling class attacks on bourgeois-democratic rights, they must do so by their own methods and under their own independent banner. As we said in our 22 December 2008 supplement, "Liberal-NDP Coalition: Tool of the Bosses" (SC No. 160, Spring 2009):

"The Trotskyist League/Ligue trotskyste is fighting to build the nucleus of a revolutionary Marxist party that can root itself in the working class. Taking up the cause of all the oppressed, such a party would give conscious leadership to the struggles of the workers not only to improve their present conditions but to do away with the entire system of capitalist wage slavery. 'Unity' with the oppressors, or with their social-democratic political agents, is the road to defeat. The only way to smash the all-sided assault on social programs, to assure free quality medical care, childcare and jobs and decent living standards for all, to end the neocolonial pillage of the Third World, is by ripping the productive forces from the hands of the capitalist class through socialist revolution and putting them in the hands of those whose labour makes society run." ■

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SC164

Critical Notes on the “Death of Communism” and the Ideological Conditions of the Post-Soviet World

We reprint from Workers Vanguard No. 949 (1 January) a 14 March 2009 document by Spartacist League Central Committee member Joseph Seymour. The document, slightly edited for publication, was a contribution to discussions and debates preceding the 13th National Conference of the Spartacist League, U.S. section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist). For a report on the conference, see “Dog Days of the Post-Soviet Period” (WV No. 948, 4 December 2009).

By Joseph Seymour

At our International Executive Committee plenum in early 2008, there was a discussion of and, I believe, inchoate differences over the content of the term “death of communism,” which is key to understanding the political-ideological conditions of the post-Soviet world. At the time I argued:

“An important question in the discussion of the work in South Africa and Mexico... is whether and in what sense these countries and other countries—China’s been mentioned, Greece—are an exception to what we call the ‘retrogression of consciousness’ and the ‘death of communism’ ideology. But the concept of an exception implies a norm. So what’s the norm? The overwhelming majority of our tendency is located in the advanced capitalist-imperialist countries of West Europe and North America... It’s here that we every day, pervasively, encounter the ‘death of communism’ ideology. And I think that this has conditioned a certain skewed and deformed understanding of the radically changed ideological and political contours and divisions throughout the world.

“Almost every time we use the term ‘death of communism’ we link it to bourgeois triumphalism. We’re not talking about the triumphalism of the bourgeoisie of India or Egypt or Brazil. We’re talking about the triumphalism of the Western imperialist, centrally American, bourgeoisie. But a disbelief in the possibility of a future international communist society—and that’s the crux of the ‘death of communism’—in Third World countries is not and cannot be identified with American imperialist triumphalism and domination. What you have rather is the rise of fairly significant, with a broad base of support, political-ideological movements which claim to be *opposed* to American imperialist triumphalism. The obvious example is, of course, nationalist populism in Latin America exemplified by Hugo Chávez. But you also have the same phenomenon in a very right-wing way which is the rise of anti-Western Islamic fundamentalism in the Near East. Osama bin Laden, Hugo Chávez, Tony Blair, Bill Clinton all represent the ‘death of communism’ in different ways in different national contexts.”

The crux of the “death of communism” is just that: a *disbelief* in the historical possibility of a global communist civi-



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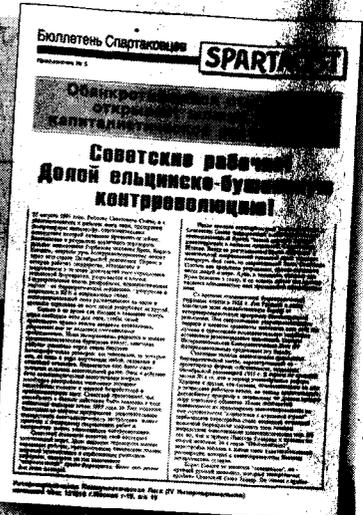


Workers Vanguard

Top left: Boris Yeltsin waves Russian flag on barricades of capitalist counterrevolution in Moscow, August 1991. ICL distributed tens of thousands of leaflets headlined, “Soviet Workers: Defeat Yeltsin-Bush Counterrevolution!” Bottom: Spartacists protest Yeltsin visit, New York City, 1992.

lization in the Marxist sense. This is a *basic common ground* shared by diverse political tendencies with often strongly antagonistic attitudes toward Western imperialism, parliamentary democracy, a capitalist market economy and other divisive issues (e.g., environmental degradation) separating left and right in the conventional usage of these terms.

To make sure we all understand the terms of discourse, I’ll briefly restate the main features of a fully communist society on a global scale. Economic scarcity has been overcome, thereby leading to the elimination of wage labor (“from each according to his ability; to each according to his needs”). Alienated labor has been replaced by creative, scientific and cultural work (Marx once pointed to composing music as an example of the latter). The state has withered away so that, in Engels’ words, the governing of men has been replaced by the



administration of things. Racial, national and ethnic affiliation has disappeared through widespread interethnic procreation and global mobility (“the international soviet shall be the human race”). The family has been replaced by collective institutions for housework and the nurturing and socialization of children.

The overwhelming majority of self-considered leftists over the age of, say, 40 or 50 regard a future society described above as utopian. The overwhelming majority of younger leftists, represented, for example, in the “social forum” milieu, are effectively ignorant of and indifferent to the Marxist concept of a global communist civilization. Their concerns are *defensive and minimalist*—supporting the democratic rights of oppressed peoples (e.g., the Palestinians), halting the dismantling of the “welfare state” in West Europe, preventing the further degradation of the environment (global warming).

I’ll recast my argument by referencing Lenin’s *The State and Revolution*. When this work was published in 1918 and in subsequent decades, the basic difference between revolutionary Marxists and other left tendencies concerned the subject matter discussed in Chapter I (“Class Society and the State”). In it Lenin summarily states:

“The theory of Marx and Engels of the inevitability of a violent revolution refers to the bourgeois state. The latter *cannot* be superseded by the proletarian state (the dictatorship of the proletariat) through the process of ‘withering away,’ but, as a general rule, only through a violent revolution.” [emphasis in original]

In the post-Soviet period, the most fundamental difference between ourselves and other left tendencies concerns the subject matter discussed in Chapter V (“The Economic Basis of the Withering Away of the State”), which is summarily explained in the following passage:

“The economic basis for the complete withering away of the state is such a high stage of development of communism at which the antithesis between mental and physical labour disappears, at which there consequently disappears one of the principal sources of modern *social* inequality—a source, moreover, which cannot on any account be removed immediately by the mere conversion of the means of production into public property, by the mere expropriation of the capitalists.

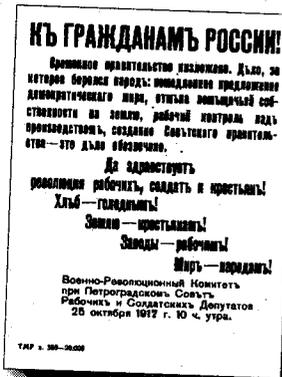
“This expropriation will make it *possible* for the productive forces to develop to a tremendous extent. And when we see how incredibly capitalism is already *retarding* this development, when we see how much progress could be achieved on the basis of the level of technique already attained, we are entitled to say with the fullest confidence that the expropriation of the capitalists will inevitably result in an enormous development of the productive forces of human society.” [emphasis in original]

The post-Soviet generation of leftist activists cannot readily understand the ideas expounded above because they don’t think about them.

American Imperialist Triumphalism Is Not the Problem

While clarity on the question of the “death of communism” will not resolve our problems, continued unclarity will continue to aggravate our problems. The failure to recognize the most fundamental difference between ourselves and the rest of the left—that we do *not* share the same ultimate goal—has been an important underlying factor in recurrent political problems in the party.

While he was still *Workers Vanguard* editor, Jan Norden [currently of the centrist Internationalist Group] consciously and consistently regarded the “death of communism” as primarily an expression of American imperialist ideological tri-



Petrograd, 1917: Leaflet issued by Petrograd Soviet’s Military Revolutionary Committee announces overthrow of bourgeois Provisional Government and victory of workers revolution. Below: Red Guards, soldiers and sailors in front of Smolny Institute, headquarters of the All-Russian Congress of Soviets.



Photo: Olsup

umphalism. Hence his belief that the 1994 Zapatista-led uprising of impoverished Indian peasants in southern Mexico was a powerful counterblow weakening, at least in Latin America, the ideological effect of the fall of the Soviet Union. Since Norden’s defection from our organization in 1996, there has been a tendency in our party to lump together under the heading of “the regression of consciousness” (a term I coined in the fight with Norden) a disbelief in a future communist society, Western imperialist triumphalism and traditional social-democratic reformism. Some comrades have argued that our basic difference with the rest of the left is over the reformability of the capitalist state, as if we were still back in the days of Lenin versus Kautsky in the immediate aftermath of the October Revolution.

A standard formulation in both our public literature and internal discourse is that the effect of the “death of communism” is “uneven” internationally. The term “uneven” implies that the effect can be quantitatively measured on a linear scale: quite high in the U.S. and France, much lower in Mexico and South Africa. As a one-time student and then teacher of academic economics, I think of a bar graph measuring and comparing, for example, per capita national output in different countries. But the differential effect internationally of the “death of communism” *cannot be understood* in that way. We are confronted with *different forms not different levels* of post-Soviet ideology.

Consider Russia in this respect. In explicating the concept of the “death of communism,” we frequently use the formulation that the former Soviet Union is viewed at best as a “failed experiment.” That is generally true in West Europe and North America. It is less true in much of the Third World. And it is *not at all true* in Russia. Quite the opposite. The politically dominant section of the new Russian capitalist class, represented by Vladimir Putin, views the former Soviet Union as the most successful experiment ever, so to speak, of Russian-centered state-building. In 2005, Putin declared that the collapse of the Soviet Union was the “greatest geopolitical catastrophe of the 20th century” (quoted in Edward Lucas, *The New Cold War: Putin’s Russia and the Threat to the* (continued on page 10)

Critical Notes...

(continued from page 9)

West [2008]). I assume a similar attitude toward the former USSR is widespread throughout Russian society at large.

In the past few years, the Putin regime and the Russian elite more generally have sought to restore Stalin's historical reputation as the premier leader of a Russian-dominated world power in the 20th century. The Russian ambassador to NATO displays a picture of Stalin in his office. A popular TV show, "The Name of Russia," ranks Stalin as one of the country's five greatest historical figures (*Economist*, 27 November 2008). In 2007, an officially sponsored educational guide, *A Modern History of Russia, 1945-2006: A Teachers' Manual*, compared Stalin favorably with Peter the Great: "Stalin followed Peter the Great's logic: demand the impossible...to get the maximum possible." It continues:

"He [Stalin] is considered one of the most successful leaders of the USSR. The country's territory reached the boundaries of the former Russian Empire (and in some areas even surpassed it). A victory in one of the greatest wars was won; industrialisation of the economy and cultural revolution took place successfully, resulting not only in mass education but also in the best educational system in the world. The USSR became one [of] the leading countries in science; unemployment was practically defeated."

—quoted in Lucas, *The New Cold War*

Hardly the description of a "failed experiment."

In a way it is more difficult for us to address the form taken by the "death of communism" in present-day Russia than in West Europe and North America. In the latter countries, the former Soviet Union is still primarily identified with "socialism," not "Russian imperialism." Stalin is viewed and generally vilified as a disciple of Marx and Engels. In Russia, Stalin is viewed and frequently extolled as the successor of Peter the Great and Catherine the Great. For many Russians, communism has not died because it never lived in the first place.

Even before the severity of the current world economic downturn became evident last fall, "free market" triumphalism had ceased to be an important current in the climate of bourgeois opinion even in the U.S. Today, prominent and respected spokesmen for American finance capital such as former Federal Reserve head Paul Volcker foresee a deep and prolonged global downturn. Comparisons with the Great Depression of the 1930s are becoming commonplace. The Tory mayor of London commented that reading the *London Financial Times* these days is like spending time with a millennial suicide cult. Nonetheless, no current of bourgeois opinion is now concerned with the prospect of imminent socialist revolutions anywhere or the revival of mass communist parties claiming the Marxist-Leninist tradition.

Of Ends and Means: A Historical Journey

In Chapter V of *The State and Revolution* in the section on "The Higher Phase of Communist Society," Lenin wrote:

"From the bourgeois point of view, it is easy to declare that such a social order is 'sheer utopia' and to sneer at the socialists for promising everyone the right to receive from society, without any control over the labour of the individual citizen, any quantity of truffles, cars, pianos, etc. Even to this day, most



Terrorism and Communism (1920), written by Leon Trotsky at height of Russian Civil War, polemicized against anti-Bolshevik pamphlet of the same name by Kautsky, who made common cause with imperialism in the name of "democracy."

bourgeois 'savants' confine themselves to sneering in this way, thereby betraying both their ignorance and their selfish defence of capitalism."

By the term "bourgeois savants," Lenin meant those intellectuals who avowedly supported and justified the capitalist economic system. He did *not* include in this category the ideological spokesmen for the Socialist (Second) International, such as Karl Kautsky, who considered himself an orthodox Marxist.

Whether by 1917-18 the right-wing leaders of the mass social-democratic parties (e.g., Friedrich Ebert in Germany, Albert Thomas in France, Emile Vandervelde in Belgium) subjectively still believed in a future socialist society is another question. In all likelihood they did not. But neither did they publicly repudiate the traditional goal of the socialist movement as a utopian project.

At the beginning of the German Revolution, in November 1918, the centrist Independent Social Democratic Party presented a series of conditions (demands) for a coalition government with the Social Democratic Party (SPD) on the basis of the then existing workers and soldiers councils. The first of these was: "Germany should be a socialist republic." To this the SPD leadership responded: "This demand is the goal of our own policy. However, the people must decide on this through the constituent assembly" (quoted in John Riddell, ed., *The German Revolution and the Debate on Soviet Power: Documents, 1918-1919: Preparing the Founding Congress* [1986]). In attacking the Bolshevik Revolution and the nascent Communist International, the social-democratic leaders primarily condemned the dictatorship of the proletariat as a violation of democracy, which they identified with a parliamentary-type government elected by universal and equal suffrage.

Here it is useful to look at *Lenin's Moscow*, a memoir written in the late 1940s-early 1950s by Trotsky's colleague and friend Alfred Rosmer. Rosmer had been an anarchist and then a leading revolutionary syndicalist intellectual in France before adhering to the newly formed Communist International. In this memoir, Rosmer recounts the initial reaction to Lenin's *The State and Revolution* among both "orthodox" social democrats like Kautsky and Jean Longuet (Marx's



Willy Römer

Armed workers in Berlin, January 1919. SPD traitors drowned workers revolution in blood.

grandson) and among anarchists:

"It was an extraordinary book and it had a strange destiny. Lenin, a Marxist and a social democrat, was treated as an outcast by the theoreticians of the socialist parties which claimed to be Marxist. 'It isn't Marxism,' they shrieked, 'it's a mixture of anarchism and Blanquism.' One of them even found a witty turn of phrase and called it 'Blanquism with *sauce tartare*.' On the other hand, for revolutionaries situated outside the mainstream of orthodox Marxism, for the syndicalists and anarchists, this Blanquism, *sauce* and all, was a pleasant revelation. They had never heard such language from the Marxists they knew."

Louis-Auguste Blanqui (1805-1881) was the last major representative of the Jacobin communist tradition that originated with Babeuf's Conspiracy of Equals in the latter days of the French Revolution. The Babouvist conception of communism (developed in a pre-industrial society) was one of distribution and consumption rather than production and the overcoming of economic scarcity. However, in labeling Lenin a "Blanquist," Kautsky, Longuet, et al. were not referring to that aspect of the Jacobin communist outlook. By Lenin's "Blanquism" they meant the insurrectionary overthrow of the capitalist state organized and led by a revolutionary vanguard party.

As Rosmer pointed out, *The State and Revolution* was well-received by many anarchists and syndicalists, some of whom thought that Lenin was moving from Marxism toward their own political camp. However, more doctrinally knowledgeable anarchists understood that while Lenin agreed with them on the need for the insurrectionary overthrow of the bourgeois state, he still maintained, indeed emphasized, the Marxist program of the dictatorship of the proletariat as a transition to a fully communist society. In this regard, Rosmer cites an imprisoned German anarchist, Erich Mühsam, writing in 1919:

"The theoretical and practical theses of Lenin on the accomplishment of the revolution and the communist tasks of the proletariat have provided a new basis for our action.... There are no more insurmountable obstacles to a unification of the whole revolutionary proletariat. It is true that the communist anarchists have had to yield on the most important point of disagreement between the two great tendencies of socialism. They have had to abandon Bakunin's negative attitude to the dictatorship of the proletariat and accept Marx's opinion on this point."

For Mühsam, the "disagreement" between Bakunin and Marx

over the dictatorship of the proletariat concerned the means to achieve a shared ultimate goal: a classless, egalitarian and stateless society.

We all know that in a political polemic the ideas and positions that are *not* argued against are in their own way as important as those that are argued against. One does not argue against positions that one's opponent does not hold and especially where there is a common ground. For example, in polemicalizing against black liberals and leftist radicals in the U.S. we do not refute the false notion expounded by some right-wing racists that blacks are "inferior" to whites. In 1918-20, Lenin and Trotsky each wrote a book-length polemic against Kautsky. Nowhere in either *The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky* or *Terrorism and Communism* do they argue against the position that a communist society in the Marxist sense is utopian since Kautsky did not hold such a position.

Let's fast forward to the late 1930s, when the international Communist movement had become completely Stalinized. Specifically, let's consider the young Maxime Rodinson, a French Jewish intellectual who later became a prominent left-wing scholar writing on the Near East and Islamic society. In a 1981 essay, "Self-Criticism," he recalled the mindset that caused him to join the French Communist Party in 1937 (he left in 1958):

"Adherence to Communism entailed, and still entails, commitment to a struggle that is supposed to enable humanity to accomplish an essential and eminently beneficial leap: to put an end to a system that permanently produces poverty and crime, that subjugates and condemns millions of people throughout the world to an atrocious life, or even to death. The intent is to create a liberated humanity in which all can blossom to the full extent of their best potential, in which the collective of free beings will control the administration of things and will lay down the minimum of rules indispensable for harmonizing relations among human beings."

—*Cult, Ghetto, and State: The Persistence of the Jewish Question* (1983)

As an intellectual, Rodinson could articulate the liberating goals of Marxism better than the many millions of young workers who joined the Communist parties in France and Italy, India and Vietnam and elsewhere during the Stalin era. Nonetheless, many of these workers—not all, to be sure—were also *motivated* by a future vision of all-sided social liberation. They did not view the Communist parties only as political agencies to defend and further their economic and other social (e.g., national) interests within the existing capitalist-imperialist system.

In general, politically advanced workers and leftist intellectuals who supported the mass social-democratic parties did not share the Marxist conception of a genuinely communist society. But they, too, aspired to a radically different and better society than their own. In 1961, the left social-democratic British intellectual Ralph Miliband published a book highly critical of the Labour Party titled *Parliamentary Socialism: A Study of the Politics of Labour*. The book came out in the immediate aftermath of a failed attempt by the party's right-wing leaders to scrap Clause IV of Labour's 1918 constitution. Clause IV was generally seen as Labour's maximal program: "To secure for the workers by hand or by brain the full fruits of their industry and the most equitable distribution thereof that may be possible, upon the basis of the common ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange." In describing the battle over Clause IV in 1959-60, Miliband

(continued on page 12)

Critical Notes...

(continued from page 11)

wrote: "In the face of the violent resistance [by the party's working-class base] this encountered, the proposal had to be dropped." By the 1980s no one would still have used the term "parliamentary socialism" to encapsulate the program or even official doctrine of the British Labour Party. And in 1995, Clause IV was dropped from the party's formal program at a special conference despite opposition from some of the big unions.

In the early to mid 1960s, there was a leftward radicalization among student-youth and some older intellectuals in the U.S. One institutionalized expression of this was the annual Socialist Scholars Conference in New York City. In 1966, the organizers of the conference invited Marxist historian Isaac Deutscher to give a presentation on "socialist man." At the time, the cultural and psychological character of a truly socialist society, how people would think and act, was a matter of intense interest among young leftist intellectuals not only in the U.S. but throughout the world. For example, in the early 1960s Che Guevara was writing about eliminating alienated labor in "socialist" Cuba. For a retrospective analysis of Guevara's thoughts on this question, see "'Radical Egalitarian' Stalinism: A Post Mortem," in *Spartacist* No. 25 (Summer 1978). In his presentation on "socialist man," Deutscher addressed a number of issues that the post-Soviet generation of leftist activists do *not* think about at all.

Huntington Versus Fukuyama Revisited

My thinking about the "death of communism" and the ideological conditions of the post-Soviet world was initially mainly developed in the course of informal discussions with Norden between 1991 and his departure from our organization in 1996. As previously noted, Norden identified the "death of communism" primarily as an expression of American imperialist triumphalism. Thus he often linked the term to George Bush's formula of a "new world order" proclaimed at the time of the 1991 Gulf War against Iraq. Norden believed that the recognition by the main body of our tendency's leadership that the character of the post-Soviet period was marked by a historic retrogression in the political consciousness of the working class internationally was a capitulation to the pressures of American imperialist triumphalism.

Norden's approach to this question was influenced by the views of a right-wing (then neo-conservative) American intellectual, Francis Fukuyama, who declared that the collapse of the Soviet bloc signaled the "end of history." An oversimplified version of Fukuyama's "end of history" thesis became widely known among what can be called the educated American public, the kind of people who subscribed to the *New York Review of Books* and occasionally read *Foreign Affairs*. I don't know if Norden actually read Fukuyama. I did and I also read those right-of-center American bourgeois ideologues, notably Samuel P. Huntington and Zbigniew Brzezinski, who strongly disagreed with Fukuyama's rosy vision of the post-Soviet world. I'm reviewing this debate because it's useful in understanding the relationship of the "death of communism" to the various currents of post-Soviet bourgeois ideology especially in (but not limited to) the Western capitalist countries.

Fukuyama took the term and concept of the "end of history" from German philosopher Georg Hegel. Hegel used that expression to describe the world-historic consequences of the

1806 battle of Jena in which the army of Napoleonic France defeated the Kingdom of Prussia. In the aftermath the French occupied and governed western and southern Germany. Hegel was one of a small number of prominent German intellectuals who supported and collaborated with the Napoleonic regime that he considered to be historically progressive.

Hegel's concept of the "end of history" had both a negative and a positive component. The negative component was that the dominant ideology of late feudal Europe—monarchical absolutism sanctioned and supported by the Christian churches—had lost its former power to shape the future course of history. The positive component was that the liberal principles of the French Revolution as understood by Hegel (and represented for him by Napoleon) had become all-conquering in the realm of ideas and over time a new sociopolitical order would be established throughout Europe in conformity with the new *zeitgeist* (spirit of the age).

Likewise, Fukuyama's version of the "end of history" had negative and positive components. The negative component was, of course, the "death of communism":

"While communist power persists in the world, it has ceased to reflect a dynamic and appealing idea. Those who call themselves communists now find themselves fighting continuous rearguard actions to preserve something of their former position and power. Communists now find themselves in the unenviable position of defending an old and reactionary social order whose time has long since passed, like the monarchists who managed to survive into the twentieth century."

—*The End of History and the Last Man* (1992)

Fukuyama here expressed a common coin among all currents of post-Soviet bourgeois ideology.

It was the positive conclusions he drew from the collapse of the Soviet bloc that was the crux of his "end of history" thesis. He maintained that the sociocultural values and corresponding economic and political institutions of the Western capitalist world would eventually prevail on a global scale:

"It is against this background that the remarkable worldwide character of the current liberal revolution takes on special significance. For it constitutes further evidence that there is a fundamental process at work that dictates a common evolutionary pattern for *all* human societies—in short, something like a Universal History of mankind in the direction of liberal democracy....

"And if we are now at a point where we cannot imagine a world substantially different from our own, in which there is no apparent or obvious way in which the future will represent a fundamental improvement over our current order, then we must also take into consideration the possibility that History itself might be at an end." [emphasis in original]

Fukuyama's notion of a universally triumphant "liberal revolution" came under heavy fire from some prominent intellectual spokesmen for American imperialism. His main antagonist was Samuel P. Huntington who counterposed his own "clash of civilizations" thesis to Fukuyama's "end of history." Referring specifically to Fukuyama, he commented condescendingly: "The moment of euphoria at the end of the Cold War generated an illusion of harmony, which was soon revealed to be exactly that" (*The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* [1996]). To be sure, Huntington agreed with Fukuyama that there would never again be powerful states or an international political movement having mass support that claimed to represent a *universal* alternative such as communism to Western-type capitalism and "democracy." But he maintained that much of the world—in particular Russia, the Islamic East

(continued on page 20)

Mumia...

(continued from page 4)

"civilization" debate which combination of lethal drugs to administer to writhing prisoners strapped to death gurneys. In threatening such treatment for Mumia, the courts hark back to when black slaves could be tortured and put to death for hitting a white man in self-defense or for any other act deemed a challenge to the slaveholders. The hugely disproportionate number of black people on America's death rows is a testament to the racist subjugation of the black population, which is fundamental to the maintenance of American capitalism. And while judges in their oak-paneled chambers decree the legal murder of the poor, minorities and working people, the police carry out the same sentence on a far greater scale as they gun down ghetto and barrio youth in the streets.

The death penalty stands at the apex of the machinery of state repression used by the tiny class of capitalist exploiters against the masses they exploit and oppress. The "justice" system threatens Mumia with the ultimate state sanction that it used against earlier militants deemed to be threats to capitalist "order"—the Haymarket Martyrs (1877), IWW militant Joe Hill (1915) and anarchist workers Sacco and Vanzetti (1927), to name a few. The state vendetta against Mumia began as part of the FBI's COINTELPRO campaign to wipe out the Black Panther Party, in which some 38 Panthers were killed and hundreds of others framed up and railroaded to prison. The government's intent was made clear in 1968 by FBI director J. Edgar Hoover, who warned: "The Negro youth and moderate[s] must be made to understand that if they succumb to revolutionary teachings, they will be dead revolutionaries."

Mumia's cause has been and must continue to be a focal point of the fight for abolition of the racist death penalty. Popular support for capital punishment has fallen steadily in recent years, due not least to the many cases where DNA evidence has exonerated death row prisoners. Even the conservative American Law Institute, whose death penalty guidelines were cited by the Supreme Court when it ended a brief moratorium on executions in 1976, has decided to get out of this gruesome business as ever more exposures of American injustice come to light. The Supreme Court, however, is not in the least deterred from its push to execute the innocent. Some six weeks before ruling against Mumia, the Court refused to consider the appeal of black California death row inmate Kevin Cooper despite evidence of his innocence and of a massive police frame-up. **Free Kevin Cooper!**

From the time we first took up Mumia's cause more than 20 years ago, the PDC has supported the use of every possible legal avenue available to Mumia while having no illusions in the courts or any other agency of the capitalist state. Our fight has centered on the struggle to mobilize the multi-racial working class in the U.S. and working people internationally, based on the fact that the proletariat is the one force in this society with the social power to effectively challenge the capitalist rulers. When Mumia faced a death warrant in the summer of 1995, worldwide protests that included trade unions representing hundreds of thousands of workers played a crucial role in staying the executioner's hand.

Counterposed to this class-struggle strategy is the policy of many organizations—Socialist Action, the Workers World Party, the Concerned Family and Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal and others—which long centered their protests on the demand for a new, fair trial for Mumia. With the judicial



SC photo

April 19, 2008: PDC-initiated rally in Toronto protesting decision by U.S. court to uphold Mumia's conviction.

appeals in which they put their faith nearly exhausted, their plea that the capitalist state deliver justice now comes in the form of petitions to Attorney General Eric Holder to conduct a civil rights investigation into Mumia's frame-up trial and to President Barack Obama to "speak out against the death penalty for Mumia Abu-Jamal."

These hat-in-hand appeals to America's top cop and imperialist Commander-in-Chief are a savage indictment of the liberal belief in the "democracy" of capitalist class rule. Holder's Justice Department recently threw leftist attorney Lynne Stewart in prison and threatened to extend her sentence by 28 more years for staunchly defending her client, who was accused of terrorist activities. Obama openly announced his support for the death penalty in his run for the White House, including in an interview with right-wing journalist Michael Smerconish, one of the voices calling loudest for Mumia's execution.

After eight years of the despised Bush regime, Obama took office to give a facelift to blood-soaked U.S. imperialism. Reinforcing illusions that Obama represents "change," the reformist left tails after the trade-union bureaucracy, whose program of seeking "friends" in the parties and state agencies of the capitalist class enemy has gravely dissipated labor's fighting capacity. Meanwhile, the U.S. military still rains death on Iraq and Afghanistan, inmates from America's vast prison complex to the military's Bagram and Guantánamo Bay dungeons continue to be brutalized and tortured, and bankers get billion-dollar bailouts while workers lose their jobs and homes.

The fight to free Mumia, as with all struggles against social oppression and deprivation, can go forward based only on a clear understanding of the class forces involved. Make no mistake: In buying for Mumia's blood, the forces of bourgeois "law and order" are sending a message to all who would fight against exploitation, oppression and imperialist war that they, too, are in the sights of the state. Any real fight for Mumia's freedom must be based on a class-struggle opposition to the capitalist rulers, who have entombed this innocent man for more than half his life. **Free Mumia now!** ■

Haiti Earthquake...

(continued from page 1)

assistance. At the same time, the United Nations augmented its 9,000-strong occupation force with an additional 3,500 soldiers, while the Obama administration is rushing in 10,000 troops as well as military aircraft and a flotilla of naval vessels. While reformist “socialists” like the International Socialist Organization (ISO) and Workers World Party (WWP) call for the U.S. to provide aid without the exercise of American military might, we have no such illusions. Indeed, American forces in Haiti have made “security” a higher priority than providing aid. While many planes carrying aid have landed at the Port-au-Prince airport, which is now controlled by U.S. forces, others were criminally diverted as the U.S. gave landing priority to planes carrying military personnel.

Against the backdrop of the brutal occupations of Afghanistan and Iraq as well as the escalating air strikes in Pakistan, the Haiti “relief effort” provides the Obama administration with a means to refurbish the “humanitarian” image of U.S. imperialism. As we have often pointed out, after eight years of the oddly demented regime of George W. Bush, which reveled in imperialist arrogance and barbarity, Obama is well suited to help provide a facelift for U.S. imperialism’s tarnished image around the world. Yet whether the Commander-in-Chief is a Democrat or Republican, U.S. imperialism remains the most bloody and rapacious imperialist power on the face of the planet. Obama’s “humanitarian” pretensions in Haiti are but a thin veneer on racist oppression and imperialist subjugation.

One of the central aims of the U.S. imperialist rulers is to prevent Haitians from fleeing the island. Thus, the U.S. quickly launched a full-scale naval blockade to prevent a seaborne exodus of refugees seeking sanctuary in the U.S. An American Air Force plane flies daily over Haiti broadcasting a Creole-language appeal from that country’s ambassador to Washington calling on Haitians not to attempt to flee the country by boat.

The Obama administration announced that undocumented Haitians in the U.S. would be granted “temporary protected status” allowing them to remain and work in this country—if they can even find jobs in this economy with rampant unemployment and dispossession. However, many injured Haitians were denied the visas that would allow them to be transferred

to Miami for surgery and treatment—immigration officials in Florida even seized a two-year-old Haitian child who required medical treatment. At the U.S. military camp in Guantánamo, Cuba, almost 200 prisoners of the “war on terror” remain locked up in inhuman conditions. Obama’s deadline for shutting down the prison passed unnoticed last week. Military authorities there are rushing to set up an installation capable of holding up to 13,000 Haitian refugees.

In preparing to interdict any Haitian refugees seeking to reach the U.S., Obama is following in the footsteps of George W. Bush and previous presidents going back to a 1981 treaty signed by President Ronald Reagan and the then-puppet dictator “Baby Doc” Duvalier. In September 1991, a military coup toppled the presidency of populist priest Jean-Bertrand Aristide after less than one year, sending many of his supporters to sea in rickety boats. The administration of the first Bush plucked thousands of Haitian refugees from their boats and imprisoned them indefinitely at Guantánamo with no right to legal counsel—a policy continued under Democrat Bill Clinton. We demand: Down with the racist ban on Haitian refugees! Full citizenship rights for all immigrants! U.S. out of Guantánamo!

Down With U.S. Imperialism!

For liberals disappointed with the Obama administration’s policies in Afghanistan and Iraq, the earthquake in Haiti was seen as an opportunity for the U.S. to show a benign face. This was echoed by Obama’s somewhat disillusioned reformist boosters, such as the ISO and WWP. The ISO demands that “Obama immediately stop the military occupation of Haiti,” while calling for the U.S. to “flood the country with doctors, nurses, food, water and construction machinery” (*Socialist Worker* online, 19 January). Likewise, a January 14 statement on Workers World’s Web site demands “the removal of all U.N. combat troops,” while calling for “all bonuses from executives of financial institutions that received bailout money to be donated to Haiti.”

The notion that U.S. imperialism can be pressured into serving the needs of the oppressed, rather than its own class interests, shows boundless illusions in the good offices of the rapacious American ruling class. Reformists like the ISO and WWP perennially raised calls at demonstrations against the U.S. war in Iraq demanding a shift of U.S. government spending priorities from war to social services like education. But neocolonial domination and aggrandizement are inherent to imperialism, and no amount of pressure and pleading can change that.

The brutal treatment routinely meted out to Haitians seeking asylum in the U.S.—detention, humiliation, deportation—contrasts sharply with the way the U.S. welcomes counterrevolutionary *gusanos* (worms), whom they encourage to “flee” from Cuba. A social revolution in Cuba overthrew capitalism in what had been an impoverished neocolony, and ever since then the U.S. ruling class has been determined to overturn the Cuban Revolution and re-establish capitalist exploitation in that country. We stand for the unconditional military defense of the Cuban bureaucratically deformed workers state against imperialism and the forces of internal counterrevolution. At the same time, we fight for workers political revolution to oust the ruling Stalinist bureaucracy and replace it with a



Duran/Reuters

Cuban medical team treats earthquake victim in Port-au-Prince, January 18.

regime based on workers democracy and revolutionary internationalism.

Cuba has provided medical personnel and medical training to countries throughout Latin America and elsewhere, and Cuban universities have trained over 500 Haitian doctors, free of charge. Before the earthquake hit, some 350 Cuban medical personnel were already working in Haiti. Within hours of the quake, Cuba dispatched an additional 69 doctors from the Henry Reeve International Contingent of Doctors Specialized in Disaster Situations and Serious Epidemics. That brigade, named after a U.S. citizen who fought for Cuban independence from Spain in the late 19th-century, was set up by the Cuban government in September 2005 to aid victims of Katrina (the Cuban doctors were refused entry into the U.S.).

Even the conservative *Wall Street Journal* (17 January) conceded: "U.S. officials have blamed security concerns for holding up providing relief. Yet a team of Cuban doctors were seen Monday treating hundreds of patients without a gun or soldier in sight." Moreover, despite repeated attempts by U.S. imperialism to foment counterrevolution—including a decades-long U.S. starvation embargo—Cuba has temporarily allowed U.S. military aircraft to fly over its airspace in order to speed up aid efforts for Haiti.

The advantages of a collectivized economy over capitalist anarchy are evident not least in the way Cuba deals with natural disasters. Cuba, which is regularly battered by hurricanes, is well known for its efficient evacuation of citizens in the face of such disasters. When the Haiti quake struck, southeastern Cuba was put on tsunami watch for 90 minutes. During that brief period, Cuban authorities evacuated some 30,000 people from Baracoa, that part of the island closest to Haiti; they were able to return home that evening.

A History of Neocolonial Rape and Dispossession

For 200 years, the Haitian masses have been paying in blood for the revolution they carried out under the leadership of Toussaint L'Ouverture against the French colonial slavery. Directly inspired by the Great French Revolution, the Haitian Revolution of 1791-1804, which culminated in the

creation of the first independent black state in the modern era, served as a beacon, inspiring slave revolts throughout the Americas. It was greeted with a frenzy of racist counterrevolutionary hostility from both Napoleonic France and the slave-owning United States.

In return for recognition by France, Haiti was compelled to compensate the former slaveowners to the tune of 150 million gold francs—approximately \$20 billion at today's prices. For its part, the U.S. refused to grant Haiti diplomatic recognition until 1862, during the Civil War against the Southern slavocracy. Throughout the 1800s, the U.S. and European powers used gunboat diplomacy and the threat of military intervention to extort debt repayment. By the end of the 19th century, 80 percent of Haiti's national budget was going to pay off its former exploiters, and the country remains a hideously impoverished debtor nation today.

The U.S. militarily intervened into Haiti in 1888, 1891 and 1914. In 1915, the U.S. initiated a bloody occupation of the country that would last until 1934. The U.S. military regime in Haiti was, according to one historian, "probably the bloodiest in all of the Caribbean" (Donald Schulz and Douglas Granham [eds.], *Revolution and Counterrevolution in Central America and the Caribbean* [1984]).

The occupation and the subsequent imposition of forced labor provoked a national uprising by *cacos* (peasant bands) beginning in 1916, which lasted five years before being drowned in blood. As described by Mumia Abu-Jamal, America's foremost class-war prisoner, in a 1994 column ("American Hatred of Haiti," *WV* No. 609, 28 October 1994):

"When the people rebelled against this involuntary servitude in the Cacos Insurrection, the U.S. Marines responded by ruthless repression, that left an estimated 15,000 peasant casualties.

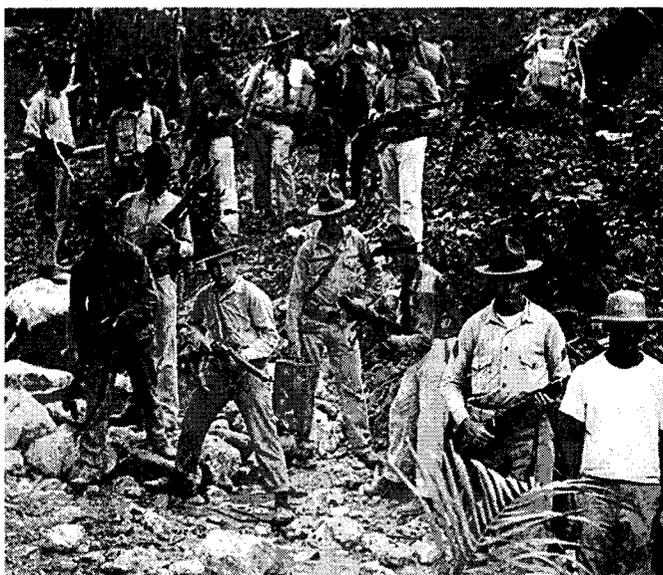
"One U.S. Marine officer, Colonel Littleton W.T. Waller (Virginia) wrote of his impressions of the people historians now say they came to 'help'; the Haitians were 'real n----rs and make no mistake—there are some fine looking, well educated polished men here, but they are real n--s beneath the surface.'

"A perfect example of exported American 'democracy'."

Since then, the U.S. has propped up one Haitian despot after another, each further bleeding the country dry of whatever resources were left. Among these brutal dictators was the infamous "Papa Doc" Duvalier, who organized the Tonton Macoutes thugs and killed 50,000 opponents. His demented son "Baby Doc" was forced to flee to France amid a mass upheaval in 1986. One report estimated that "Baby Doc" stole the equivalent of up to 4.5 percent of the Haitian GDP for every year he was in power. As Graham Greene put it in his novel *The Comedians*, the U.S. was responsible for setting up "the nightmare republic." Americans can read the novel; Haitians had to live it.

The massive discontent that drove "Baby Doc" Duvalier out of power ultimately led to the election of radical Catholic priest Jean-Bertrand Aristide in December 1990. Virtually the entire left internationally gave him political support. WWP hailed Aristide for supposedly promising to introduce such things as "economic justice," "honest" government and "broad participation of the people" (*Workers World*, 27 December 1990). The WWP article quoted from a solidarity message they sent to Aristide hailing his "great courage in bringing the flood of the mass struggle into the election campaign." Likewise, the ISO celebrated Aristide's election, claiming that he was "fully aware that for democracy to survive in Haiti, the

(continued on page 16)



U.S. National Archives

Haiti under boot of U.S. imperialism. Marines (circa 1919) during brutal 1915-34 occupation.

Haiti Earthquake...

(continued from page 15)

whole system had to be restructured" (*Socialist Worker*, November 1991).

In contrast, we warned: "Aristide will either play the role of groveling instrument of the Haitian bourgeoisie and the U.S. imperialist overlords or he will be swept away in a reactionary crackdown aimed at decisively disciplining the pitilessly oppressed population" ("Haiti: Election Avalanche for Radical Priest," *WV* No. 517, 4 January 1991). Both proved to be true.

Initially, Aristide irked the U.S. rulers by resisting their economic diktats and establishing diplomatic relations with Cuba. This was one of the few benefits from the Aristide regime since it meant that Cuban doctors and nurses began working in Haiti. Aristide was toppled in 1991. In 1994, following a starvation embargo against Haiti, President Clinton re-installed Aristide at the point of bayonets, with Marines occupying the country in a military intervention dubbed "Operation Uphold Democracy." Aristide supported both the embargo and the invasion. He proved his reliability to his U.S. overseers by agreeing in advance of his 1994 return to power to a drastic austerity program, privatization of state-owned industry, massive layoffs in the public sector and the virtual abolition of import tariffs. The latter induced the collapse of the indigenous economy as the market was flooded with, for example, American rice at prices cheaper than the Haitian-grown product. Having dissolved the army (a center of opposition to his regime) in 1995, Aristide propped up his rule with a brutal police force and gang terror.

Again in 2004, as Haiti was being swept by armed revolts (some with the support of Washington neoconservatives), Bush sent U.S. Marines to invade Haiti as a U.S. military escort whisked President Aristide out of the country and into exile in Africa. Prominent in pushing the hesitating Bush administration to send the Marines were the Democrats of the Congressional Black Caucus, though ostensibly in defense of Aristide. The 1994 and 2004 U.S. invasions, both of which were carried out with UN backing, were largely motivated by the U.S. rulers' determination to prevent Haitians from reaching America's shores. We pointed out that the U.S. occupation of Haiti also represented a danger to the Cuban deformed workers state, as

well as to the militant proletariat of the Dominican Republic, which shares the island of Hispaniola with Haiti (see "Haiti: U.S./UN Troops Out!" *WV* No. 821, 5 March 2004).

Following the 2004 U.S. invasion, an occupation force was set up under UN sponsorship, bringing with it a beefed-up Haitian police force composed of sadistic rapists and killers. The UN, since its creation at the end of World War II, has always been a fig leaf for naked imperialist aggression against semicolonial countries. During the current earthquake disaster, the U.S.-armed thugs of the Haitian police have coldbloodedly gunned down "looters," including a 15-year-old girl who was shot in the head as she carried a few wall hangings from the ruins.

The imperialist system, which imposes grinding poverty and degradation on its colonial and semicolonial subjects, must be swept away through international proletarian revolution. Toward that end, Haitian workers in the U.S., Canada and elsewhere will serve as a vital bridge linking the struggle for national and social emancipation in Haiti with the fight for socialist revolution in the imperialist centers of North America that have turned that country into a neocolonial hell.

For Revolutionary Internationalism

In a January 20 article posted on its Web site, the centrist Internationalist Group (IG) argued that the earthquake provides an opening for socialist revolution in Haiti. The IG wrote that Haiti's "small but militant proletariat can place itself at the head of the impoverished urban and rural masses seeking to organize their own power, particularly at present where the machinery of the capitalist state is largely reduced to rubble and a few marauding bands of police."

The stark reality that the IG would deny is that a) even before the earthquake, there was virtually no working class in Haiti; b) in the aftermath of the earthquake, not only is the state "largely reduced to rubble," but so is the society as a whole, including the desperate and dispossessed population; and c) there is a military power in Haiti that is far from "reduced to rubble," and it's U.S. imperialism.

The IG demands that "*all U.S./U.N. forces get out*," painting the U.S. military presence in Haiti today as aimed at suppressing a popular uprising: "This huge military occupation is not intended to deliver aid, but to *put down unrest by the poor and working people of Haiti*" (emphasis in original). By the IG's reasoning, the Cuban government is to be condemned for opening its airspace to American military planes after the earthquake. The IG is cynically toying with rhetoric, blithely unconcerned with the fact that, in the real world, if the policies they advocate were implemented, they would result in mass death through starvation.

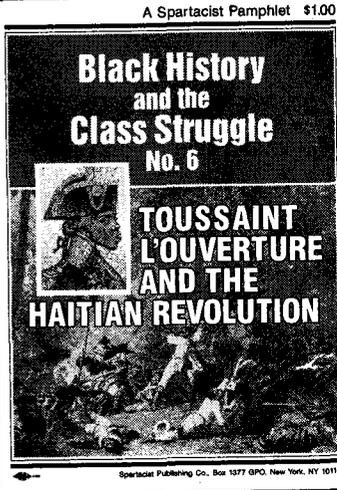
Notwithstanding the IG's deranged and grotesque fantasies, there are no good alternatives facing Haiti today. The U.S. military is the only force on the ground with the capacity—e.g., trucks, planes, ships—to organize the transport of what food, water, medical and other supplies are getting to Haiti's population. And they're doing it in the typical piggish U.S. imperialist manner. We have always opposed U.S. and UN occupations in Haiti and everywhere—and it may become necessary to call for U.S./UN out of Haiti in the near future—but we are not going to call for an end to such aid as the desperate Haitian masses can get their hands on. As Bolshevik leader Leon Trotsky explained in his 1938 article "Learn to Think: A Friendly Suggestion to Certain Ultra-Leftists":

"An irreconcilable attitude against bourgeois militarism does not signify at all that the proletariat *in all cases* enters into a struggle

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Third World Cheerleading and Cynical Phrasemongering

Haiti: IG Conjures Up Revolution Amid the Rubble

The following article is reprinted from *Workers Vanguard* No. 952 (12 February), newspaper of the *Spartacist League/U.S.*

Confronting the massive toll of death and destruction in the aftermath of the earthquake in Haiti, Marxists were obliged to underline the history of imperialist depredations that left the Haitian masses utterly exposed in the face of this natural disaster. *Workers Vanguard's* front-page article, "Haiti Earthquake Horror: Imperialism, Racism and Starvation" (WV No. 951, 29 January) [see front page of this SC], also documented the role of the Haitian lackeys of imperialism, including the populist Jean-Bertrand Aristide, the former Haitian leader embraced by the reformist left internationally. We told the bitter truth: Haitian society had been pulped by the earthquake. The desperate conditions of Haiti today cannot be resolved *within* Haiti: "The key to the liberation of Haiti lies in proletarian revolution throughout the hemisphere, in which the mobilization of the sizable Haitian proletariat *in the diaspora* can play a key role."

We exposed the reformist "socialists" who cheered Obama's election as U.S. Commander-in-Chief and now plead for U.S. aid without the exercise of American military might, revealing their touching faith in the bourgeois state. Our article also attacked the grotesque and cynical

phrasemongering of the centrist Internationalist Group (IG). In the IG's fantasyland, the earthquake placed workers revolution on the immediate agenda in Haiti: "This small but militant proletariat can place itself at the head of the impoverished urban and rural masses seeking to organize their own power, particularly at present where the machinery of the capitalist state is largely reduced to rubble and a few marauding bands of police" ("Haiti: Workers Solidarity, Yes! Imperialist Occupation, No!" *Internationalist*, January 2010). To this end, the IG demanded that "all U.S./U.N. forces get out," claiming: "This huge military occupation is not intended to deliver aid, but to *put down unrest by the poor and working people of Haiti*" (emphasis in original). As we wrote in response:

"Notwithstanding the IG's deranged and grotesque fantasies, there are no good alternatives facing Haiti today. The U.S. military is the only force on the ground with the capacity—e.g., trucks, planes, ships—to organize the transport of what food, water, medical and other supplies are getting to Haiti's population. And they're doing it in the typical piggish U.S. imperialist manner. We have always opposed U.S. and UN occupations in Haiti and everywhere—and it may become necessary to call for U.S./UN out of Haiti in the near future—but we are not going to call for an end to such aid as the desperate Haitian masses can get their hands on."

(continued on page 18)

against its own 'national' army. At least the workers would not interfere with soldiers who are extinguishing a fire or rescuing drowning people during a flood; on the contrary, they would help side by side with the soldiers and fraternize with them....

"In ninety cases out of a hundred the workers actually place a minus sign where the bourgeoisie places a plus sign. In ten cases however they are forced to fix the same sign as the bourgeoisie but with their own seal, in which is expressed their mistrust of the bourgeoisie. The policy of the proletariat is not at all automatically derived from the policy of the bourgeoisie, bearing only the opposite sign (this would make every sectarian a master strategist). No, the revolutionary party must each time orient itself *independently* in the internal as well as in the external situation, arriving at those decisions which correspond best to the interests of the proletariat."

The IG's conjuring up of a proletarian revolutionary opposition in Haiti today is the demented logic of their glorification of Third World nationalism. In practice, they deny the horrendous impact that nearly two centuries of depredation by the U.S. and other capitalist powers has had on Haiti. The bitter truth is that the desperate conditions of Haiti today cannot be resolved *within* Haiti. The key to the liberation of Haiti lies in proletarian revolution throughout the hemisphere, in which the mobilization of the sizable Haitian proletariat *in the diaspora* can play a key role. In addition to the brutally oppressed Hai-

tian sugar cane workers in the Dominican Republic and those elsewhere in the Caribbean, hundreds of thousands of Haitian workers now live in cities from Montreal to Miami. These workers can be a vital link to class struggle by the powerful North American proletariat.

The IG's article does not even mention the hundreds of thousands of Haitian workers in the urban centers of North America. In contrast, as a Spartacist speaker explained at an October 1991 forum in New York City ("Haitian Workers: Fight for Power!" WV No. 537, 25 October 1991):

"Haitian nationalists are forever lamenting the fact that the Haitian diaspora exists. Comrades, it is very *good* that you have this diaspora! It internationalizes the struggle of Haitian workers, gives them social power and helps forge an international vanguard directly linked to the U.S. proletariat, which has the power to bring imperialism to its knees....

"Haitian workers throughout the diaspora are today a vital link between revolutionary class struggle in Haiti and throughout the Caribbean, and the North American continent. Organizing the most conscious elements into an international Bolshevik party, a Trotskyist party, is the task the International Communist League sets itself in the struggle for worldwide socialist revolution."

It is only this revolutionary internationalist program that holds out any genuine perspective for the liberation of the Haitian masses. ■

IG...

(continued from page 17)

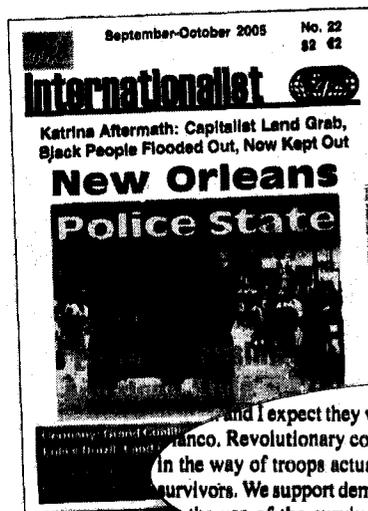
The IG seizes on this statement in a subsequent polemic posted on its Web site to revile the SL for nothing less than having "gone over from bending under pressure from the ruling class to outright apology for imperialism" ("Spartacist League Backs U.S. Imperialist Invasion of Haiti," 30 January). Not only does the IG lie about our position but, by omission, it lies about its own position, doctoring a quote from its earlier statement in order to disappear its call for a revolutionary uprising "particularly at present where the machinery of the capitalist state is largely reduced to rubble and a few marauding bands of police." The IG's squeamish self-censorship is simply further evidence that this oh-so-revolutionary rhetoric was nothing but vicarious bravado. Has the IG informed the Haitian workers and oppressed masses that now is the time for them to rise up in revolution and drive the U.S. troops into the sea? There is certainly no evidence of this on the IG's Web site, which has yet to even carry a French translation of their articles on the earthquake.

"Democratic" Imperialism and the Aristide Connection

In fact, the IG's declarations are not intended for the Haitian masses but for the consumption of the domestic Third Worldist and reformist swamp the IG inhabits. Take, for example, the Workers World Party (WWP), which joins the IG in proclaiming "U.S. Troops Invade Haiti—Pentagon Sabotages Relief Effort, Escalates Suffering" (*Workers World*, 4 February). With greater honesty than the IG, WWP openly urges the Obama administration to engage in a purely humanitarian mission in Haiti. *Workers World* approvingly quotes Kim Ives of the weekly paper *Haiti Liberté* saying, "The earthquake was half a revolution, removing all the government buildings and virtually eliminating the repressive power of the state. That's why the U.S. is rushing in to replace that state power, to control Haiti's future and to prevent the people of Haiti from carrying out the other half."

It should be noted that Ives is a passionate supporter of Aristide, who was toppled from power in 1991 shortly after his election, reinstated by Democratic president Bill Clinton in 1994 at the point of U.S. Marine bayonets, and removed from office a second time through a U.S.-led invasion force in 2004. We opposed both the 1994 and 2004 invasions and called for the immediate withdrawal of all imperialist troops. Aristide protégé René Préval is now president of Haiti. Our previous article documented the role played by Aristide, Préval & Co. as quislings for the U.S. imperialists in helping to police the impoverished Haitian masses. Yet in its two articles on the earthquake, the IG has only oblique and passing references to Aristide.

It is no accident that the IG largely sidesteps the issue of Aristide. In its second article, the IG warns darkly that the U.S. military may "go beyond the patrolling of Haiti" by the existing United Nations occupation force and "take over the government and impose something like a U.N. protectorate on Haiti." Put simply, this is a crass prettification of the imperialist occupation that resulted from the 2004 U.S.-led invasion. Haiti has been a UN protectorate in all but name for the past six years: the imperialist occupiers have been the real state power there, lord-



IG's line on troops providing aid following Hurricane Katrina disaster. Non-U.S. residents need not apply.

ing it over the Haitian masses. Préval was hand-picked by Washington in large part because, as a representative of Aristide's "Lavalas" movement, he could hope to retain popular support and dampen unrest. Like Aristide, Préval is simply a toady of the imperialists. Exposing this reality is central to combating the widespread illusions among Haitian working people in the populism represented by Aristide. However, the IG's shrieking about the supposed imperialist "invasion" of a country already under imperialist occupation does just the opposite. It essentially portrays Préval and his predecessor Aristide not as quislings of the imperialist powers but as the embodiment of national independence. The pro-Aristide liberals make this explicit. A petition initiated by the Canada Haiti Action Network on January 21, signed by Noam Chomsky, among others, declares:

"We demand that US commanders immediately restore executive control of the relief effort to Haiti's leaders, and to help rather than replace the local officials they claim to support...."

"We call on the de facto rulers of Haiti to facilitate, as the reconstruction begins, the renewal of popular participation in the determination of collective priorities and decisions."

The petition goes on to call on the imperialists to bring back from exile "Haiti's most popular and most inspiring political leader, Jean-Bertrand Aristide."

The IG, the liberals and the reformists are perpetuating the fraud that Aristide and Préval are capable of some modicum of independent functioning. Under the imperialist occupation of Haiti that began in 2004, disaster relief has not been implemented by imperialism's corrupt and ineffective agents in the Haitian government, who totally lack the requisite means and ability. Yet we don't recall the IG screaming about an imperialist invasion when the U.S. and Canada dispatched warships to Haiti after the country was devastated by four hurricanes in the summer of 2008.

To back up its current claims of an "invasion," the IG simply manufactures its own alternative reality, assuring us that "none" of the U.S. ships "carried cargo for Haiti" and that "U.S. military planes did not deliver anything." Yet, even the IG acknowledges that the UN has been feeding up to 310,000 people. In the IG's fantasy version of events, the question of how those hundreds of tons of supplies got to Haiti remains a mystery. The IG might also ponder why the "nuclear-powered aircraft carrier," the USS *Carl Vinson*, which the IG, in its diatribe against us, adduced as evidence of the U.S. presence in Haiti as purely and simply an invasion force, has already left

Haiti along with a number of other U.S. warships.

In our article, we pointed out that U.S. authorities are building a concentration camp at Guantánamo where they can detain any Haitian refugees caught trying to flee the country by sea. At the same time, we noted that the Cuban deformed workers state, despite being under the guns of U.S. imperialism, had opened its airspace to American military planes in order to speed up aid efforts to Haiti. We challenged the IG to declare whether the Cuban government should be condemned for what, in the IG's twisted logic, can only be seen as support to an imperialist invasion of Haiti. So far, the IG has preferred to duck that question. Yet this issue has taken on considerable importance as the U.S. military camp in Guantánamo has emerged as a key logistical hub for U.S. Navy planes flying relief supplies into Port-au-Prince. Because of the Cuban government's overflight permission, which Havana has extended until the end of February, U.S. military and civilian planes carrying relief supplies for Haiti from the U.S. can save considerable time by flying directly to Guantánamo.

Nationalist Populism vs. Proletarian Internationalism

The cynicism of the IG's vituperations against our refusal to oppose the U.S. military providing aid to the Haitian people is revealed not least by the fact that the IG itself did not oppose the deployment of National Guard troops to New Orleans in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina in 2005. In fact, in language similar to what we say regarding Haiti, the IG declared: "Revolutionary communists would certainly not stand in the way of troops actually providing aid or helping rescue survivors" ("New Orleans Death Trap: Thousands of Black Poor Left to Die," *Internationalist*, September 2005). As far as the IG is concerned, it's okay for U.S. military forces to provide aid to survivors of a natural disaster in the U.S., but not in the Third World.

Nor did the IG call for a workers revolt amid the devastation left in the wake of Katrina. Rather they took a page from Martin Luther King Jr. and called for a "march on Washington," fatuously declaiming: "The sight of thousands of unemployed homeless camped out on the ellipse and the mall in full view of Bush's White House and the Capitol, recalling the hunger marches of the early 1930s, would send shivers down the spine of the ruling class."

In its response to us, the IG dismisses out of hand our reference to Leon Trotsky's 1938 article, "Learn to Think," sneering: "WV throws in a quote from Leon Trotsky about not interfering with soldiers extinguishing a fire or rescuing drowning people during a flood. But Trotsky was explicitly talking of a 'national' army, not an imperialist invasion force." No. In fact, Trotsky was speaking here of not opposing on principle aid by an imperialist power to a national struggle in a semicolonial country. Trotsky's example that "the workers would not interfere with soldiers who are extinguishing a fire" was meant to be a self-evident statement aimed at urging woodenheaded simpletons to learn to think. This is clearly too profound for the opportunists of the IG. By the IG's logic, workers in the U.S. should be actively blocking any aid being shipped to Haiti by the U.S. military.

Adaptation to Third World populist nationalism is what lies behind the IG's conjuring up fantasies of proletarian revolution in Haiti. The IG shrieks: "Haiti has now joined a growing list of places where, according to the SL, there is no

working class. It started off with Bolivia in 2005, then came Oaxaca in 2006, now Haiti in 2010." Well, it actually started much earlier than 2005. For example, in 1985, when current IG *líder máximo* Jan Norden was still editor of *Workers Vanguard*, we wrote in "South Africa: Razor's Edge" (WV No. 376, 5 April 1985):

"South Africa is the one place in sub-Saharan Africa where there is the possibility for a workers state, because here the black population has been partially absorbed, at the bottom, into a modern industrialized society which can, based on the revolutionary reorganization of society, provide a decent life for its citizens."

This, precisely, is the rather elementary point for Marxists, that socialist revolution requires an industrial proletarian concentration that is sufficient for overturning capitalist class rule and establishing a workers state, the dictatorship of the proletariat. And if such is not the case? "Then the struggle for national liberation will produce only very partial results, results directed entirely against the working masses" (Leon Trotsky, *The Permanent Revolution* [1930]). This is clearly evident in Haiti, where bitter and bloody popular uprisings in recent decades have led to nothing more than the installation of bourgeois-populist regimes ultimately backed by the might of U.S. imperialism.

The same applies in contemporary Bolivia, where measures by the imperialists and the domestic bourgeoisie, centrally the shutting down of the nationalized tin mines, led to the material devastation and atomization of the once powerful mining proletariat. The 2005 "Bolivian revolution" that the IG and other fake leftists enthused over was in fact a plebeian upheaval that resulted in the coming to power of bourgeois populist Evo Morales. And while Mexico does have a powerful industrial proletariat, the struggle in Oaxaca, one of the most economically backward parts of the country, was limited to teachers and sectors of the petty bourgeoisie such as students and peasants. We pointed out: "Although the struggle in Oaxaca could serve as a spark to ignite workers struggle, in itself it does not pose a 'revolutionary danger'," as the IG would have it ("Down With Bloody State of Siege in Oaxaca!" WV No. 880, 10 November 2006). At bottom the IG's glorification of the struggle in Oaxaca reflects its opportunist tailing of the populist milieu around the bourgeois Party of the Democratic Revolution.

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Just Out!

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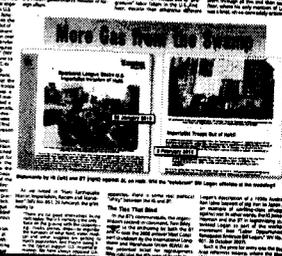
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IG...*(continued from page 19)*

The IG notwithstanding, the virtual absence of an industrial proletariat in Haiti, even before the devastation wreaked by the earthquake, is an obvious fact. Despite some modest economic development over the past few years, mainly centered on the garment industry, the financial trade magazine *TendersInfo* (5 October 2009) reported last fall: "The country now has 25 garment factories that export primarily to the United States and employ more than 24,000 workers, mostly women." By comparison, the garment industry in Bangladesh consists of 4,500 factories employing more than 2.5 million workers. Of course, Bangladesh is a much bigger country than Haiti. However, even as a proportion of GDP, the economic weight of the textile industry in Bangladesh is almost twice that in Haiti.

However, this does not mean that the masses in Haiti are consigned in perpetuity to imperialist oppression. Again, as we pointed out in our last article, there is a sizable Haitian proletariat in the diaspora, which went unmentioned in the IG's revolution-mongering around the earthquake. These workers can be a vital link to class struggle by the powerful North American proletariat. But to infuse the multiracial U.S. working class with an understanding of its role as the gravedigger of U.S. imperialism requires a political struggle against the pro-capitalist labor misleaders who chain the working class to its capitalist exploiters, centrally through political support to the Democratic Party.

And here is where the soft opportunist underbelly of the IG's Third World cheerleading is most exposed. At the time of the 2001 U.S. invasion of Afghanistan, we called for military defense of that country while stressing the need for class struggle against the American ruling class at home. At the same time, we highlighted our call at the time of the Soviet intervention beginning in December 1979 to "Hail Red Army in Afghanistan!" In contrast, when the IG initiated a November 2001 Hunter College rally in New York to protest plans by the administration to drive out undocumented immigrant students, IG speakers did not so much as mention the Soviet intervention, for fear of offending those anti-Communist leftists at the rally who had been on the imperialist side against the

Red Army in Afghanistan (see "IG Disappears Red Army Fight Against Islamic Reaction in Afghanistan," WV No. 772, 11 January 2002). While disappearing the one force capable of effecting a social revolution in Afghanistan, the IG idiotically raised the call for proletarian revolution in Afghanistan, where there is absolutely no industrial proletariat, writing in the *Internationalist* (September 2001): "Genuine communists defend semi-colonial countries against imperialist attack as we fight for socialist revolution against their bourgeois and, in the case of Afghanistan, feudalistic leaders."

A few years later, the IG went a step further, amnestying the pro-capitalist International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) tops over the May Day 2008 antiwar West Coast port shutdown. That action was a powerful demonstration of the kind of working-class struggle needed against the imperialist occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan. But, as we wrote, "the ILWU leadership politically undermined this action by channeling the ranks' anger at the Iraqi occupation and desire to defend their union into pro-Democratic Party 'national unity' patriotism," and support for Obama as the future Commander-in-Chief of U.S. imperialism ("ILWU Shuts West Coast Ports on May Day," WV No. 914, 9 May 2008). Thus, we noted that the ILWU tops buried any mention of the war in Afghanistan, which Obama championed.

The IG, echoing its favorite left-talking labor faker, ILWU Local 10 Exec Board member Jack Heyman, screamed bloody murder over our supposed slander. But antiwar activist Cindy Sheehan, who was a speaker at the ILWU rally and was then running as an independent candidate against Democrat Nancy Pelosi, confirmed what we said. Sheehan told *Workers Vanguard* that Heyman's co-emcee at the rally and fellow Exec Board member Clarence Thomas "said that I couldn't say anything bad about Nancy Pelosi or talk about Afghanistan; I was supposed to stay focused only on Iraq" (quoted in "Antiwar Reformists, Labor Bureaucrats and the Democratic Party: The Syphilitic Chain," WV No. 945, 23 October 2009)!

To paraphrase the IG: it is one thing to read in history books about former revolutionaries capitulating to programs alien to Marxism, but here we see the process unfolding in real time, before our eyes. ■

Critical Notes...*(continued from page 11)*

and China—would be dominated by anti-Western governments and political movements based on national and religious-cultural values and traditions:

"In this new world the most pervasive, important, and dangerous conflicts will not be between social classes, rich and poor, or other economically defined groups, but between peoples belonging to different cultural entities....

"The West is and will remain for years to come the most powerful civilization. Yet its power relative to that of other civilizations is declining. As the West attempts to assert its values and to protect its interests, non-Western societies confront a choice. Some attempt to emulate the West and to join or to 'bandwagon' with the West. Other Confucian and Islamic societies attempt to expand their own economic and military power to resist and to 'balance' against the West. A central axis of post-Cold War world politics is thus the interaction of Western power and culture with the power and culture of non-Western civilizations."

The Huntington/Fukuyama debate underscores the need for us to differentiate between belief in the "death of communism," which is pervasive and still current, and the limited and short-lived American imperialist triumphalism in the immediate aftermath of the fall of the Soviet Union.

Brief Concluding Thoughts

A very important question confronting us can be formulated in this way: is it possible that a spontaneous upheaval, involving a substantial section of the working class, against a right-wing government can lead to a prerevolutionary and even a revolutionary situation (i.e., organs of dual power) even though the mass of workers and other toilers involved do *not* aspire to socialism? I think the answer is yes. While we have not experienced such a development, we should not rule it out. For now, our primary task is to propagate a Marxist worldview with the expectation of recruiting relatively small numbers of leftist intellectuals and advanced workers. To paraphrase John Maynard Keynes: when the facts change, so will our perspectives. ■

Class-Struggle Defense...

(continued from page 24)

1837-38 was followed by the execution of 17 of its leaders. Our opposition to the Canadian state today is underscored by our advocacy of an independent Quebec, which would remove the national question as an obstacle to united workers struggle, opening the road to smashing the chains of capitalist rule in both English Canada and Quebec.

Canadian Bolsheviks

I mentioned the 1917 October Revolution, which rose up out of the carnage of the first imperialist world war, and which sparked an explosion of class struggle around the world. In Canada, the high point of these post-1917 struggles was the Winnipeg General Strike of 1919. The rulers responded to that struggle by launching a ferocious manhunt, jailing and deporting foreign-born Communists, anarchists, militant unionists, anybody else who could be labelled a "dangerous foreigner."

The early Communist Party, founded and led by Maurice Spector and "Moscow Jack" MacDonald (now, he was Scottish, so the term "Moscow Jack" was a political name), took up a ceaseless defense of the class fighters persecuted by the Canadian rulers. Following the lead of James P. Cannon's International Labor Defense in the U.S., they set up the Canadian Labor Defense League in 1925. The CLDL's founding statement vowed to:

"provide means for the defense and support of workers, regardless of their political or industrial affiliations, race, color or nationality, who are indicted and prosecuted on account of their activity in the Labour movement."

That's pretty much what we say today. For a closer look at this history, I urge people to read *Canadian Bolsheviks* by Ian Angus, which is available on our literature table. Aside from the chapters on the proud history of the early Canadian communists, this book also explains the impact of the rise to power in the Soviet Union of a nationalist bureaucracy headed by Joseph Stalin starting in 1923-24. The Stalinists abandoned the program of internationalist, revolutionary Marxism that ani-



Glenbow Archives

Louis Riel (centre) and the Métis Provisional Government, formed in 1869.

mated the Russian Revolution of 1917. In Canada, this led to the expulsion of many founding party leaders, including Spector in 1928 and MacDonald in 1931. Both became leaders of the Canadian Trotskyists, joining the International Left Opposition to continue the struggle for new October Revolutions.

The 1930s, like today, witnessed a growing economic crisis, as the anarchy of capitalist production for profit led to mass unemployment and general social dislocation of workers and people who were already poor and oppressed. In fear of organized discontent, the rulers launched a ferocious campaign of anti-communist repression. In 1931, on September 29, the RCMP put a bloody end to a Communist-led coal strike by murdering three miners in cold blood, in broad daylight on the main street of Estevan, Saskatchewan. Just weeks earlier, on August 11, a joint force of the RCMP, Ontario Provincial Police, and Toronto cops raided the offices of the Communist Party and the homes of its leaders, arresting nine people, including party leader Tim Buck. Ottawa charged them under Section 98 of the Criminal Code with "seditious conspiracy" and being members and officers of an "unlawful organization." Most of the Communist Party defendants received five-year prison terms for "subversion."

In the same spirit of non-sectarian defense we stand on today, one of the earliest campaigns of the Trotskyists in Canada was the fight to defend the leaders of the Communist Party, the party from which they had just been expelled. In an article for the U.S. Trotskyist paper, the *Militant* (29 August 1931), Maurice Spector wrote:

"There can be no question of the position that every class-conscious worker must take up towards this trial—absolute, militant, intransigent struggle against the forces of reaction. The workers must organize in a broad united front, whatever their political or industrial affiliation, to protest against the wave of terror which the capitalist authorities have let loose against the militants of their class."

Class-Struggle Defense in World War II

Eight years later, with the outbreak of World War II in 1939, it was the Trotskyists' turn to be targeted by the ruling class. They defied the government's efforts to whip up patriotic fervour by publicly agitating in street corner rallies against the war effort. The Socialist Workers League, as the Trotskyists were

(continued on page 22)



Vanguard Press

Canadian communist leaders in 1925, left to right: William Moriarty, Tim Buck, and future Trotskyist leaders Jack MacDonald and Maurice Spector.

Class-Struggle Defense...

(continued from page 21)

called, was declared illegal, and one of its leaders imprisoned. In our newspaper *Spartacist Canada* (No. 162, Fall 2009), we republished an editorial from the clandestine paper that the Trotskyists put out in September 1939 after their legal newspaper, *Socialist Voice*, had been suppressed. Just as Lenin's Bolsheviks did in 1914, our comrades stood firm, defying the patriotic fervour whipped up by the government. They called for revolutionary defeatism against the imperialist powers—Germany, France, the United States, Britain, Canada, Japan—while unconditionally defending the USSR against imperialist attack.

A key test of class-struggle defense arose later in the war with the government's order to round up 22,000 Canadians of Japanese descent. Their property was seized and they were declared "enemy aliens." Thousands of men, women, children, old people, the sick, with little more than the clothes on their backs, were forced into internment camps from the B.C. interior to as far east as Ontario. At every stage of their torment, the Japanese Canadians stood virtually alone. Trade-union misleaders on the West Coast actively whipped up racist hysteria against them. The CCF (Cooperative Commonwealth Federation), predecessors of today's NDP, made its contribution to the great "war for democracy" by having party member Grant MacNeil serve on the advisory board to the B.C. Security Commission, which oversaw the concentration camps. The now-Stalinist Communist Party, which was avidly supporting Canada's war effort, despicably applauded the round-up of the Japanese Canadians, just as it later hailed the atomic incineration of Japanese civilians at Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

In sharp contrast, our comrades denounced the rulers' racist persecution of the Japanese Canadians. Their own press banned, the Trotskyists continued to distribute the *Militant*, the paper of the then-Trotskyist Socialist Workers Party in the U.S., which exposed the racist lies and atrocities against Japanese Americans. At the war's end, they also raised their voices against Ottawa's preparations to deport 10,000 Japanese Canadians to war-ravaged Japan. Writing in their paper, *Labor Challenge*, the Trotskyists said:

"The mass compulsory forced exodus of the Japanese Canadians from the West Coast finds a parallel in modern times only in the slave labor trek of the peoples of Europe into Hitler's industrial war machine....

"Canadian capitalism stands self-indicted. Another War Crime stains its bloody hands."

Quebec and the "October Crisis," 1970

The next decade, the 1950s, saw the purge of reds of all kinds from the trade unions, often spearheaded by CCF leaders like the late David Lewis. In the 1960s and early 1970s, however, social struggles resurged, and again the capitalist rulers raised the fist of repression. Among those targeted and imprisoned was Dr. Henry Morgentaler whose heroic defiance of the courts eventually defeated the back-alley butchers and religious bigots, forcing the legalization of abortion in Canada in 1988. This was a victory for women's rights that is today once again under siege.

Class-struggle defense was posed most sharply in Quebec during the "October Crisis" of 1970. The Liberal government of Pierre Trudeau, who also extradited Leonard Peltier to his tormentors in the U.S., was seeking to crush a mass labour and social radicalization in Quebec, including growing sup-



National Archives of Canada

Internment of Japanese Canadians during World War II, racist atrocity of Canadian imperialism.

port for Quebec independence. Ottawa seized on the kidnappings of two government officials, James Cross and Pierre Laporte, by the Front de Libération du Québec, or FLQ. Trudeau declared martial law and sent thousands of armed troops to occupy the streets of Montreal, rounding up and imprisoning hundreds of people.

Pierre Laporte, one of those held by the FLQ, was killed, and eventually the government made a deal with the FLQ for the release of the other, James Cross. The government then staged a series of show trials for "sedition" under the War Measures Act against people, including prominent union militants, who had exactly nothing to do with the kidnappings of Cross and Laporte. This sparked a new wave of anti-government protest, in the upshot of which nearly all the charges were thrown out. But the rulers' vendetta against the FLQ continued, leading to several arrests over the next decade.

The FLQ was not a Marxist organization. It was a small handful of activists that espoused a version of leftist petty-bourgeois nationalism inspired by guerrilla national liberation movements that had been sweeping through Southeast Asia, Latin America and Africa. The FLQ's urban guerrilla tactics were ultimately ineffectual. Some of their targets were also random—they endangered the lives of innocent people, and this is something which Marxists condemn. For the most part, however, the FLQ targeted symbols of Canadian capitalism. From the standpoint of the working class such actions are manifestly *not* crimes.

In 1939, Leon Trotsky responded to the trial of Herschel Grynszpan, a Jewish youth, for shooting a Nazi official in Paris. In the article "For Grynszpan" he wrote:

"We Marxists consider the tactic of individual terror inexpedient in the tasks of the liberating struggle of the proletariat as well as oppressed nationalities. A single isolated hero cannot replace the masses. But we understand only too clearly the inevitability of such convulsive acts of despair and vengeance. All our emotions, all our sympathies are with the self-sacrificing avengers even though they have been unable to discover the correct road."

The Trotskyist League/Ligue trotskyste did not exist at the time of the 1970 October Crisis. But after our founding five years later, we had many occasions to address these events, tying them to our own defense of Quebec's right to self-determination (see article, opposite). Our call to defend the arrested FLQers was deeply controversial, as ostensible "radicals"—swimming with the rightward political tide of the late

The "October Crisis" in Quebec

The following article, originally titled "Abolish the War Measures Act!" is reprinted from SC No. 45, November/December 1980.

"So I told one guy, I think it was (Pierre) Vallières or (Charles) Gagnon: 'We're arresting you for nothing. You went and sat down in front of the United Nations building in 1965 and you went on a hunger strike demanding to be recognized as a political prisoner. Well, my friend, you have become one.

"Now I'm arresting you, and I have no charges against you. Go to jail—I don't know for how long—and wait!"

—Gilles Masse, Montreal Police Brotherhood president describing the October 1970 arrests, quoted in the *Globe and Mail*, 4 October [1980]

The 1970 October Crisis. Trudeau invokes the draconian War Measures Act following the kidnapping of British diplomat James Cross and Quebec labor minister Pierre Laporte by the Front de Libération du Québec (FLQ). Armored cars roll into Montreal and fully armed troopers in battle dress guard public buildings.

Over 450 "suspects"—labor leaders, separatists, leftists—are rounded up and held incommunicado for days, without charges, as all civil liberties are suspended. The capitalist media exploit the wild rumors of Cuban involvement, lengthy FLQ hit lists, the ravings of cabinet ministers to create a climate of fear to justify the government's dictatorial measures. Trudeau speaks darkly of "apprehended insurrection." The conservative Catholic editor of *Le Devoir* Claude Ryan is implicated in a mythical provisional government. Jean Marchand spins a lurid yarn of "3,000 terrorists armed with rifles and enough dynamite to blow up the heart of Montreal."

The welter of reminiscences, official inquiries, journalistic reviews and new trials marking the tenth anniversary of the "October Crisis" all point to the total fabrication of evidence used by the Liberal governments in Ottawa and Quebec to justify the repression. The Keable commission "investigating" RCMP crimes, the Duchaine report and the unmasking of several police agents within the FLQ point to the strong probability that the authorities had foreknowledge of the kidnappings but chose to exploit the situation to deal a knockout blow to the entire nationalist movement. Almost all of the

kidnappers had been followed, photographed and investigated for years; the cops knew within days, if not hours, the handful of FLQers they were looking for. But Trudeau and then-Quebec premier Robert Bourassa saw an opportunity to harass, intimidate and disrupt the activities of their political foes. The massive display of force was aimed not only at separatists but at the left and the militant Quebec labor movement. Not one of the known members of the FLQ was picked up in the wave of mass arrests.

The War Measures Act gives the bourgeois state the legal means to dispense with all supposed guarantees of democratic rights whenever it feels that capitalist rule is being challenged. This dictatorial anti-working class piece of legislation must be abolished. For the Communist Party of Canada, however, the problem was "that the War Measures Act contributed nothing to counteracting the juvenile terrorist activities of the FLQ" (*Canadian Tribune*, 20 October [1980]). From the mouths of Stalinists this is not such a surprising statement. The Italian CP has been outspoken in clamoring for the enforcement of "law and order" against the Red Brigades—demanding expansion of the state secret police and more suppression of "political criminality."

As Leninists we reject the impotent petty-bourgeois strategy of terrorism, which is born out of pessimism over the ability of the working masses to overthrow their oppressors. Inevitably terrorist acts provide a pretext for massive state terror, as did the 1970 kidnappings. We condemn acts of random terror, such as the mailbox bombings of the sixties, which endanger the lives of innocent people. But although the Felquistes were misguided, their targets in October 1970 were symbols of imperialist oppression and capitalist rule. We demand that those imprisoned for the Cross/Laporte kidnappings be freed!

The War Measures Act was intended as a warning to the Québécois that the slightest threat of separation would be met with all the military muscle the Canadian state could muster. It is the elementary duty of the Canadian labor movement and socialists to unconditionally defend Quebec's right to independence. Only through the active defense of the democratic national and language rights of the Québécois can the basis be laid for truly uniting French- and English-speaking workers in the struggle for North American socialist revolution. ■

1970s—dropped defense of the FLQ like a hot potato. We excoriated the loyalty to the bourgeois state of our fake-Marxist opponents in an article bluntly headlined "FLQ Defense: Acid Test for the Left" (SC No. 34, March 1979).

The Trotskyist League's fight for class-struggle defense flows from our Marxist outlook: class against class. The period we're struggling in today is a bad one. The ruling class claims that the destruction of the Soviet Union proves "communism is dead." Now, the impact of this historic defeat has demoralized millions of working people around the world. Unlike the situation faced by our forebears in the 1920s and 1930s, today even the most advanced workers do not in general identify their struggles with the liberating goals of socialism. But history shows there is no way to end the poverty, war and oppression endemic to the capitalist system short of the overthrow of capitalism and its replacement with an egalitarian social system. To get there, we need to forge a Marxist vanguard party—one

that defends *all* the oppressed and downtrodden in its fight for socialist revolution. In this struggle, we give a place of honour to the class-war prisoners past and present, who have been victimized for standing up to the barbaric capitalist system, accurately described by Marx as "dripping with blood from every pore." *Their fight is our fight.* ■

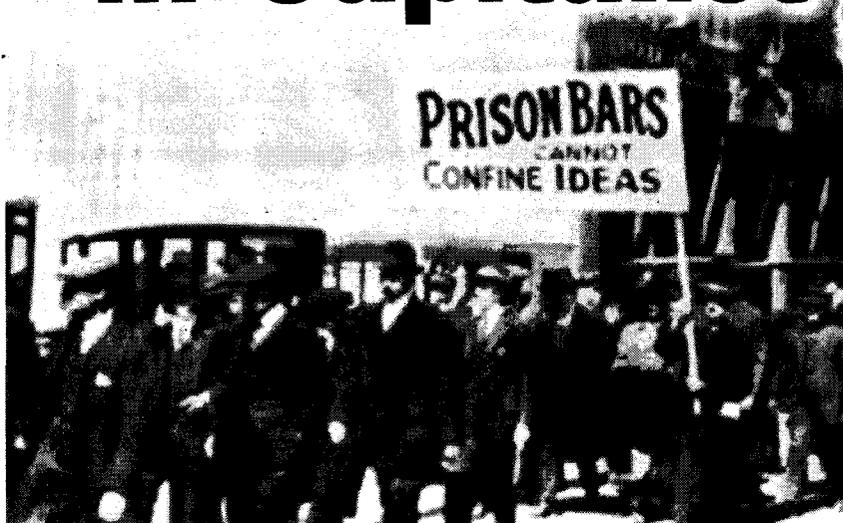
Trotskyist League/Ligue trotskyste

Toronto: Box 7198, Station A
Toronto ON M5W 1X8
(416) 593-4138
spartcan@on.aibn.com

Vancouver: Box 2717, Main P.O.
Vancouver BC V6B 3X2
(604) 687-0353
trotskyist_vancouver@shawcable.com

ICL Website: www.icl-fi.org

Class-Struggle Defense in Capitalist Canada



Library and Archives Canada



Johnson/Canadian Forces

Demonstration for arrested leaders of Winnipeg General Strike, 1919. Inset: Canadian government invoked War Measures Act, sent troops to occupy Montreal, October 1970.

The Partisan Defense Committee's annual Holiday Appeal benefits held in December in New York, Chicago, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Toronto and Vancouver raised more than \$10,000 (U.S.) after expenses. These funds go toward providing monthly stipends and holiday gifts to class-war prisoners and their families, an expression of proletarian solidarity and material support. The case of death row political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal was central to the Holiday Appeal benefits (see article, page 4).

We also honoured 15 other class-war prisoners including American Indian Movement activist Leonard Peltier and the eight MOVE members, now in their 32nd year of prison for the "crime" of having survived a massive cop assault on their Philadelphia home in 1978. For more on the Holiday Appeals and the class-war prisoners see "Supporting the Class-War Prisoners" (*Workers Vanguard* No. 951, 29 January).

A highlight of the December 11 Toronto benefit was a speech by Trotskyist League spokesman Andrew Shilling on the history of class-struggle defense by Marxist revolutionaries in Canada which we print below, slightly edited for publication.

We've heard it reiterated in a number of ways this evening: the Partisan Defense Committee "champions cases and causes in the interest of the whole of the working people." This sounds like a very simple phrase, almost common sense

for any person who's on the side of the working class. But, actually, what these words express is what Leon Trotsky called "the dearly bought lessons of the past." These are lessons learned by the generations of those who came before us and often paid a very high price. The principles of class-struggle defense as we know them today combine the program of the 1917 October Revolution in Russia, the world's first successful socialist revolution, with the best militant traditions of workers struggle in North America going back to the syndicalist Industrial Workers of the World, the IWW.

I want to talk tonight about a few—a very few—examples of defense cases that we and our Marxist predecessors have had to take up in this country. The capitalist class in Canada is like any other in its basic purpose: making profit through savage exploitation of the working class. But each national gang of capitalist exploiters also has its own special characteristics. Canadian capitalism arose from the bones of genocide, the virtual extermination of the pre-existing aboriginal societies.

The hanging of heroic Métis fighter Louis Riel in November 1885 by the "Father of Confederation," John A. Macdonald, underlines that from the start, the rule of Canadian capitalism has been shaped by racism. It has also been shaped by a specific bigotry against the French population centred in Quebec. The bloody suppression of the Patriote Rebellion

(continued on page 21)

From Winnipeg 1919 to Montreal 1970