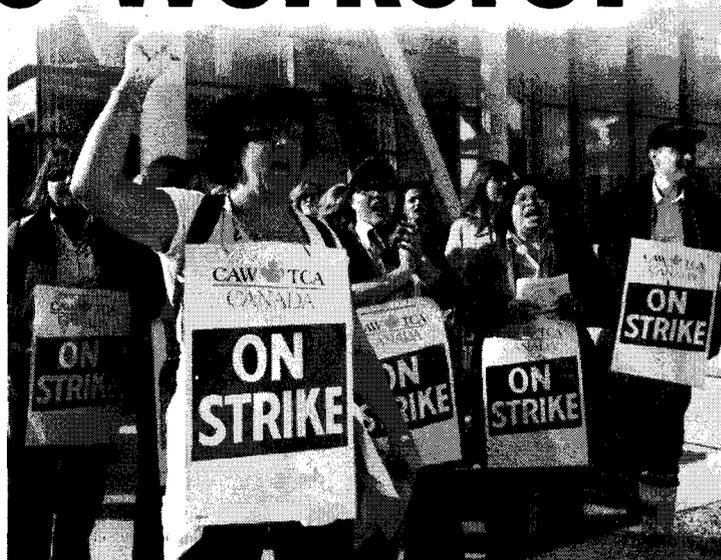


Occupy Protests Push “99 Percent” Populism

We Need a New Ruling Class—the Workers!



Andrew Moran



Sherwood/National Post

Left: Occupy Toronto protesters take to the streets, October 22. Right: Air Canada workers at Toronto's Pearson Airport strike in defense of pensions, June 14. Working class uniquely has social power, collective interest to smash capitalism.

Widespread anger over corporate profit-gouging, mass unemployment and stark economic inequalities found an outlet this fall in the Occupy protests that began in New York City and spread to cities across the U.S. and Canada. A wave of police attacks descended upon many of the encampments in the U.S. in November. New York cops left protesters on a November 17 march bloodied and beaten, detaining over 200, including trade unionists and journalists. In Oakland, where protests drew 10,000 or more youth and workers, cops acting at the behest of “progressive” Democratic Party mayor Jean Quan staged repeated and brutal attacks before finally shutting down the protest. Protests in Canada were also shut down under a variety of legal pretexts. **Drop all charges against the Occupy protesters!**

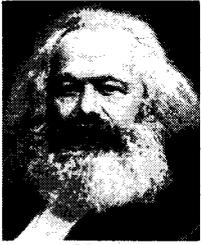
Many of the youth and workers whose prospects have been blighted by the capitalist meltdown embraced the Occupy protests, seeing in them the potential to do something, *anything*, about this catastrophe. But this populist movement presented not the slightest challenge to the functioning of the capitalist profit system, which is the root cause of misery and inequality. Thus sections of the bourgeois ruling class looked favourably on the protests, seeking to co-opt and channel widespread dis-

content. Even ex-prime minister Paul Martin said the protests had “touched a chord...it’s a very important thing they’ve done” (*Huffington Post*, 18 November). Bank of Canada governor (and former Goldman Sachs investment banker) Mark Carney called them “entirely constructive.”

The organizers prided themselves on not having a clear political agenda, affiliation or even a fixed set of demands, but they did have a program: liberal reform, especially of capitalism’s financial sector. Issuing patriotic appeals to this country’s purported democratic values, they raised slogans like: “We are the 99 percent,” “Tax the rich” and “Canada before capital—Not for sale.”

It is false that “99 percent” of the population share common interests. There is a fundamental *class divide* in society between the capitalists—the tiny group of families that owns industry and the banks—and the working class, whose labour is the source of the capitalists’ profits. The working class is the only force with the potential power and historic interest to sweep away the capitalist system and rebuild society based on a centralized, planned economy that serves human need, not profit.

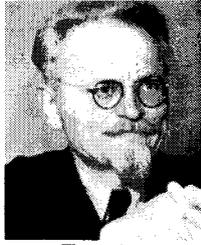
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Marx



Lenin



Trotsky

Imperialism and Capitalist Decay

The current global economic turmoil was triggered by a banking collapse, the result of rampant financial speculation originating in the U.S. and largely centred on housing and real estate. Writing nearly a century ago, Bolshevik leader V.I. Lenin noted the displacement of capitalist "free competition" by monopolies and the domination of finance capital centred on the banking industry. Lenin emphasized that the rise of this worldwide imperialist system signaled an epoch of capitalist decay, posing the need for proletarian socialist revolution in order to reorganize society in the interests of the vast majority.

Imperialism, as the highest stage of capitalism in America and Europe, and later in Asia, took final shape in the period 1898–1914. The Spanish-American War (1898), the Anglo-Boer War (1899–1902), the Russo-Japanese War (1904–05) and the economic crisis in Europe in 1900 are the chief historical landmarks in the new era of world history.

The fact that imperialism is parasitic or decaying capitalism is manifested first of all in the tendency to decay, which is characteristic of every monopoly under the system of private ownership of the means of production. The difference between the democratic-republican and the reactionary-monarchist imperialist bourgeoisie is obliterated precisely because they are both rotting alive (which by no means precludes an extraordinarily rapid development of capitalism in individual branches of industry, in individual countries, and in individual periods). Secondly, the decay of capitalism is manifested in the creation of a huge stratum of *rentiers*, capitalists who live by "clipping coupons." In each of the four leading imperialist countries—England, U.S.A., France and Germany—capital in securities amounts to 100,000 or 150,000 million francs, from which each country derives an annual income of no less than five to eight thousand million. Thirdly, export of capital is parasitism raised to a high pitch. Fourthly, "finance

capital strives for domination, not freedom." Political reaction *all along* the line is a characteristic feature of imperialism. Corruption, bribery on a huge scale and all kinds of fraud. Fifthly, the exploitation of oppressed nations—which is inseparably connected with annexations—and especially the exploitation of colonies by a handful of "Great" Powers, increasingly transforms the "civilised" world into a parasite on the body of hundreds of millions in the uncivilised nations. The Roman proletarian lived at the expense of society. Modern society lives at the expense of the modern proletarian. Marx specially stressed this profound observation of Sismondi. Imperialism somewhat changes the situation. A privileged upper stratum of the proletariat in the imperialist countries lives partly at the expense of hundreds of millions in the uncivilised nations.

It is clear why imperialism is *moribund* capitalism, capitalism in *transition* to socialism: monopoly, which grows *out of* capitalism, is *already* dying capitalism, the beginning of its transition to socialism....

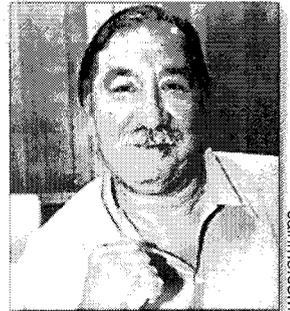
By exposing the fact that the opportunists and social-chauvinists are in reality betraying and selling the interests of the masses, that they are defending the temporary privileges of a minority of the workers, that they are the vehicles of bourgeois ideas and influences, that they are really allies and agents of the bourgeoisie, we teach the masses to appreciate their true political interests, to fight for socialism and for the revolution through all the long and painful vicissitudes of imperialist wars and imperialist armistices.

—Lenin, "Imperialism and the Split in Socialism"
(October 1916)

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West Bengal After the Elections

The Political Bankruptcy of Indian Stalinism



Left: Rival electoral posters in Kolkata, West Bengal, earlier this year. Above: Protesters against land expropriation in Nandigram by CPI(M)-led government, 2007.

The humiliating rout of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) (CPI(M)) in the West Bengal elections last May puts a harsh spotlight on the political bankruptcy of Indian Stalinism and its Maoist variants. The dominant force in the Left Front, the CPI(M) had ruled continuously since 1977, wielding the repressive powers of the capitalist state against the deeply impoverished and oppressed masses of West Bengal. The CPI(M) has committed many crimes against the toilers, but its bloody repression in Singur and Nandigram virtually assured its defeat at the hands of the right-wing Trinamool Congress (TMC).

In December 2006 the Left Front government expropriated land in the Singur district on behalf of Tata Motors, one of India's largest capitalist conglomerates. Those who resisted were severely beaten and arrested and a young woman activist was brutally raped and murdered. The following March, thousands of police and armed CPI(M) cadre assaulted peasants resisting a forced land expropriation in Nandigram. At least 14 were killed and over 200 injured. (See "India: The Nandigram Massacre," *SC* No. 159, Winter 2008/2009.) Try as they might, oceans of lying CPI(M) propaganda could not wash away the blood of Singur and Nandigram.

Trinamool leader Mamata Banerjee demagogically manipulated the anger over Singur and Nandigram, but this posturing was aimed only at wresting power from the CPI(M). A right-wing split from the Congress Party, Trinamool is a Bengali regional outfit that has repeatedly allied itself with the communalist Hindu-supremacist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). Trinamool's rule will be marked by Hindu chauvinism, anti-Communism and intensified attacks

on workers and the poor. Already Banerjee has called for a law against strikes and *bandhs* (street protests).

The CPI(M) was reduced to a rump in the state legislature, though its 30 percent of the vote indicates that it still retains the allegiance of millions of workers and peasants. This is

Forge a Leninist-Trotskyist Party!

the context for a wave of political violence—largely aimed at the CPI(M)—that has marked the post-

election period in West Bengal. Reportedly, TMC thugs have killed up to 30 leftists, most of them CPI(M) supporters, and carried out hundreds of rapes and thousands of assaults, arsons and mass evictions. The offices of non-Trinamool trade unions have been ransacked and taken over by the ruling party. The workers movement must oppose all such anti-worker and anti-Communist attacks, as well as any communalist violence—which often targets India's large Muslim minority—that TMC reactionaries may provoke.

Grotesquely, however, CPI(M) leader Buddhadeb Bhattacharya protested that "Instead of taking action against the 'Maoists' the government is acting against us," adding that the Maoists "are the real danger to the state" (*People's Democracy*, 21 August). With this, the CPI(M) continues its criminal support to Operation Green Hunt, the Delhi government's armed offensive against Maoist guerrillas in India's eastern and central interior. Trinamool, needing no urging from these contemptible hacks, has already announced its own plans for an "all-out" military offensive against the Communist Party of India (Maoist)—hereafter referred to as CPI (Maoist)—and its supporters among the adivasi tribal peoples. As one of her henchmen put it, "Chief minister

(continued on page 4)

West Bengal...

(continued from page 3)

Mamata Banerjee is for development in the Maoist-dominated areas and those who oppose it will have to face the wrath of the government" (*Hindustan Times*, 6 July).

Permanent Revolution vs. Stalinist Betrayal

Twenty years after capitalist counterrevolution devastated the Soviet Union and East Europe, India is one of the few places in the world where parties purporting to be Communist continue to have mass influence among the working class and oppressed. However, as the events in West Bengal demonstrate, the politics of the many parties that are derived from Indian Stalinism, including the Maoists, are sharply counterposed to the revolutionary, proletarian and internationalist program of authentic Marxism. Today, these parties are entering into significant political and organizational crises. The question of what way forward for the Indian masses is posed acutely.

Without exception, the Stalinist parties espouse a two-stage program of "democratic revolution." This dogma means supporting brutal capitalist exploiters while postponing the proletarian revolution to an indefinite future, i.e., never. The end result is not "democracy," much less socialism, but the killing of leftists, workers and peasants.

In pursuit of its "People's Democratic Front" strategy, the CPI(M) has always sought alliances with a mythical "progressive" wing of the bourgeoisie. The official CPI(M) program instructs workers to ally with the "non-big bourgeoisie," stressing that "every effort must be made to win them to the democratic front." In reality, the CPI(M) has courted not just the "non-big," but the *really* big bourgeoisie. The violent dispossession of the impoverished peasants of Singur and Nandigram on behalf of the Tata and Indonesian Salim Group conglomerates was an application of this political logic.

Nor are the Maoists an alternative, for they share the same fundamental program, also routinely seeking alliances with bourgeois forces. During the protests against the Singur and Nandigram atrocities, various Maoist groups allied with Trinamool. Going into the May elections, the CPI (Maoist) backed this extremely right-wing party as the "alternative" to the betrayals of the CPI(M). "We will support her [Banerjee] and follow the roadmap for development drawn up by her if she comes to power," they vowed in a statement (*The Hindu*, 18 January), only dropping this unabashed support at the eleventh hour.

In India, where capitalist development is belated and constrained by imperialist subjugation, the weak national bourgeoisie is dependent on its imperialist masters—yesterday the British, today the U.S.—and above all fears its "own" working class. The only road to liberation for the subjugated masses lies in the successful struggle of the proletariat for state power, at the head of all the oppressed, especially the vast peasantry, and under the leadership of a revolutionary workers party. An Indian workers revolution would spark a revolutionary upsurge throughout the subcontinent, from Pakistan to Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka. Its survival and advancement would hinge on the achievement of social revolutions in the imperialist centres: Japan, North America and West Europe.

This is the perspective of permanent revolution. First elab-



Getty Images

Kolkata, August 2011: Student members of CPI(M) arrested during protest against Trinamool's attacks on left, workers.

orated for countries of combined and uneven development by Leon Trotsky around the 1905 Russian Revolution, it was stunningly confirmed by the October 1917 Revolution and the coming to power of the working class under the leadership of the Bolshevik Party. The Russian workers were able to take power in 1917 thanks to the Bolsheviks' intransigent struggle for class independence from the capitalists. The result was a workers state, a revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat supported by the peasantry. Key to cementing the workers' alliance with the peasants was the Bolsheviks' support for peasant seizures of the landed estates and the division of the land among those who worked it.

Internationalist to the core, Lenin, Trotsky and the other Bolshevik leaders saw the revolution in economically backward Russia as the first step in a worldwide socialist revolution, crucially including the advanced capitalist countries. But the failure of a number of revolutionary opportunities in the period after World War I—particularly the defeat of the 1923 German Revolution—deepened the isolation of the Soviet state. This, combined with the economic devastation of World War I and the subsequent Civil War, allowed the emergence of a conservative bureaucratic layer in the party and state apparatus.

Beginning with a political counterrevolution in 1923-24, the USSR underwent a qualitative bureaucratic degeneration in which the working class was deprived of political power. The nationally narrow conservatism of the consolidating bureaucratic caste was given ideological expression by Stalin's promulgation in late 1924 of the theory that socialism could be built in a single country. Under this anti-Marxist dogma, the struggle for the international extension of the revolution was increasingly shelved in favour of the pipe-dream of "peaceful coexistence" with world imperialism. The parties of the Communist International were transformed—after ruthless purges in most cases—into reformist tools of class collaboration with their "own" capitalist rulers. In the colonial and neocolonial world this meant the resurrection of the old Menshevik formula of "two-stage" revolution—the very program that had been defeated and discredited in the

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Trotskyist League National Conference

The Trotskyist League/Ligue trotskyste, Canadian section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist), held its Twelfth National Conference earlier this year. Comrades from our Toronto and Vancouver locals, representatives of the ICL's International Secretariat and the Spartacist League/U.S. Central Committee as well as members of the Spartacus Youth Clubs and other invited guests discussed developments in the class struggle internationally and in Canada and assessed our ongoing work in fighting to build the nucleus of a Marxist vanguard. The conference convened several months after the ICL's Sixth International Conference, whose decisions served to frame our deliberations. The latest issue of our international journal *Spartacist* (No. 62, Spring 2011) includes a comprehensive report on the ICL conference.

A main resolution drafted by the outgoing TL/LT Central Committee was discussed, amended and adopted unanimously. We are fighting for revolutionary Marxism in a period defined by the global retrogression of consciousness that followed the destruction of the Soviet Union and the East European bureaucratically deformed workers states in the early 1990s. The document thus affirmed that rather than pursuing opportunist, "get rich quick" schemes, our approach must be *propagandistic* and *programmatic*. It noted that "a signal success in the period since our 2007 national conference has been the recruitment and integration of a layer of new members in both locals," and that bringing these and other younger cadres into aspects of party leadership through training, education and political struggle must remain a priority.

The international report by comrade H. Kelter addressed two main subjects: the impact of the capitalist economic crisis, particularly in Europe, and ongoing discussions in the ICL over appropriate demands to raise to intersect struggles in countries of belated capitalist development, such as Tunisia and Egypt. In North Africa as elsewhere in the neocolonial world, our perspective is the *permanent revolution*: an understanding that all-round economic and social modernization cannot come under capitalism, including in its "democratic" guise, but requires proletarian revolution leading the poor peasants and other oppressed. Further advance toward socialism can only come through the extension of socialist revolution to the imperialist heartlands of North America,

West Europe and Japan.

A number of comrades underlined the importance of our principled stand in defense of neocolonial Libya against the attack by NATO and its local allies, while giving no political support to the bonapartist strongman Qaddafi. This was in sharp contrast to the pro-NDP reformist left, which backed the pro-imperialist opposition in the name of a mythical "Libyan revolution."

In the absence of major controversies, much of the conference was devoted to educational sessions and discussions assessing the state of the left and labour movement. One agenda point dealt with the fight for Trotskyism in South Asia, taking off from the articles on this question in the latest *Spartacist*. Comrades noted that the rapid growth of the Indian proletariat highlights an acute crisis of working-class leadership, as the various Stalinist-derived "Communist" parties all uphold class collaboration in one form or another. The work of the Bolshevik-Leninist Party of India during World War II is an essential reference point for militants from the subcontinent who seek the road to authentic Marxism.

A highlight of the conference was a panel on the stance of the Canadian left toward the Quebec national question from the 1920s to the 1950s. In his report, comrade Charles Galarneau noted that the early Communist Party of Canada (CPC) had a blind spot on the question of Quebec. Its campaigns for "Canadian independence" from Britain, which began in the mid 1920s, fed a retrograde Canadian nationalism that ossified with the party's Stalinist degeneration. The CPC took until the early 1950s to formally raise the call for Quebec's right to self-determination, and its politics remain marked by Maple Leaf nationalism to this day.

Comrade Galarneau also addressed the CPC's work inside Quebec. Despite its line on the national question and the repressive/clerical nature of Quebec society, the party managed to build a base of several hundred francophone workers in Montreal by the 1940s. This was thrown away in 1947, when almost the entire French Canadian membership quit, with the key underlying issue being the party's refusal to uphold Quebec's national rights.

Comrade Andrew Shilling took up the views of the Trotskyists after their expulsion from the CPC in the late 1920s. The

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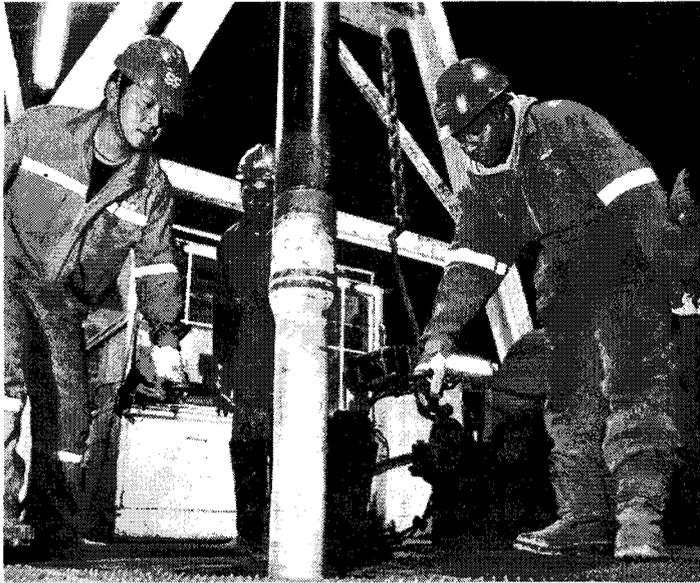
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Fake Trotskyists in Camp of Counterrevolution

Hue and Cry over China's Role in Africa



Xinhua



EPA

Left: Work crew at one of 30 geothermal wells drilled in Kenya by a Chinese state-owned oil company, September 13. Right: Chinese-built Merowe Dam provides Sudan with stable electrical power supply.

The following article is reprinted from Workers Vanguard No. 987 (30 September), newspaper of the Spartacist League/U.S.

In August 2009, U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton visited Angola to witness a major agreement between the government of the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) and the American oil giant Chevron. Clinton took the occasion to pledge further U.S. investment, which came on top of an earlier promise by Washington to help build two hydroelectric plants. For Angola's bourgeois-nationalist MPLA, these deals marked something of a turn by the U.S. imperialists. For nearly 30 years after winning independence from Portugal in 1975, Angola was wracked by a devastating civil war. For much of that period, the U.S. gave military and financial support to guerrilla forces allied with apartheid South Africa fighting a reactionary war to unseat the MPLA, which was backed by the Soviet Union and Cuba. Furthermore, U.S. capitalists had shown little interest in investing in Angola following the official end of the civil war in 2002.

There was a clear purpose to the friendly face Clinton offered the MPLA government. The year before her visit, Angola had become Africa's largest trade partner with China, the most powerful of those countries today where capitalist rule has been overthrown. Providing nearly 15 percent of China's petroleum, Angola has surpassed Saudi Arabia as the largest oil exporter to China. In return, Beijing has provided low-interest loans that have been used to build hospitals, schools, irrigation systems and roads. Similar deals have been

struck from Sudan and Algeria to Zambia and the Democratic Republic of Congo, providing oil and metallic minerals for mainland China's booming industries.

For the U.S. and other imperialist powers, which suffered a historic defeat with the 1949 Chinese Revolution, these are not welcome developments. Carried out by a peasant-guerrilla army led by Mao Zedong's Chinese Communist Party (CCP), the 1949 Revolution established a workers state, although one that was bureaucratically deformed from its inception. The creation in subsequent years of a centrally planned, collectivized economy laid the basis for enormous social progress for workers, peasants, women and national minorities. Ever since 1949, the imperialists have sought the counter-revolutionary overturn of CCP rule and the return of China to untrammelled capitalist exploitation. To this end they have pursued military pressure and threats, supported internal anti-Communist movements and "dissidents" and, over the last 30-plus years, penetrated the Chinese mainland economy courtesy of the CCP regime's "market reforms."

As Chinese trade and aid agreements with African countries began to proliferate five years ago, imperialist spokesmen sounded the alarm. World Bank head Paul Wolfowitz lashed out at the very favorable loans offered by China's state-owned banks, which, he declaimed, did not meet "social and environmental standards." This from a man who a few years earlier had been a leading architect of the Bush administration's wars in Afghanistan and Iraq! Chiming in with a throwback to the anti-Soviet Cold War, a headline in Britain's

Daily Mail (18 July 2008) screamed: "How China's Taking Over Africa, and Why the West Should Be VERY Worried."

The blowback touched off a debate among academics and government officials in China on its role in Africa, within the bounds, to be sure, of overall policy set by the Beijing Stalinist bureaucracy. An article titled "The Practice of China's Diplomatic Concept of 'Harmonious World'—An Analysis of Sino-African Relations in Recent Years" by Ge Zhiguo rightly condemned "the West's longstanding policies toward Africa," which have not only "not given Africa prosperity and stability" but have also "caused many African countries to sink into long-term chaos and ethnic violence" (*Gaoxiao Sheke Dongtai* [Social Sciences Perspectives in Higher Education], third issue in 2007; this and other translations are by WV).

From King Leopold's killing fields of the Belgian Congo to Britain's concentration camps in Kenya and U.S. support to apartheid South Africa, the record of the Western imperialists in Africa is one of mass murder, slave-like labor and brutal repression of independence movements and workers struggles. Indeed, the precursor to such barbarism was the enslavement of Africans in capitalism's early mercantile stage. Imperialist subjugation, far from modernizing such societies, has reinforced their backwardness and immiseration. Noting that China's investments in Africa are motivated by very different purposes, Ge Zhiguo called on Beijing to reform some of its own policies to counter resentment among Africans over the treatment of workers in China's enterprises and the undercutting of local businesses by Chinese entrepreneurs.

As Trotskyists, the International Communist League stands for the unconditional military defense of China against imperialism and internal counterrevolution. We support China's right to trade in order to procure what it needs to further its development. We recognize, however, that China's investment and aid programs are determined not by proletarian internationalism but by the CCP bureaucracy's narrow nationalist interests, which are rooted in the Stalinist dogma of "building socialism in one country" and its corollary, "peaceful coexistence" with imperialism (now called the "harmonious world" policy). Opposed to the perspective of international proletarian revolution, the CCP regime has accommodated imperialism—including, as will be discussed below, by joining with the U.S. and South Africa in backing the anti-Soviet forces in Angola—while militarily and politically supporting "friendly" bourgeois rulers in Africa and elsewhere who brutally repress workers and the rural and urban poor.

China's role in Africa is *contradictory*, reflecting the contradictions besetting China itself as a bureaucratically ruled workers state in an imperialist-dominated world. To defend and extend the gains of the Chinese Revolution requires a proletarian political revolution to oust the CCP bureaucracy and replace it with a regime of workers democracy committed to the fight for world socialism.

China Is Not Capitalist

Forming the left flank of the imperialists' anti-China campaign are such "socialists" as the Committee for a Workers' International (CWI), led by Peter Taaffe, and the United Secretariat (USec) of the late Ernest Mandel. A 30 March 2008 article titled "China in Africa" by the CWI's German section, Socialist Alternative (SAV), denounced China as "just another player" in the "game" of exploiting African countries. The SAV declared that "China, like other imperialist countries, only seeks to exploit their resources and markets as effectively

as possible." In the USec's *International Viewpoint* online (January 2007), Jean Nanga, described as a "Congolese revolutionary Marxist," similarly condemned China's supposed "global ambition" as "motivated by capitalist interest."

That the CWI and USec have shamelessly enrolled in the anti-Communist crusade against China is no surprise. Prostituting themselves to bourgeois "democracy," the USec and the CWI's predecessor hailed all manner of imperialist-backed counterrevolutionaries that were arrayed against the former Soviet and East European deformed workers states, e.g., Polish Solidarność and the reactionary rabble on Boris Yeltsin's Moscow barricades in August 1991.

Directing its Stalinophobia against China, the USec has championed such pro-imperialist "dissidents" as Nobel "Peace" Prize recipient Liu Xiaobo, a fan of the U.S. wars in Vietnam, Iraq and Afghanistan (see "Hong Kong: Fake Trotskyists Hail Imperialist Running Dog Liu Xiaobo," WV No. 981, 27 May). Meanwhile, the CWI, as our comrades of the Spartacist League/Britain noted, has cheered anti-Communist riots in Tibet and openly defended "democratic" capitalist Taiwan, which has long been supported by U.S. and Japanese imperialism as a dagger aimed at the People's Republic of China (see "China Is Not Capitalist," *Workers Hammer* No. 202, Spring 2008). Peter Taaffe likes to pontificate that the "transition" toward full-blown capitalism "has not yet been fully completed" ("Halfway House," *Socialism Today*, July/August 2011). This is just a bit of cosmetic cover for the CWI's concrete and consistent support to the forces of capitalist counterrevolution.

The furor over China's role in Africa began to seriously mount in 2006 in response to the Darfur conflict in western Sudan, which resulted in mass slaughter and the driving of some two million people from their homes. The proximate cause of that conflict was the unleashing of *janjaweed* militias, based on nomadic Muslims, by the Khartoum government against guerrilla forces based on a farming population that was also Muslim. In the U.S., a campaign by Christian rightists, Zionists and a number of prominent liberals demanding imperialist intervention to "save Darfur" demonized China, which has invested heavily in Sudanese oil production and developed close ties with the al-Bashir regime, providing it with military hardware. Joining in with this cabal, the SAV's 2008 article wailed, "The Chinese regime, which imports 8 percent of its oil from Sudan, has shown during the recent conflict that it cares a lot about its profits and far less about the fate of the local population."

It should be noted that one of the factors prompting China to increasingly turn to Africa for petroleum was a rabidly anti-Communist campaign, led largely by the American labor bureaucracy, that succeeded in quashing the China National Offshore Oil Company's planned acquisition of U.S.-based Unocal in 2005. Earlier that year, the CWI's U.S. affiliate, also called Socialist Alternative, enlisted in the anti-China effort by cosigning a leaflet demanding that Harvard University divest from PetroChina, another Chinese state-owned enterprise, and Unocal.

Anti-China tirades by liberals and ostensible socialists might play well in London, Paris and other imperialist centers, where the bulk of the left pushes the lie that China is capitalist or is irreversibly on that road. But that message is not so eagerly embraced in Africa, where Chinese aid in building hospitals, schools and other infrastructure contrasts

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China...

(continued from page 7)

sharply with the legacy left by the real imperialists: extreme poverty, social backwardness, tribal and ethnic warfare. The carving up of Africa by the European powers at the 1884-85 Berlin Conference was a signal of the emergence of modern imperialism. As V.I. Lenin explained in *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism* (1916), the advanced industrial countries were increasingly compelled to export capital to the more backward countries in the search for raw materials and cheap labor. The resulting interimperialist competition led to two world wars and countless colonial adventures, at the cost of untold death and destruction.

The fundamentally different purpose of China's investments in Africa can be seen in the value of the commodities they generate. All commodities—from mined products to factory-produced goods—embody both use value (as desirable objects of consumption) and exchange value (broadly reflected in market prices). Under capitalism, the owners of industrial plants and other means of production amass profit by hiring labor to produce commodities, with the purpose of increasing exchange value. China's overseas investments, which are financed by several of the mainland's state banks, are driven not by the profit motive but by the need for raw materials for its collectivized industries at home—i.e., to extract use value.

U.S. State Department official Princeton Lyman, who is decidedly not a Marxist, acknowledged as much in a 2005 presentation to the Congressional U.S.-China Commission, stating:

"China utilizes a variety of instruments to advance its interest in ways that western nations can only envy. Most of China's investments are through state-owned companies, whose individual investments do not have to be profitable if they serve overall Chinese objectives. Thus the representative of China's state-owned construction company in Ethiopia could reveal that he was instructed by Beijing to bid low on various tenders, without regard for profit. China's long term objective in Ethiopia is in access to future natural resource investments, not in construction business profits."

The mere fact that China engages in world trade does not make it capitalist or imperialist. It is because Chinese investment is *not* driven by the capitalist profit motive that its effects are so radically different from those produced by imperialist exploitation of Third World countries. Martyn

Davies, director of the China Africa Network at South Africa's University of Pretoria, lauds the Chinese as "the biggest builders of infrastructure" in Africa ("The Next Empire?" *Atlantic*, May 2010), a sentiment echoed by American academic Deborah Brautigam in her overwhelmingly favorable 2009 book on China's role in Africa, *The Dragon's Gift* (Oxford University Press).

Pressures of the World Market

China's need to import raw materials became acute around a decade ago when, due to its soaring economic growth, the mainland could no longer provide the bulk of oil and metallic minerals to meet industrial needs. By virtue of its "going global" policy, China by 2009 was importing 52 percent of its oil and 69 percent of its iron ore.

China's situation contrasts with that of the Soviet workers state, which issued out of the 1917 October Revolution led by the Bolshevik Party. After the failure of proletarian revolutions in more advanced European countries, especially Germany, a conservative bureaucratic caste led by J.V. Stalin usurped political power beginning in 1923-24. Severely marked by the backwardness inherited from tsarism and the devastating effects of imperialist war and civil war, the Soviet Union possessed abundant iron ore, oil, timber and other raw materials. Stalin & Co. used that fact as an argument for the reactionary-utopian notion that socialism could be achieved in Soviet Russia alone. This threw overboard the basic Marxist understanding that achieving socialism—a society of material abundance—requires workers rule internationally, particularly in the industrially developed countries.

Based on its planned economy, the Soviet Union underwent phenomenal growth in the 1930s while the rest of the world was mired in the Great Depression. But through its own resources and efforts, the USSR could not reach, much less surpass, the technological level and labor productivity of the advanced capitalist countries. Decades of imperialist military and economic pressure, combined with bureaucratic mismanagement and Stalinist sellouts of revolutionary opportunities internationally, fatally weakened the Soviet workers state, which was destroyed by capitalist counterrevolution in 1991-92.

Following this catastrophe, the CCP leadership conducted an internal study aimed at figuring out how to avoid a similar fate while hewing to its nationalist Stalinist program of "socialism with Chinese characteristics." One of the regime's conclusions was that the Soviet Union had spent too much of its resources trying to compete with the imperialists militarily and in other ways. China, it was determined, would instead expand and deepen its ties to the world capitalist market. Beijing is now such a "responsible" partner in the world market that the Chief Economist at the World Bank, one of the main institutions enforcing imperialist dictates, is Justin Yifu Lin, one of China's leading economists!

In "going global," Beijing has increasingly backed military intervention in the Third World by the United Nations, a den of imperialist thieves and their victims. This represents a turn from the policy the CCP regime adopted when China was admitted to the UN 40 years ago. As Stefan Stähle noted in "China's Shifting Attitude Towards United Nations Peacekeeping Operations" in the academic journal *China Quarterly* (September 2008):

"At first, China completely rejected the idea of UN peacekeeping. Beijing regarded all UN interventions as being manipulated

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by the superpowers, not least because China had been the target of the first US-led enforcement action authorized by the United Nations in 1951 [*sic*, should be 1950] during the Korean War.... Since 1981, however, when China began to open up to the world, Chinese diplomats have voted in favour of all those missions which carried out traditional peacekeeping tasks or managed transitions.”

In plain English, “peacekeeping tasks” translate to bloody repression and the imposition of imperialist diktat. China has criminally lent its own military and police forces to such “peacekeeping,” from Haiti to Sudan. As Chris Alden noted in *China in Africa* (Zed Books, 2007), “The majority of Chinese peacekeepers, in fact, are based in Africa, making China the largest contributor of all the permanent member states of the UN Security Council to peacekeeping operations.” As proletarian internationalists, we demand that China end its participation in UN military missions.

As China’s economy continues to grow while the imperialist countries are mired in a seemingly endless depression—the latest demonstration of the crisis-ridden nature of the system of production for profit—it might seem that Beijing has indeed found a way around the pressures that ultimately led to the collapse of the Soviet Union. But such an idea is based on fallacious belief in the stability of the world capitalist order and the benevolence of China’s imperialist trading partners, which dominate the world market.

In China itself, the country’s stunning economic growth serves to *exacerbate* class and social tensions. Particularly due to “market reforms,” an enormous divide has been created between corrupt government officials, capitalist entrepreneurs and privileged petty-bourgeois on one side and the hundreds of millions of proletarians—in both state-owned and private enterprises—and poor peasants on the other. A wave of strikes last year in auto plants and other private enterprises was but one component in the explosion of what the CCP regime calls “mass incidents”—work stoppages, assemblies of petitioners, protests against corruption, etc. The number of such incidents reached 180,000 in 2010, doubling since 2006.

Sooner or later, the Stalinist regime will bring China to the brink, posing the threat of capitalist counterrevolution. At the same time, the antagonism between the bureaucracy and China’s toiling masses is preparing the ground for a proletarian political revolution to oust the parasitic Stalinist regime. The Chinese proletariat needs the leadership of a Leninist-Trotskyist party that combats the apostles of “democratic” counterrevolution, not least those who parade this program in “socialist” and even “Trotskyist” garb, and breaks the working class from Stalinist nationalism. Guided by such a leadership, a China of workers and peasants councils would promote proletarian revolution internationally. Under workers rule, the industrial and technological capacity in Japan, the U.S. and West Europe would be harnessed for the all-around development of China as part of a world socialist order.

“Non-Interference”: Support to Bourgeois Rule

In responding to the charge of Chinese “neocolonialism” in Africa, many academics and government spokesmen in China point to Beijing’s policy of “non-interference” in other countries’ internal affairs. Writing in an academic journal, Liu Naiya enthused over China’s aid to former colonial countries in Africa as “a ‘gift’ to African nationalism from a socialist country. In other words, it is a rational political



Bettmann

British colonial forces terrorize Kenyan villagers in 1953 in suppression of Mau Mau rebellion.

investment—a great demonstration of the brotherly friendship of international communism”. (“Mutual Benefit: The Essence of Sino-African Relations—A Response to the Charge of ‘China’s Neocolonialism in Africa’,” *Xiya Feizhou* [West Asia and Africa], August 2006).

CCP spokesmen like to point to the aid and diplomatic support that China early on gave to some of the movements in Africa that fought for independence from colonial rule. And there is no doubt that Chinese aid and investment have spurred development in many African countries. But this is a far cry from socialist internationalism. China’s business agreements come with the “political condition” that Beijing do nothing to upset its bourgeois trading partners. Thus the Chinese Stalinists help *prop up* the capitalist order that keeps the masses of African workers and peasants in abject poverty. The CCP’s willingness to shore up reactionary bourgeois regimes was demonstrated as early as the 1954 Asian-African Solidarity Conference in Bandung, Indonesia, where Zhou Enlai propounded the “Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence,” including a pledge to refrain from pressuring other countries to change their economic systems. The “anti-imperialist” rationale for this class-collaborationist program was exposed as threadbare by the Mao regime’s simultaneous policy of peaceful coexistence with Japan, the imperialist powerhouse of Asia.

A common reference in arguments supporting Beijing’s policies is the building of the Tanzania-Zambia railway by Mao’s China in the early-mid 1970s. This was a significant development that entailed an enormous outlay of self-sacrificing labor by Chinese workers. But the CCP simultaneously gave political support to Tanzania’s Nyerere regime, which repressed basic trade-union struggles by impoverished workers.

In this, the Chinese Stalinists showed their political kinship with the Kremlin bureaucracy. Soviet aid was critical in the construction of the Aswan Dam in Egypt, which was completed in 1970. Along with this aid came Soviet military advisers, and more. In fact, Moscow gave Egypt’s bourgeois bonapartist Nasser regime more advanced military hardware than it gave to North Vietnam in its heroic fight against U.S. imperialism! Meanwhile, the Soviet-aligned Sudanese Communist Party subordinated itself to the bourgeois-nationalist

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Magnum



Bohemia

Left: Mao welcomes Nixon to Beijing in 1972 as China seals anti-Soviet alliance with U.S. imperialism. Right: Chinese advisers with Angolan FNLA leader Holden Roberto (third from left), who joined with UNITA in 1975 in CIA-funded war against Soviet-backed MPLA.

China...

(continued from page 9)

strongman Nimeiry, betraying a revolutionary opportunity that ended in a massacre of Communists in the early 1970s. Following the same class-collaborationist program, the South African Communist Party (SACP) has for over 80 years submerged itself in an alliance with the African National Congress (ANC), today helping to enforce the dictates of neo-apartheid capitalism as part of the ANC-led bourgeois government.

Revolutionary Marxists recognize that a *workers state* might be compelled to strike trade deals and diplomatic agreements with capitalist states. But this must not be confused with the task of the *communist party* to lead the struggle for proletarian revolution. In Lenin's time, the Soviet workers state signed the 1922 Rapallo treaty with capitalist Germany, an agreement that included military cooperation. Simultaneously, the Bolsheviks were the leading force in the Communist International, seeking to forge Communist parties that could successfully lead the workers, not least in Germany, to the proletarian seizure of power.

A revolutionary regime would also seek to use overseas assets as a weapon of proletarian-internationalist strategy. Leon Trotsky addressed this in regard to the Chinese Eastern Railroad, which had been built by tsarist Russia to further the plunder of China but remained under Soviet ownership following the October Revolution. In 1929, two years after slaughtering tens of thousands of Chinese Communists and other militants, Chiang Kai-shek's regime provoked a military conflict with the Soviet Union, then under the Stalinist bureaucracy, over control of the railroad. In "Defense of the Soviet Republic and the Opposition" (September 1929), Trotsky fought against those who treated Soviet policy in this regard as "imperialist." He pointed out: "We regard the Chinese Eastern Railroad as one of the weapons of the world revolution, more specifically, of the Russian and Chinese revolutions.... So long as we have the possibility and the power, we shall protect it from imperialism, in preparation for handing it over to the victorious Chinese revolution."

Trotsky continued that "the character of this type of socialist enterprise" and its administration and working conditions "would have to be such as to raise the economy and culture

of the backward countries with the aid of the capital, technology, and experience of the richer proletarian states to the mutual benefit of both sides." Projecting how a proletarian dictatorship in Britain would handle the former imperialist rulers' concessions in India, he wrote:

"The workers' state will be bound to transform them not only into vehicles of India's economic upbuilding but also of her future socialist reconstruction. Naturally, this policy, equally indispensable for consolidating socialist England, could be carried through only shoulder to shoulder with the vanguard of the Indian proletariat and it would have to offer obvious advantages to the Indian peasants."

CCP's Anti-Soviet Treachery

The perspective outlined by Trotsky is diametrically opposed to the nationalist, *anti-revolutionary* program of the Chinese Stalinists. This was glaringly seen in the criminal alliance Mao's regime forged with U.S. imperialism against the Soviet Union, castigated and slandered by Maoists as "social-imperialist" and the "main enemy" of the world's peoples.

One of the fruits of this betrayal was the devastation of Angola from decades of war. After winning independence from Portugal in 1975, the country was thrown into a civil war between three nationalist guerrilla forces: the MPLA, the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) and the National Front for the Liberation of Angola (FNLA). Initially, as Marxists we gave no support to any of the contending sides, all of which were petty-bourgeois nationalist movements aspiring to congeal a bourgeois regime. However, that situation soon changed.

Aided by the Soviet Union, the MPLA gained control of most key areas, including the capital Luanda, and declared Angola a "people's republic." In response, the U.S. forced the unification of UNITA and the FNLA and supplied them with arms, while South Africa and Portugal added hundreds of their own troops to the effort to overthrow the MPLA. The civil war was thus transformed into a proxy war between U.S. imperialism and the Soviet degenerated workers state. Marxists had a clear side in this conflict: for the military victory of the MPLA. Mao's China, however, actively *supported the CIA-funded FNLA/UNITA*, even sending military instructors to train the anti-Communist cutthroats. Testifying

to China's role, U.S. officials noted that Washington was able to cut back "aid to the anti-communist movements, because we were satisfied to let the Chinese do the work in the field" (quoted in *Le Monde*, 5 December 1975). So much for "non-interference"!

As South African troops led a blitzkrieg toward Luanda, China's official *Peking Review* (21 November 1975) issued a high-level policy statement condemning the "expansion and crude interference of the Soviet Union," refusing to even mention the invasion by the apartheid armed forces! Soviet aid, combined with later intervention by heroic Cuban troops, eventually turned the tide and drove back the imperialist proxies and their South African advance guard. But the civil war dragged on. Bridges were destroyed by bombs, rural roads and fields were planted with land mines, and urban infrastructure all but collapsed, enormously compounding the country's pre-existing deep backwardness.

The Angolan masses paid in blood for the treachery of the Chinese Stalinists, who have been able subsequently to take advantage of the destitution of Angola and other countries in sub-Saharan Africa to which they themselves contributed. More fundamentally, with its material aid to reactionary, imperialist-backed anti-Soviet forces from Southern Africa to Afghanistan in the 1970s-80s, the CCP contributed to the destruction of the USSR itself, a catastrophic defeat for workers and the oppressed the world over, including in China.

For Proletarian Internationalism!

Directed by the Beijing bureaucracy's narrow national interests, overseas state investment often pits Chinese firms and managers against the workers they employ. Along with the Chinese-financed mines, oil facilities and construction projects that have sprung up throughout Africa has come evidence of workers abused through discriminatory hiring practices, low wages and outright union-busting. One study cited by Deborah Brautigam in *The Dragon's Gift* found that Chinese construction firms in Namibia violated minimum wage laws and "affirmative action" training requirements while also failing to pay social security and other benefits. Chinese workers in Africa have waged their own battles against mistreatment. According to Brautigam, when some 200 Chinese construction workers in Equatorial Guinea went on strike in March 2008, a clash with local security forces resulted in two

workers being killed.

A fact virtually ignored by both the bourgeois and the "left" press is that many of the worst attacks on African workers are carried out by private Chinese entrepreneurs who, with Beijing's approval, have attached themselves like leeches to China's investment program. In 2010, two Chinese supervisors at the Collum Coal Mine in Zambia shot 13 miners during a wage protest. The following year, Zambian authorities decided not to press charges, touching off widespread anger among Zambians. The mine, which the press described as "Chinese-owned," was not a state-owned entity but the property of a private investor, operated by his four younger brothers.

Marxists support workers fighting for union rights and decent wages and benefits, including their struggles against Chinese management. At the same time, it is necessary to combat nationalist demagogues and trade-union misleaders who seize on the abuses of workers to jump onto the imperialists' anti-China bandwagon. For example, the COSATU union federation in South Africa, part of the Tripartite Alliance with the ANC and SACP, has long vituperated against Chinese clothing imports driving out local manufacturers.

Such protectionism promotes the lie that the (overwhelmingly black) South African proletariat has a common "national interest" with the (overwhelmingly white) South African capitalist class, revealing the bankruptcy of the COSATU bureaucrats' claims to stand for international working-class solidarity. It also feeds the drive for counter-revolution in China, strengthening the hand of the imperialists whose military and economic might pose formidable obstacles to proletarian revolution in South Africa and elsewhere. Defense of China and the other deformed workers states—Cuba, North Korea, Vietnam and Laos—is of vital importance in the fight for a socialist future in Africa, for which the combative and strategically concentrated South African working class holds the key. You can't win new gains if you can't defend old ones!

Marxists must also combat the chauvinism that permeates the Chinese state bureaucracy and its representatives overseas. With budgets and deadlines determined by Beijing, Chinese companies often employ workers from China rather than hire locally. Defending such practices, the general manager of the state-owned China National Overseas Engineering Corporation declared: "Chinese people can stand very hard work. This is a cultural difference. Chinese people work until they finish and then rest." Zambian workers, he complained, were "like the British": "They have tea breaks and a lot of days off. For our construction company that means it costs a lot more" (quoted in Chris Alden, *China in Africa*). Such comments speak volumes about the contempt that Chinese bureaucrats hold toward both African and Chinese workers.

Inheriting the overseas operations of Chinese state enterprises, a government of workers and peasants councils in China would make special efforts to hire and train local workers, with union rights and with pay and benefits above local scale. Such a regime would also make short shrift of the bourgeois elements who have arisen in China as a result of "market reforms" and have found a place in Africa as well. Above all, it would follow the lead of the early Soviet workers state in promoting the victory of workers rule throughout the planet. It is to carry out the task of forging the Leninist vanguard parties necessary to lead that struggle that the ICL fights to reforge the Fourth International, world party of socialist revolution. ■

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Workers...

(continued from page 1)

At the core of populist protest is the petty bourgeoisie, a heterogeneous and highly stratified social layer comprised of, among others, students, professionals and small businessmen. Lacking social power and its own class perspective, the petty bourgeoisie is incapable of offering an alternative to capitalism. In the end, this layer has but two choices: it can either swing to the side of the proletariat or the bourgeoisie.

A case in point is *Adbusters*, the Vancouver-based magazine that issued the original call for a Wall Street occupation. This “anti-corporate” outfit has received funds from the Tides Foundation, a clearinghouse for the Ford and Gates big-business foundations. But *Adbusters* doesn’t just take money from fat cats; it also runs its own “grass-roots capitalism”—the production of sneakers, which they hail as “ethical.” Ask the workers in Pakistan who produce these “no logo” kicks for the pitiful local minimum wage if it feels more humane to slave over hemp rather than nylon.

Reflecting the widespread view that cops are “part of the 99 percent,” Toronto Occupy organizers thanked the police for their “restraint” and even praised them as protesters were being turfed out of St. James Park on November 23. The police are neither workers nor potential allies. They are the armed fist of the state, which defends the property and profits of the capitalist ruling class. Recall the mass arrests and barbaric police violence against the Toronto G20 protesters in June 2010. The vast majority of the 1,100 protesters who were rounded up ended up facing no charges. However, six activists originally hit with bogus conspiracy charges now face jail time for counseling to commit mischief and/or obstruction. These people have committed no crime and should not spend a day in jail!

The Social Power of the Working Class

At every level of government, from Harper and the Tories down to city halls across the country, the rulers are waging a one-sided war on the workers. A particular target of the Occupy Toronto protests was the right-wing regime of mayor Rob Ford, which has been slashing services and attacking the city unions. Trade unionists joined the marches, and the St. James Park encampment received considerable aid from the union movement, including the Ontario Federation of Labour. Yet the Occupy protesters generally regard the working class as just one more victim of capitalist austerity within the “99 percent.”

The populist notion that everyone from workers to students, yuppies and shopkeepers (or even cops) has common interests also serves the trade-union misleaders, who are desperate to avoid even a hint of class struggle. This is in line with the social-democratic New Democratic Party, which more and more presents itself as the party of “middle-class families.” As for the pseudo-socialist left, the International Socialists (I.S.) and the Fightback group pandered to the “99 percent” populism with their own pale pink reformist politics. The I.S. dubbed Occupy a “new anti-capitalist movement” which can “become a pole of attraction for resistance” (*Socialist Worker*, October 2011). Fightback says the answer



Reuters

Police are armed fist of capitalist state: Toronto riot cops attack anti-G20 protesters, June 2010.

is to put the NDP in power “on a socialist program.” Such “fight the right” opportunism is a complete dead end for workers and radical youth.

Occupy Toronto organizers were largely silent on the crimes of Canadian imperialism abroad, such as the recent NATO assault on Libya. They did, however, join a reactionary “free Tibet” demonstration outside the Chinese Consulate on November 4. The drive for a “free Tibet” amounts to a political lever for the restoration of capitalism to China, including Tibet, and a return to imperialist enslavement. This “free Tibet” protest was in perfect keeping with luminaries of the Occupy protests like home-grown liberal ideologue Naomi Klein and pseudo-Marxist academic Slavoj Žižek, whose rants against China as an affront to “democracy” are an ideological service to Wall Street and Bay Street.

The 1949 Chinese Revolution overthrew capitalist rule, liberating the country from imperialist subjugation and leading to massive advances for workers, peasants and deeply oppressed women. However, the peasant-based revolution was deformed from its inception, putting into power a bureaucratic nationalist regime akin to that of the Soviet Union after its degeneration under Stalin.

Today, despite major inroads by both foreign and indigenous capitalists, the core elements of China’s economy remain collectivized. State ownership of the banking system has promoted massive economic growth in China, mainly through investment in infrastructure. This stands in stark contrast to the profit-driven world’s dominant capitalist economies, which have been mired in crisis. As Trotskyists, we stand for the unconditional military defense of China against imperialism and internal counterrevolution. At the same time, we fight for proletarian political revolution to replace the parasitic Stalinist bureaucracy with a regime of workers and peasants soviets (councils) committed to the fight for world socialist revolution.

As for Žižek, no one should be fooled by his “revolutionary” verbiage, which he spouts when it serves his “bad boy” image in academia. The core of his politics was evident when he hailed Obama’s 2008 election in the U.S. as “a sign of hope in our otherwise dark times.” Žižek was an active participant in the capitalist counterrevolution that devastated Yugoslavia, a deformed workers state, in the early 1990s—a

crime against the international working class.

The ruling class has two primary ways of dealing with protest—state repression and political co-optation. Describing how the Occupy movement in the U.S. receives funding and support from key Democratic Party outfits, Patrick Henningsen commented in the London *Guardian* (15 November): “When the dust settles and it’s all said and done, millions of Occupy participants may very well be given a sober lesson under the heading of ‘controlled opposition.’ In the end, the Occupy movement could easily end up doing the bidding of the very elite globalist powers that they were demonstrating against to begin with.”

Against those who purvey illusions in capitalist “reform,” we Marxists have intervened in the Occupy protests with our revolutionary program: the only road to eliminating economic scarcity is the fight for new socialist revolutions. Mobilizing the power of the working class independent of the parties of capital is crucial to every struggle against imperialism, exploitation and the multiple forms of oppression under capitalism. We print below in abridged and edited form a presentation entitled “Karl Marx Was Right: The World Economic Crisis—Profits Rise, Millions Starve.” The talk was given by Tynan Maddalena, editor of *SC’s Young Spartacus* pages, to a September 24 Trotskyist League/*Spartacus Youth Club* day school in Toronto.

As stock markets crash and the world economy stands on the precipice of a second “Great Recession,” consider that the collapse of 2008-09, the worst global economic crisis since the 1930s, added 130 million people to the ranks of the chronically malnourished and hungry. That brings the total number to over one billion. In so many words, one-seventh of the human race is starving. One-seventh and counting.

Across the European Union, 23 million workers are out of work. In Spain, which was recently rocked by general strikes and enormous protest movements, youth unemployment is over 44 percent. In Greece, hundreds of thousands of jobs are gone, homelessness is through the roof, and many people, especially pensioners, line up at soup kitchens in order to survive.

Every so-called bailout for every financial crisis across the eurozone—from Greece to Ireland to Portugal—brings with it unrelenting attacks on the living standards of the masses, who seethe with discontent. The IMF, the European Central Bank, the governments of Germany, France and the United States all chauvinistically chastize the peoples of these countries in crisis as living beyond their means or lazy. In reality, the financial powers are only bailing out themselves—their own failed banking systems—on the backs of workers and the poor.

Here in North America, we hear a lot of talk about an economic recovery. It is a jobless recovery, a wageless recovery, a fragile recovery, a “still-nascent” recovery. At the end of July, the American government revised its statistics: the 2008 recession was deeper than reported, and the “recovery” was even more dubious than reported. As for the Canadian economy, we recently learned that it shrank by 0.4 percent in the second quarter of this year. Scotiabank released a report two weeks ago forecasting another drop in the third quarter which could be as great as 2.5 percent. “Canada could be among the first of the world’s advanced economies to fall into a technical recession,” warned the CBC. That’s rich. We’ve had a jobless,



AFP/Getty Images

Athens: May 2010 protest near Greek parliament building against sweeping austerity measures.

wageless, fragile, still-nascent recovery, but don’t worry, the coming recession is going to be only a “technical” one!

In human terms, one in six Americans is now unemployed, with the average time out of work close to ten months. Forty-five million people are on food stamps, and that has increased more than 30 percent during the two years of this specious recovery. Since the housing bubble burst in the U.S., there have been over seven million home foreclosures. Enforcing them is a brutal act of state repression: the police come to a home, haul the furniture and other possessions onto the street and lock the family out. The bourgeois media would have you believe that the worst was over by 2008. The truth is that 932,000 of those foreclosures came in the first quarter of 2010, and that was an increase of 16 percent over the previous year. And under racist American capitalism, blacks and Latinos, one-third of whose households have no net worth, always suffer disproportionately. In some largely black and Latino neighbourhoods of South Chicago, as well as across the Detroit metropolitan area, one of every 20 households was in foreclosure.

In Canada, well over a quarter million manufacturing jobs have been lost since 2002. This underscores the decades-long deindustrialization of North America, represented in the rusted wreckage of steel mills and the shells of auto plants. As Karl Marx put it: “Thus the forest of uplifted arms demanding work becomes ever thicker, while the arms themselves become ever thinner.”

At the same time, corporate profits have reached record levels. Ed Clark, chief executive officer of the Toronto-Dominion Bank, whose profits recently rose to a staggering \$1.45 billion, recently joined billionaire capitalist parasites Warren Buffett and George Soros in advocating higher taxes for the rich. Their only concern, of course, is to better preserve the capitalist system, including by giving it a facelift—though that did not prevent right-wing demagogues from labeling Buffett and Soros “socialists.” As they say, truth is stranger than fiction.

It should come as no surprise that the Conservatives, now with a majority government, are moving rapidly against the unions. The government ended a lockout by Canada Post this

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Workers...

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spring by legislating wage levels that were even lower than the employer's final offer. Recently, two different unions at Air Canada were threatened with strikebreaking legislation.

The bailouts of the banks—in some cases to the tune of trillions of dollars—were enacted uniformly by every government in the imperialist West and Japan at the expense of the working class. These measures point to an elementary truth of Marxism-Leninism: that the executive of the modern state is but a committee for deciding the common affairs of the ruling class as a whole. Or look at Export Development Canada's agreement to lend \$1 billion to the Vale mining conglomerate. This came after a year-long strike at Vale's Sudbury nickel mines, during which the company claimed that funds simply weren't available to meet the union's modest demands.

Various reformists and even self-professed Marxists claim that the way forward is to look for "concrete" solutions "in the here and now," i.e., liberal palliatives. The problem is that any reform wrested from the capitalists today will only be taken away tomorrow—and today the rulers aren't even offering the pretense of reform. The reformists especially drag out their cant about "real world" solutions when they want to express disdain for the theory and program of revolutionary Marxism, which they dismiss as "abstract."

In fact, the reformists' perspective is *counterposed* to the only road that can end the hunger, poverty and social degradation that are intrinsic to capitalism. Vladimir Lenin, who along with Leon Trotsky led the October Revolution of 1917, warned: "Champions of reforms and improvements will always be fooled by the defenders of the old order until they realise that every old institution, however barbarous and rotten it may appear to be, is kept going by the forces of certain ruling classes" ("The Three Sources and Three Component Parts of Marxism," 1913). Lenin stressed that "there is *only one* way of smashing the resistance of those classes, and that is to find, in the very society which surrounds us, the forces which can—and, owing to their social position, *must*—constitute the power capable of sweeping away the old and creating the new, and to enlighten and organise those forces for the struggle." As scientific socialists, we fight for workers revolution to establish an international, centrally-planned economy based on satisfying human want.

Marxist Theory and the Class Struggle

Lenin called Marxist theory the "granite foundation" of the Bolshevik Party. Without revolutionary theory, he explained, there can be no revolutionary movement. The core of Marxism is the labour theory of value, elaborated by Marx in the first volume of *Capital*. Not a breeze to read. But when it comes to the theory that all value in a capitalist economy derives solely

from, or is indeed synonymous with, labour, whether or not someone wants to learn hinges to a great extent on their sympathies for the working class. It was Marx's commitment to the modern industrial proletariat that allowed him to unlock the secret of value that underlies commodity circulation. As we Spartacists say, program generates theory.

Capitalist production developed from commodity circulation. People have always had to come together to produce for their needs. However, as the techniques of production developed and diversified, people no longer produced goods solely for their own groups, but for trade with others through the medium of exchange. Thus Marx called commodities a relationship between people expressed as a relationship between things.

Obviously, there would be no need for someone to trade their product for something they already had. In order to be exchanged, two commodities must have different uses to satisfy different wants. At the same time, they must on some level be equivalent: they must possess equal value, otherwise there would be no basis for each person to voluntarily give up their product for someone else's. The great discovery of Karl Marx was that the basis for this equivalence is that all commodities are the product of labour, labour in the most abstract and general sense.

Go to an economics lecture at a university and you may learn that people exchange things solely because they have different uses. But why not just get it yourself? The answer is that it has to be produced: it takes work to acquire it. A slightly more sophisticated version of the same bourgeois argument is that you can't get it yourself because it is scarce. That reflects a certain truth. However, it is a rigid, static view of the truth that is conditioned by the values of the bourgeoisie, which is an idle class. Anyone who works readily understands that all commodities are scarce until they are brought into existence by labour.

It has never been the case that people have produced commodities on a level playing field. Capitalism did not begin with a clean slate, but was built up on the previously-existing systems of feudalism and slavery. Large sections of the ruling classes of these societies capitalized their wealth, whereas the slaves remained dispossessed and the peasants were often brutally robbed of what little they had. Through market competition, the larger, more efficient producers drove the smaller, weaker ones out of business, bought out their capital and conquered their share of the market. Those who were amassing the wealth became capitalists—the bourgeoisie. Those who had nothing left to sell but their own sweat and blood were the workers—the proletariat.

It's often said that workers sell their labour. In fact, they are not permitted to do even that. The prerequisites for labour in an industrial society—machines and factories, the core of which can be scientifically termed the means of production—belong to the capitalist. The worker cannot work without first receiving permission from the capitalist. What the worker actually sells is therefore not his labour, but rather his potential to labour. That is what Marxists call *labour power*.

Labour power is bought, sold and consumed. It is a commodity, but there is something peculiar about it. The price of any commodity is based roughly on its value, or the amount of labour necessary for its reproduction. What is the value of labour power? The cost of reproducing the ability of the worker to perform his labour. That consists of food, shelter, clothing, some means of relaxation and of acquiring the skills necessary for doing the job. And finally, enough to support a family so that the working class can continue to exist from

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one generation to the next.

Taken together, the labour required for these measures constitutes the value of labour power. The gist of capitalist exploitation is that the proletariat generates far more value than is required for the production and reproduction of its labour power. In other words, the peculiarity of the commodity of labour power, its unique attribute, is that it is a source of value. The difference between the total value the worker adds to the product and the value of labour power is called *surplus value*. Exactly how much of the total value goes to the capitalist and how much goes back to the labourer? This is determined by living factors, by a contest of forces—in other words, by the class struggle.

Take Freeport-McMoRan Copper & Gold. Their operation in Indonesia faced a strike last July. Reuters news agency, which is anything but Marxist, made the following calculation: the workers' wages were \$1.50 an hour, the price of gold, \$1,500 an ounce; therefore, the gold output lost during the eight-day strike could have covered three times the workers' annual wages.

To begin to determine the rate of exploitation of these miners—otherwise known as the rate of surplus value—you would need to know the value of the machinery and fuel used up during production and subtract it from the total product. Otherwise, you could not verify the total amount of value the workers add to the product through their labour. However, the fact stands that these gold mines yield 137 times the workers' annual wages each year, and Indonesian mines are not famous for being high-tech. Since based on our present knowledge we are confined to being somewhat less than scientific, let's just say that someone is being taken advantage of here, and it's not the capitalist.

There can be no fair division of the social product between the worker and the capitalist. As Trotsky explained: "The class struggle is nothing else than the struggle for surplus-product. He who owns surplus-product is master of the situation—owns wealth, owns the state, has the key to the church, to the courts, to the sciences and to the arts" ("Marxism in Our Time," 1939). There can be no such thing as equality, fairness, freedom or democracy between the slaves and the slave masters.

Exploitation and Capitalist Crisis

So what are social classes? Lenin defined them as "large groups of people differing from each other by the place they occupy in a historically determined system of social production, by their relation (in most cases fixed and formulated in law) to the means of production, by their role in the social organisation of labour, and, consequently"—only consequently—"by the dimensions of the share of social wealth of which they dispose and the mode of acquiring it" ("A Great Beginning," 1919).

Social class does not derive from a state of mind, nor is it even fundamentally a question of the rich and the poor. For example, a skilled unionized worker in a modern factory in an imperialist country may under exceptional cases make over \$100,000 per year. Yet because labour productivity is so high, his or her rate of exploitation is likely much higher than that of far more oppressed and impoverished labourers in a semicolonial country. Moreover, a unionized worker in the trades may make as much as or more than a yuppie supervisor in an office. Nevertheless, the worker still has an economic interest in overthrowing his capitalist exploiter, while



Reuters

October 10: Workers strike against mining giant Freeport-McMoRan in West Papua, Indonesia. On same day, riot cops attacked strikers, killing one.

the supervisor is an accessory to capitalist production and thus bound to it materially and, you could say, spiritually.

Just about anyone can criticize capitalism from the standpoint of reason or morality. Yet Marx criticized capitalism from the standpoint of *maximizing labour productivity*, which is generally promoted by capitalism's ideological defenders as its strong point. Marx proved that capitalist production increasingly puts the brakes on historical development, at the same time as it creates its own gravedigger, the proletariat.

Day in and day out, the proletariat continues to produce. It cannot use its own labour to get ahead as a class, because it is only paid what is necessary to allow it to continue producing. Everything necessary to get ahead goes to the capitalists. As Marx put it: "If the silk worm were to spin in order to continue its existence as a caterpillar, it would be a complete wage-worker."

As capitalism develops, the bourgeoisie amasses more and more capital. Technology advances. Machinery becomes more and more sophisticated and extensive and labour productivity rises. The capitalist devotes an increasingly large ratio of his wealth toward acquiring machinery, and a correspondingly declining ratio toward employing workers. In Marx's words, the organic composition of capital increases. The effect of this is contradictory. On one hand, the rate of exploitation increases. On the other hand, the rate of profit decreases. That's the dilemma the capitalist faces. Even if he ratchets up the rate of exploitation, the rate of profit still tends to go down. That is why the capitalist has no future. Let's take a closer look.

Say you've got your engineering degree and you're looking for a job in your field. Off you go to the Celestica factory at Don Mills and Eglinton to pave the information superhighway, one transistor at a time, for \$11.75 an hour on six-month contracts with no benefits. (And your boss can call you a few hours before your shift starts to tell you to stay home without pay.)

So there you are with your coworkers paving the information superhighway with these transistors; array enough together in the right way and you get a flip-flop, an edifice of the binary logic used on a grand scale in computers. It's nowhere near as glamorous as it sounds in *Wired* magazine or those trendy post-Marxist academic seminars. Away you

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Workers...

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work. Eventually, the company replaces the soldering irons that each of you uses with a wave solder machine. A chunk of your coworkers gets laid off. You're producing way more circuit boards than before, only your wage is the same. Since most of your friends were laid off, the company's spending on wages has gone way down. The rate of exploitation overall has increased astronomically. Good times for the capitalist, right? Not so fast.

At first, the company will have an advantage over its competitors. Soon, however, that new machinery will become the standard across the industry. Even though the rate of exploitation has gone up, the rate of profit will go down. It all comes back to labour being the sole source of value. One capitalist can sell another capitalist a machine, but that exchange does not increase the total amount of value in the economy. The value just changes hands. It's only once the capitalist purchases labour power, and consumes it by having the worker do his job, that any new value is added to the economy. The lower the ratio of the capitalist's wealth that is spent on wage labour, the lower is the ratio of surplus value to his total expenses. More and more of his wealth gets tied up in replacing and maintaining machinery—what Marx evocatively termed "dead labour."

As I said, the rate of exploitation is going up, but the rate of profit is going down. The capitalist does not resign himself to that fate peacefully, however. He panics and slashes wages like a madman, doing whatever he can to transfer the burden of his decaying system onto the backs of the people he exploits. When that capitalist can no longer produce at a competitive rate of profit, he simply ceases to produce. He throws his workers onto the street. Like Malcolm X said of the slave master, he worked them like dogs and dropped them in the mud. Production is in chaos. The empty factories rust.

Once the slave escapes his master, he is no longer a slave; once the serf gets his plot of land, he is no longer a serf. But even after the proletarian punches his time card for the final time and quits (or loses) his job, he remains a proletarian. The modern slave, the wage slave, is slave to the entire capi-

talist class. The proletariat cannot escape this exploiting class but must overthrow it in its entirety, worldwide, and in so doing liberate everyone who is oppressed by capitalism.

For a Revolutionary Workers Party!

What has been placed on the agenda is proletarian revolution, even if this seems far off today. We look above all to the legacy of the Russian Revolution. As Trotsky noted about the early years of the Soviet Union:

"Socialism has demonstrated its right to victory, not on the pages of *Das Kapital*, but in an industrial arena comprising a sixth part of the earth's surface—not in the language of dialectics, but in the language of steel, cement and electricity. Even if the Soviet Union, as a result of internal difficulties, external blows and the mistakes of its leadership, were to collapse—which we firmly hope will not happen—there would remain as an earnest of the future this indestructible fact, that thanks solely to a proletarian revolution a backward country has achieved in less than ten years successes unexampled in history."

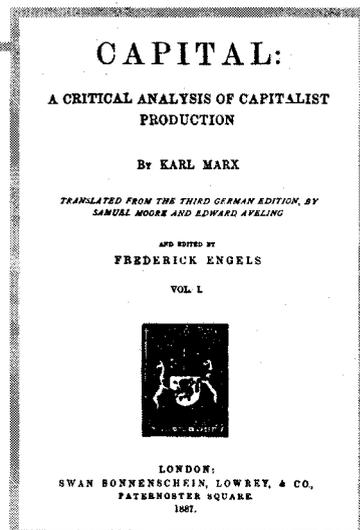
—*The Revolution Betrayed* (1936)

We Trotskyists fought against the Stalinist degeneration of the USSR, and against its final counterrevolutionary collapse in 1991-92. Nevertheless, that collapse did occur, and the ideologues of the bourgeoisie have done everything they can to bury the lessons of the October Revolution, which remains our model.

The key political instrument for victory is the revolutionary vanguard party as developed by Lenin. Trotsky explained: "The class, taken by itself, is only material for exploitation. The proletariat assumes an independent role only at that moment when from a social class *in itself* it becomes a political class *for itself*. This cannot take place otherwise than through the medium of a party. The party is that historical organ by means of which the class becomes class conscious" ("What Next? Vital Questions for the German Proletariat," 1932). We seek to win the working class, starting with its most advanced layers, to understand the necessity of sweeping away capitalist rule and establishing what Marx called the dictatorship of the proletariat. That is the only road to communism, a global high-tech society of material abundance where classes, the state and family no longer exist, and where thereby social inequality based on sex is eradicated and the social significance of race, nation and ethnicity abolished.

Where to get started? We come full circle to the question of what to do concretely in the here and now. We can now approach that question scientifically, from the standpoint of the historic interest of the proletariat as a class. We can avoid the pitfall of do-gooder moralism, of becoming, as Lenin warned, "the foolish victims of deception and self-deception in politics," whether in the form of right-wing religious demagoguery or social-democratic opportunism.

The class consciousness of the proletariat and its will to struggle have been greatly undermined by the social-democratic misleadership of the labour movement, exemplified by the New Democratic Party. Three years ago, the now-deceased NDP leader Jack Layton—who, unlike the reformist left, we do not eulogize—called on workers to have the "courage" to "take a pay cut so your friends at the plant can



Progress

In his seminal 1867 work *Capital*, Karl Marx laid bare inner workings of oppressive capitalist system.

keep their job.” This is one of many reasons why we said “No vote to the NDP” in the May federal election, and we say so again for the upcoming Ontario election.

The NDP is based not merely on a bad set of ideas. It is rooted materially in the trade-union bureaucracy of English Canada. That bureaucracy expresses the interests of a stratum of the working class that Marxists term the labour aristocracy. Where does the labour aristocracy come from? It lives off scraps from the superprofits the capitalists in imperialist countries tear out of the semicolonial countries. Thus, to Marxists, it was no surprise that the NDP voted with both hands for NATO’s war on Libya. The NDP is what Marx’s close collaborator Friedrich Engels called a *bourgeois workers party*: it may be linked to the organizations of the working class, but it is thoroughly pro-capitalist in its leadership and outlook.

What is needed is something completely different: a class-struggle workers party that understands that the interests of the capitalists and the workers have nothing in common. Such a party would be, in Lenin’s words, a tribune of the people, which understands that the working class can only emancipate itself by ultimately abolishing all forms of oppression.

A revolutionary workers party would intervene into the class struggle as the most historically conscious and advanced element of the proletariat. It would advocate Quebec independence to oppose the dominant Anglo chauvinism and get the stifling national question off the agenda, making way for a higher level of class struggle. It would champion free abortion on demand and fight for the perspective of women’s liberation through socialist revolution, including

among the more backward layers of the proletariat. To combat mass unemployment, it would demand the sharing of available work, with no loss of pay, and a massive program of public works.

To unmask the exploitation, robbery and fraud of the capitalist owners and the swindles of the banks, a class-struggle workers party would demand that the capitalists open their books. Raising the call for the expropriation of branches of industry vital for national existence, it would explain that this must be linked to the fight for the seizure of power by the working class, as against the reformist misleaders for whom the call for nationalization is merely a prescription for bailing out bankrupt capitalist enterprises. As Trotsky argued in opposition to the capitalists and their reformist agents in the Transitional Program (1938):

“If capitalism is incapable of satisfying the demands inevitably arising from the calamities generated by itself, then let it perish. ‘Realizability’ or ‘unrealizability’ is in the given instance a question of the relationship of forces, which can be decided only by the struggle. By means of this struggle, no matter what its immediate practical successes may be, the workers will best come to understand the necessity of liquidating capitalist slavery.”

That is the task to which we of the Trotskyist League and the Spartacus Youth Clubs are dedicated. In the trough of the reactionary political period following the destruction of the Soviet Union, it’s a task with few immediate rewards. But let’s be sober and scientific about this—there is an overhead to historical progress. And on the grounds of that necessity, we urge you to join us in that struggle. ■

TL Conference...

(continued from page 5)

Trotskyists publicly raised the call for the right of Quebec self-determination by at least 1938. However, seemingly due to leadership discontinuities, more in-depth discussions on the question do not appear to have been pursued until around 1945, when Ross Dowson—who emerged as the central leader of Canadian Trotskyism in the early years of World War II—wrote a document titled “The Problem of French Canada.” Dowson had been posted in Quebec while in the army, and learned the realities of national oppression first hand. His document, which laid out a materialist analysis of Quebec society and the centrality of the national question in Canada, appears to have been intended to begin a broader discussion. However, this was not pursued to a clarifying conclusion.

In discussion, comrades noted that no credible detailed history of Canadian Trotskyism is available to us. This makes it difficult to trace the Trotskyists’ line on the national question and work in Quebec prior to the “Quiet Revolution” of the 1960s. (This period saw tumultuous social struggles that reshaped Quebec society, breaking the hold of the church and producing a sharp growth in both nationalist sentiment and left-wing politics.) Several comrades noted the importance of pursuing this research, since the Quebec national question remains a litmus test for would-be Marxists in Canada. The reformist left capitulates to Anglo chauvinism (generally via support to the NDP) and/or embraces bourgeois Quebec nationalism; we in contrast advocate Quebec independence while opposing all forms of nationalist ideology.

Discussion under the national report on the final day of the conference focused on analyzing the relationship between the

NDP and the trade-union movement. In her report, comrade Miriam McDonald underlined how, unlike our reformist opponents, we have always fought to break workers and leftist youth from illusions in the NDP social democrats. Utilizing their ties to organized labour via the English Canadian union bureaucracy, which helped to found the party in 1961, the New Democrats have served for half a century as a reliable left prop for Canadian capitalism. More recently, as the report outlined, the NDP has taken considerable steps to distance itself from organized labour, while elements among the union bureaucracy have distanced themselves from the NDP, with some advocating “tactical” votes to the bourgeois Liberals. The conference resolution codified our present understanding:

“Always a right-wing social-democratic party, under Jack Layton the NDP has shifted its posture even further rightward, e.g., by dropping its paper opposition to NATO and NORAD and endorsing huge increases in military spending. No longer reliant on union funding, now banned under federal law, the NDP presents itself as the party of ‘middle-class families,’ aiming to displace the Liberals as the alternative to the Tories. NDP leaders would evidently like to refashion the party along the lines of the U.S. Democrats, i.e., as a purportedly ‘progressive’ bourgeois party, however this process is nascent and reversible. We continue to characterize the NDP as a bourgeois workers party.”

A report by our national treasurer took up the impact of the capitalist crisis on the Canadian working class, as well as our own financial situation. The conference also approved several revisions to our organizational rules and guidelines. It concluded with the election of a new Central Committee to guide the work of the TL/LT until our next conference, followed by the singing of the international workers anthem, the *Internationale*. ■

West Bengal...

(continued from page 4)

victorious 1917 Revolution. The result has been defeat after defeat for the toiling masses.

The Origins of Indian Stalinism

The original Communist Party of India (CPI), founded in December 1925, was marked by class collaborationism from the start. Under the guidance of the pseudo-Marxist adventurer M.N. Roy (then a close ally of Stalin and Nikolai Bukharin in the leadership of the Communist International), the CPI set out from its inception to build a cross-class "Peasants' and Workers' Party" in Bengal. This party in turn operated as a pressure group on the bourgeois Indian National Congress of Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru. Roy's aim in this was to capture the bourgeois Indian National Congress and make it a "people's" or "revolutionary nationalist" party based on a democratic program of national independence (see "M.N. Roy: Nationalist Menshevik," *Spartacist* [English-language edition] No. 62, Spring 2011).

Both before and after independence, the CPI time and again gave political support to the bourgeois-nationalist Congress. For a period during World War II, it even renounced the struggle for Indian independence in favour of an alliance with the "democratic" British imperialist oppressors, attacking Congress from the right. The CPI(M), which issued from the CPI in 1964, unswervingly upholds this ingrained class collaboration. At the all-India level, both CPs have repeatedly backed Congress and its allies, including until 2008 the Congress-dominated United Progressive Alliance government of Manmohan Singh in New Delhi.

Like tsarist Russia, present-day India is marked by combined and uneven development, with stark contrasts of wealth and poverty, modern industries directly abutting unspeakable squalor. Myriad forms of special oppression—based on sex, caste, nationality, religion—are among the heritages of a pre-industrial past that were reinforced and deepened by nearly two centuries of brutal British colonial rule. This culminated in the 1947 British partition of the subcontinent into India and Pakistan, which unleashed communalist slaughter and the forced migration of millions of Muslims, Sikhs and Hindus. Since independence, and mainly under the rule of the nominally secular Congress Party, the Indian bourgeoisie has

continued to fan the flames of every kind of murderous division. It is criminal and illusory to place even a shred of confidence in this venal and backward ruling class as a vehicle for liberation.

From Naxalbari to Nandigram: CPI(M)'s History of Betrayal

As leftist author Achin Vanaik noted in a recent *New Left Review* (July/August 2011) article, the CPI(M) and CPI are "the principal legatees of the old Nehruvian consensus—the social-democratic vision of a strongly secular, welfarist and non-aligned, yet capitalist India. Formal commitment to a communist future leaves no imprint on these parties' programmes or behaviour."

The CPI(M) has an unbroken and often bloody history of class betrayal in West Bengal. In 1967, shortly after it joined the "United Front" state government, a peasant revolt broke out in the Naxalbari district. CPI(M) cadres who for years had organized tea estate workers in the area now began urging peasants to seize the land. Many of the impoverished peasants of Naxalbari did so, and their actions sparked land seizures across India. The United Front government responded with bloody repression.

The CPI(M) leadership denounced supporters of the Naxalbari upheaval as CIA agents and counterrevolutionaries, expelling them from its ranks and launching a bloody fratricidal assault on these erstwhile comrades. The revolt reverberated throughout the country and shook the CPI(M) to its core. A mass of defections over the party's role in the murderous vendetta against the Naxalbari uprising led directly to the birth of the Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist), the forerunner of today's CPI (Maoist).

The United Front government was soon thrown out of office and replaced by direct rule from the centre ("President's Rule"), as was a second United Front government in 1970. In the years that followed, West Bengal was wracked by massive terror at the hands of the ruling Congress Party, which came to power in the state in 1972. In Calcutta (today Kolkata), 1,800 opponents of the government were simply murdered in the early 1970s. By 1973, nearly 18,000 people had been imprisoned as Naxalites. The CPI(M) itself was subjected to organized political terror and tens of thousands of its supporters were driven underground.

The repression in West Bengal was supplemented in 1975 by Prime Minister Indira Gandhi's brutal two-year "Emergency" rule which saw some 150,000 people jailed, civil rights shredded, strikes banned and virtually all elections cancelled. Little wonder then that the CPI(M)'s 1977 victory at the polls in West Bengal aroused enormous expectations. The raw violence ended, but the CPI(M) did not hurry to empty the jails of political prisoners, and ensured that the careers of the police who had become notorious for torturing leftists would not suffer.

Upholding capitalist rule, and thus incapable of mobilizing the working class against the vicious caste, class and communal oppression that has defined nominally secular India, the CPI(M) was a mirror of the Indian ruling class. The Nandigram massacre had a precursor in a 1979 massacre of dalit (so-called "untouchable") Hindu refugees from heavily Muslim Bangladesh. These refugees, some 30,000, had tried to settle on the small island of Marichjhapi in the inhospitable terrain of the Sundarbans, but the CPI(M) leaders declared their settlement "unauthorized." After a starvation blockade

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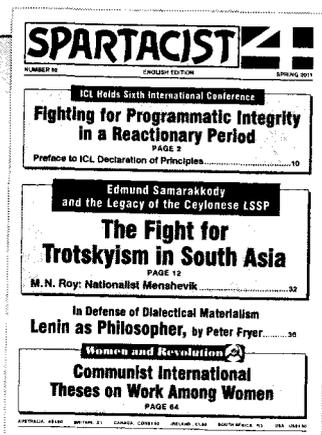
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AFP

In crackdown on Maoists, paramilitary troops arrest villagers in West Midnapore district, West Bengal, June 2009.

led to as many as 1,000 deaths, forcible removal began and hundreds were simply massacred. Settlers were tear-gassed, their huts razed, their fisheries and wells destroyed. As they were driven out of Marichjhapi, over 4,000 families perished.

At no level could the CPI(M) reformists solve the burning needs of the toiling masses—in West Bengal or anywhere else. Modest land reforms helped build support for the party, but without a thoroughgoing agrarian revolution to expropriate the feudal landlords and big capitalist farmers, the poor peasants still had no land. While the CPI(M)'s mass support comes in part from a reputation for opposing communalism, its repeated alliances with Congress have fuelled Hindu chauvinism, betraying the often decent impulses of its own militants. In India's 1999 Kargil War against Pakistan—a war in which the proletariat had no side—the CPI(M) spewed vile patriotic gore. In CPI(M)-run West Bengal, the police targeted Muslims, while antiwar protesters in Kolkata were first attacked by Hindu communalists, and then arrested.

The CPI(M)'s most valuable service to Indian capitalism has been to ensure that the struggles of the proletariat would never breach the limits of capitalist class rule. For 34 years, West Bengal's capitalists got class peace, as the CPI(M) served up a steady diet of class collaboration to the workers, to be sure wrapped in red flags. In the first weeks of Left Front rule, according to a report in *Economic and Political Weekly* (27 August 1977), chief minister Jyoti Basu openly assured the capitalists that he “would not allow a rash of labour troubles to break out” and trade unions were told to treat strikes as a “last resort.” In recent years, CPI(M) leader Bhattacharya repeatedly denounced “irresponsible” strikes.

Mao and Stalin vs. Lenin and Trotsky

The original Naxalite movement of the late 1960s won support from urban youth who mistook the “revolutionary” rhetoric of Mao's China for the real thing. Today, some leftist youth are similarly animated by the armed struggles of the CPI (Maoist) in the so-called “Red Corridor,” seeing in them an alternative to the flagrantly pro-capitalist CPI(M). But behind the Maoists' “protracted people's war” rhetoric is the

same basic program upheld by the CPI(M): the quest for alliances with a wing of the bourgeoisie. The Maoists' “New Democratic United Front” is a class-collaborationist bloc embracing, as their leader Ganapathy states, “four democratic classes, i.e. workers, peasants, urban petty-bourgeoisie and national bourgeoisie” (*Sanhati*, January 2010).

These are obvious references to “New Democracy” and the “bloc of four classes,” the twin pillars of Maoist faith. Instead of fighting for workers revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat, the CPI (Maoist) presents the peasantry as the epicentre for a “democratic” overthrow of oppressive Indian society. Time and again, this strategy has meant that the thoroughgoing workers revolutions so desperately needed in India and all South Asia have been deferred, derailed and defeated.

Maoism is a modern crystallization of the politics which Lenin and the Bolsheviks had to combat in order to plant the banner of Marxism in tsarist Russia and then bring the 1917 October Revolution to victory: In fighting to win radical intellectuals away from the then dominant populism, founding Russian Marxist Georgi Plekhanov insisted as early as the 1880s that the proletariat, not the peasantry, was destined to make a revolution in Russia, leading the oppressed masses against the tsar. Due to its place in production—where its collective labour is exploited by the capitalists for profit—the working class alone has both the material interest in liberating and expanding socialized production based on a collectivized economy, and the social power to carry out the necessary revolution.

India's history has seen no shortage of the volatile explosions of collective rage that are peasant uprisings. But the peasant masses, highly stratified and dispersed in small villages all over India, cannot cohere an independent social policy. The decisive classes in capitalist society are the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. The peasants are part of a heterogeneous intermediate layer, the petty bourgeoisie. Their outlook and aspirations are proprietary, not the coherent and collectivist class interests of the urban proletariat. Thus peasant parties are at bottom pro-bourgeois or bourgeois. A revolutionary workers party must win the poor and landless peasants to the side of the proletariat, demanding expropriation of the landlords and land to the tiller, while seeking as much as possible to neutralize the middle and upper strata of the peasantry.

With their inherently class collaborationist “people's war” perspective, the Maoist guerrillas of India are unable to root out the intense backwardness of village peasant life, be it women's oppression or the devastating oppression of caste. Moreover, the Maoists' strategy of two-stage revolution is exactly what Lenin *rejected* in 1917. Following the February Revolution that overthrew the tsar, Lenin returned to Russia and waged a fight in the Bolshevik Party against the then-leadership centred on Stalin and Kamenev, who were conciliating the new capitalist Provisional Government and its continued participation in World War I. In his famous *April Theses*, Lenin argued that power must “pass to the proletariat and the poorest sections of the peasants aligned with the proletariat.”

A decade after the Russian October, the tragedy of the Chinese Revolution of 1927 was a powerful negative confirmation of the theory of permanent revolution. Stalin and Bukharin (and their agent M.N. Roy) had ordered the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) to literally disarm the proletariat, hold down

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West Bengal...

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the class struggle of workers and peasants against the “anti-imperialist” bourgeoisie and liquidate into the bourgeois-nationalist Guomindang of Chiang Kai-shek. The fruit of this strategy was the defeat of the revolution as the Guomindang drowned the Chinese working class in blood. It was the experience of this defeat that caused Trotsky to generalize his theory of permanent revolution to countries of belated capitalist development.

In the years that followed, the CCP, now under Mao Zedong’s leadership, retreated from the cities to the countryside. It was only under the highly exceptional circumstances of the immediate post-World War II period that Mao’s peasant-based People’s Liberation Army was able to take the cities and smash capitalist class rule in 1949, creating a bureaucratically deformed workers state modelled on the Stalinist-ruled USSR. The deeply corrupt Guomindang regime had collapsed and the working class, atomized by the vicious repression of both the Guomindang and Japanese occupation forces, was not a factor. A final crucial factor was the existence of the Soviet Union, a workers state that could provide military and economic support to the new People’s Republic of China.

The Chinese Revolution shook the world and was a beacon for millions of toilers in Asia. Despite the bureaucratic rule of Mao and his successors, China’s collectivized economy has brought immense gains for workers, peasants and women, not least an end to centuries of chronic starvation in the countryside. This stands in stark contrast to developments in capitalist India. But the Chinese Stalinists’ search for “peaceful coexistence” has meant conciliating imperialism, including under Mao himself, as seen in their criminal alliance with U.S. imperialism against the Soviet Union. In 1972, as bombs were raining down on Vietnam, Mao hosted U.S. president Nixon in Beijing. In 1979, four years after the heroic Vietnamese had defeated the U.S. and its Vietnamese puppets, Chinese troops criminally invaded Vietnam, acting in concert with Washington’s interests.

Today, U.S. imperialism sees India as a strategic ally in its drive to overturn the gains of the Chinese Revolution. The International Communist League stands for the unconditional military defense of China against imperialism and counterrevolution. At the same time, we call for a proletarian political revolution to oust the nationalist, Stalinist ruling caste in Beijing and create a regime based on workers democracy and revolutionary internationalism.

For a Workers India in a Socialist Federation of South Asia!

For the CPI(M), the workers are voting cattle, buttered up with promises and fake Marxist phrases while their struggles are contained and betrayed. To the CPI (Maoist), the workers are—at best—just another urban support group for their rural struggles. In practice, the Maoists end up supporting a section of the bourgeoisie, as with Trinamool in West Bengal.

Yet it is the proletariat—in the car factories, mines, steel mills and railways—whose labour produces the massive profits that enrich the Indian ruling class. This vibrant working class holds the key to the future. The Indian capitalists



AFP/Getty Images

Auto workers seize Maruti Suzuki plant in Gurgaon, the massive industrial area near Delhi, October 2011.

and the imperialists to whom they answer are sharply aware of the potential power of this sleeping giant, and continually work to obstruct or prevent the growth of unions, especially in new enterprises. A new labour bill would exempt operations with fewer than 40 workers from almost all basic laws governing minimum wages, payment of wages, working hours and contract work. This would give legal sanction to virtual slave conditions for millions of workers.

Indian workers have been on the defensive in the face of unremitting capitalist attacks, and strike levels are at record lows. Nevertheless, labour battles in some vital and highly profitable industries have rattled the Indian bourgeoisie. In Gurgaon, a massive industrial area near Delhi, workers have repeatedly struck against the giant car producer Maruti Suzuki. Hundreds of thousands of auto and other industrial workers in the area suffer brutal superexploitation, as their labour creates fabulous profits for Indian, Japanese, American and other capitalist magnates.

In some of the very areas where the Maoists are leading peasant insurgencies, large numbers of workers in coal and other mines have been waging hard-fought battles from protests to strikes and blockades. In October, a one-day general strike of some 300,000 workers against Kolkata-based Coal India Ltd. (CIL), the world’s largest coal producer, swept the country. With record commodity prices, mining conglomerates worldwide are raking in the profits, and workers from Chile to South Africa have struck for higher wages. Just how massive these profits are may be gauged by the fact that the one-day strike against CIL cost the company 1.2 billion rupees (\$25 million).

A small spark could light this enormous social tinder, but a revolutionary Marxist leadership that fights for proletarian unity and class independence is essential. The fighting power of the proletariat is greatly undercut by the fact that the unions are divided politically. Congress, the Hindu-communist BJP and various of the Stalinist-derived parties, among others, each run their own unions and there are some 13 separate labour centrals. A working class divided by caste, religion and ethnicity is further fractured by these competing party-linked unions. An authentic proletarian leadership

would fight for industrial unions which include all workers in an industry as an elementary defense of the working class.

The reality behind the myth of “Shining India,” with its start-ups in Bangalore and its tiny layer of fabulously wealthy in cities like Delhi and Mumbai, is that the Indian masses are even poorer than they were 30 years ago. Industrial development and the pillaging of India’s natural resources have destroyed the lives and livelihoods of millions of peasants, and it is this which fuels the almost continual cycle of peasant revolt and protest. The working class—which has grown rapidly in recent years—toils under terrible conditions for miserable wages.

The situation cries out for the kind of perspective fought for by the Bolsheviks in the 1917 October Revolution: the workers seizing power at the head of the oppressed masses and smashing the bourgeois state, agrarian revolution to liberate the peasantry, the socialization and rational reorganization of the economy in the interests of human needs not profit, and the fight to extend socialist revolution internationally, especially to the imperialist heartlands.

Social liberation in South Asia will not come through bourgeois parliamentarism and political blocs with the parties of the capitalist exploiters. Nor will it come through isolated struggles in the forests and jungles. On the contrary, it requires the mobilization of the urban proletariat under revolutionary leadership—a Leninist-Trotskyist party. Such a party, a genuine tribune of the people, will oppose every kind of caste and communal oppression, fight for land for the

peasants and be in the forefront of the struggle for women’s liberation. In the fight to forge such a leadership, crucial lessons can be drawn from the work of the revolutionaries of the Bolshevik-Leninist Party of India (BLPI), Indian section of the Trotskyist Fourth International during the years of World War II. The BLPI fought heroically for a Marxist proletarian perspective and sought to chart a path to the Indian workers revolution and a socialist federation of South Asia. Writing in 1942 on the revolutionary tasks of the proletariat in India, these comrades stated:

“The realization of the combined character of the Indian revolution is essential for the planning of the revolutionary strategy of the working class. Should the working class fail in its historic task of seizing the power and establishing the dictatorship of the proletariat, the revolution will inevitably recede, the bourgeois tasks themselves remain unperformed, and the power swing back in the end to the imperialists without whom the Indian bourgeoisie cannot maintain itself against the hostile masses. A backward country like India can accomplish its bourgeois-democratic revolution only through the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat.”

—“Draft Programme of the Bolshevik-Leninist Party of India” (1942)

Such is the perspective we in the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist) fight for today. Forward to the construction of Bolshevik parties in India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka! Forward to the socialist federation of South Asia!■

Iran...

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accusation peddled by Washington is that Iran, using a flaky Iranian American used-car salesman as its agent, tried to hire hitmen from a Mexican drug cartel. (His “contact” turned out to be an informant for the U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency.) The Iranian government cogently compared this fiction to the George W. Bush administration’s concoction of Saddam Hussein’s “weapons of mass destruction” as a pretext to launch the invasion of Iraq in 2003. The UN resolution exemplifies the role of that body as a fig leaf for the pursuit by the imperialists—centrally the U.S.—of their great-power interests, including through naked aggression against semicolonial countries.

The escalating sanctions come as Israeli officials have been whipping up war hysteria and threatening to launch air strikes against suspected nuclear research sites in Iran. Determined to maintain its monopoly on nukes in the Near East, Israel conducted air strikes against Iraq in 1981 and Syria in 2007. The stakes are much higher in any attack on Iran, which is a significant and historic power in the region.

The news that the government of Benjamin Netanyahu had discussed striking Iran was broken earlier this year by Meir Dagan, the former head of Israel’s Mossad intelligence agency. In May, Dagan had told the press that a military strike aimed at taking out Iran’s nuclear facilities was “the stupidest thing I ever heard,” and would threaten to push Israel into a “regional war that it would not know how to get out of” (*Haaretz*, 1 June). Under Dagan, who has plenty of blood on his own hands, Israel tried to thwart Iran’s nuclear program by injecting the Stuxnet computer virus into Iran’s centrifuge system, which enriches uranium, and by carrying out assassinations of scientists as well as a senior commander

of Iran’s missile development program.

U.S. president Barack Obama, for his part, has repeatedly rattled his sabre at Iran, declaring that he would keep “all options,” including the threat of military attack, “on the table.” Washington recently announced that next year U.S. and Israeli military forces will carry out their largest-ever joint exercises, “simulating the ballistic missile defense of Israel.” Imperialist sanctions and military “options” go hand in hand. Recall that the 2003 war against Iraq, which led to the death of upward of a million Iraqis and unleashed communalist slaughter on a mass scale, was prepared by UN sanctions imposed 13 years earlier that killed 1.5 million people.

The misinformation offensive over Iran’s nuclear program was powerfully exposed by journalist Seymour Hersh in “Iran and the Bomb: How Real Is the Nuclear Threat?” (*New Yorker* website, 6 June). Hersh recalled that the 2007 National Intelligence Estimate (NIE), a summary of the views of senior officers from all major U.S. intelligence agencies, concluded “with high confidence” that Iran had stopped working toward a nuclear weapon in 2003. Hersh wrote that the original draft of this year’s NIE update, later changed under pressure from the Obama White House, stated that Iran’s supposed earlier nuclear weapons research targeted not Israel or West Europe but Iran’s longtime nemesis Iraq, which Iranian leaders thought at the time was trying to develop nukes. Hersh explained: “The Iranian nuclear-weapons program evidently came to an end following the American-led invasion of Iraq, in early 2003, and the futile hunt for the Iraqi W.M.D. arsenal.”

Iran has repeatedly stated that its nuclear program is intended solely for peaceful purposes. In fact, in the face of imperialist nuclear blackmail and with continuing military threats, it is entirely rational and necessary for Iran to pursue

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getting nuclear weapons and adequate delivery systems to deter attack. As the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR), a major think tank for the U.S. ruling class, admits, nuclear weapons “offer a deterrent capability; unlike Saddam’s Iraq, a nuclear Iran would not be invaded, and its leaders would not be deposed” (“After Iran Gets the Bomb: Containment and Its Complications,” *Foreign Affairs*, March/April 2010).

U.S. Imperialist Terrorists

In the event of any military attack by the U.S. or by Israel on Iran, working people and the oppressed internationally must not be neutral but must take a clear side *with Iran*. As Marxists, we do not give an iota of political support to the reactionary Islamic regime in Iran. But it is the nuclear-armed U.S. imperialists who are the main enemy of the world’s working people and oppressed.

It was the U.S. that incinerated some 200,000 Japanese people in the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945, an unprecedented atrocity which was immediately hailed by Canada’s bourgeois rulers. The U.S. ruling class that is today threatening Iran is the same obscenely rich capitalist class that gorges itself on profits while busting unions, throwing millions out of work, slashing social services, destroying health care and stealing pensions—attacks that hit particularly hard at the black masses segregated at the bottom of society. In opposing the U.S. occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan and other imperialist adventures, we raise the call for class struggle at home, promoting the understanding of the need to mobilize the proletariat to sweep away the murderous imperialist order through socialist revolution. We demand: All U.S./Canadian/NATO forces get out of Afghanistan now!

Although the Obama administration is seeking—at least for now—to rein in Israel and head off an immediate military attack on Iran, support for such an action has been growing within U.S. ruling circles, and not only in *Wall Street Journal* editorials and the speeches of Zionist neocons. A sign of the broader “bomb Iran” sentiment was an exchange between strategists for the Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments (CSBA), which includes former officials from both Democratic and Republican administrations, and others from the Council on Foreign Relations.

CFR spokesmen argued in *Foreign Affairs* (March/April 2010) that, in the event Iran succeeded in developing nukes, the U.S. should threaten to attack with any means, “including nuclear weapons,” if Tehran crossed certain “redlines,” such as “initiation of conventional warfare against other countries” or “stepped-up support for terrorist or subversive activities.” Initially, the CSBA authors argued a more restrained line of keeping up the current policy of sanctions and military pressure (*Foreign Affairs*, January/February 2011). Yet one day after the November 8 IAEA report, the same CSBA authors posted a statement online titled: “Why Obama Should Take Out Iran’s Nuclear Program: The Case for Striking Before It’s Too Late.”

It takes some chutzpah for the U.S. rulers, echoed by imperialist Britain and France, to rail against Iran possibly acquiring nuclear weapons. The U.S. capitalists possess enough nuclear firepower to destroy humanity many times over. The atomic bombing of Japan, which was ultimately meant as a warning to the Soviet Union, epitomized the role



Reuters

April 2004: Mordechai Vanunu leaves prison after serving 18 years for disclosing Israel’s massive nuclear stockpile.

of the U.S. rulers as the greatest menace to the workers and oppressed the world has known. That act of imperialist barbarism has been followed by a long line of wars and military operations, from Korea and Vietnam—where the U.S. failed to reverse social revolutions—to Afghanistan, Iraq and Libya more recently. The destruction of the Soviet degenerated workers state by capitalist counterrevolution two decades ago removed what had been the chief military and diplomatic obstacle to the imperialists’ pursuit of their global ambitions.

The U.S. funnels billions in aid every year to Zionist Israel, whose existence is predicated on the displacement and brutal oppression of the Palestinian people. The Zionist rulers have transformed Gaza into a concentration camp for Palestinians, surrounded by an electric fence, a wall and the Mediterranean, while forcibly ghettoizing the West Bank Palestinians as well. Surrounded by Arab populations, Israel’s rulers consider themselves to be in a permanent state of war and have repeatedly shown their willingness to use military force.

Israel got its start as a nuclear-armed power with the aid of France, which in 1958 built the reactor for the Dimona nuclear facility in the Negev desert. The U.S. subsequently provided support for Israel’s nuclear program while shielding it from international scrutiny, helping to maintain a veil over the extent of Israel’s stockpile of nukes. In 1986, Mordechai Vanunu, a former technician at Dimona, pulled back the veil, revealing that Israel had acquired an arsenal of some 200 nuclear warheads. For his heroic exposure of the scope and scale of Tel Aviv’s doomsday machine, which targeted the USSR as well as nations in the Near East, Vanunu was convicted of treason and sentenced to 18 years in prison, eleven of those spent in solitary confinement. Forbidden to leave Israel since his release in 2004, Vanunu was twice again arrested and imprisoned. The vindictive Zionist rulers want him forever silenced, but the working class internationally will be forever in Vanunu’s debt.

Mounting Pressure Against China

Increasing belligerence toward Iran comes as the U.S. is preparing to withdraw almost all of its troops from Iraq and draw down its forces in Afghanistan, while strengthening its

position elsewhere in the region. The U.S. is reportedly planning to beef up its military contingent in Kuwait, while reinforcing its naval presence in the Persian Gulf. The Obama administration is also looking to negotiate a stronger military alliance with the six countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council, dominated by Saudi Arabia. Meanwhile, the U.S. and Turkey have announced the placement of an American anti-missile radar system on Turkish territory, 435 miles from Iran, by the end of the year.

Chief among U.S. rulers' concerns in redirecting their forces is pursuing the military encirclement of China, the largest and most powerful of the remaining bureaucratically deformed workers states. In the name of fighting "terrorism," the U.S. has in the past decade enhanced its military presence in the Philippines and resumed open military relations with Indonesia, in addition to establishing bases in Afghanistan and Central Asia. Washington has also strengthened military ties with the Japanese imperialists and continues to buttress capitalist Taiwan. Last week, Commander-in-Chief Obama announced plans to deploy 2,500 marines to Darwin in northern Australia as a move to counter China.

Capitalism was overthrown in China by the 1949 Revolution. Today, despite major inroads by both foreign and indigenous capitalists, the core elements of China's economy remain collectivized. Ultimately, the imperialists aim to restore capitalist rule in China, and for this they have a multi-pronged strategy: capitalist economic penetration combined with military pressure and support to domestic counterrevolutionaries, such as the "Free Tibet" movement. It is vital for the international proletariat to stand for the unconditional military defense of China and the other deformed workers states—Cuba, North Korea, Vietnam and Laos—against imperialism and internal counterrevolution. Thus, we support the testing and development of nukes and delivery systems by North Korea and China.

China is highly dependent on the flow of Iranian oil—in 2009, Iran ranked as China's second largest oil provider. Despite this fact, the Stalinist regime in Beijing supported all four previous rounds of UN sanctions directed against Iran, a measure of the Stalinist bureaucracy's futile strivings for "peaceful coexistence" with the imperialists. In the interest of its economic relationship with the U.S., the Beijing bureaucracy has also embraced the imperialists' "war on terror." Through its appeasement of imperialism and opposition to the program of world socialist revolution, the nationalist Stalinist bureaucracy undermines the defense of the workers state. It is necessary for the Chinese proletariat to carry out a political revolution to oust the Stalinist misrulers and establish a regime based on workers democracy and revolutionary internationalism.

Anti-Imperialism Abroad Means Class Struggle at Home

The working people of Iran have a long history of subjugation by the imperialists and bloody suppression by their "own" rulers. In 1953, after the modernizing nationalist regime of Mohammad Mossadeq tried to nationalize Iran's oil fields, the CIA staged a coup, installing Shah Pahlevi and



SC photo

Toronto 2004 antiwar demonstration: Trotskyist League fights for working-class struggle against the capitalist ruling class at home.

propping up his savage rule for 25 years. In 1979, in a "revolution" hailed by almost the entire left internationally, the Islamic hierarchy under Ayatollah Khomeini seized power, going on to crush struggles by workers, women and oppressed national minorities. Women were segregated from society under *sharia* law and forced to don the sweltering head-to-toe veil; workers organizations were smashed; leftists were jailed and executed. Uniquely, our organization, then known as the international Spartacist tendency, championed the proletariat's class interests against the forces of Islamic reaction. Our battle cry was: "Down With the Shah! Don't Bow to Khomeini! For Workers Revolution in Iran!"

Today, Iran is again a cauldron of discontent, with the working people, youth and women suffering privation and chafing under the mullahs' rule. The multinational Iranian working class, leading all the oppressed behind it, must overthrow the Persian-chauvinist, clericalist regime. Key to this perspective is the forging of a Leninist workers party in Iran. Such parties must be built throughout the Near East in struggle against all forms of fundamentalism and nationalism. In Egypt, where there has been a new outburst of mass opposition to military rule, the working class must emerge as a contender for power in its own right, against both the army and the powerful, reactionary forces of political Islam. In Israel, where recent popular struggles against economic privation have helped reveal the class divisions that define that society, Zionism continues to chain the overwhelmingly Jewish proletariat to its class enemy (see "U.S./Israel Tighten Screws on Palestinians," *WV* No. 988, 14 October).

The International Communist League fights for a socialist federation of the Near East, necessarily linked to the struggle to sweep away the rapacious imperialist rulers in the U.S. and elsewhere through workers revolutions. Imperialist subjugation, military occupations and war are endemic to capitalism in its death agony, and can only be fought through a struggle against the entire system of exploitation and oppression. The Trotskyist League/Ligue trotskyste is committed to building a multiracial workers party that breaks the political chains tying the working class to its "own" exploiters, particularly via the labour bureaucracy and the pro-capitalist NDP. Such a party is the necessary instrument to lead the struggle for workers power to victory. ■

U.S., Israel, Canada: **Hands Off Iran!**



Getty



ISNA

Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu with Barack Obama at UN, September 21 (left). Tehran, 2007: Iranians lining up for gas after government announced rationing due to threat of more economic sanctions (right).

The following article is adapted from Workers Vanguard No. 991 (25 November), newspaper of the Spartacist League/U.S.

The Obama administration's November 21 announcement of a sharp escalation of economic sanctions against Iran is the latest in a series of belligerent moves by the U.S. imperialists and their Israeli junior partners. For its part, the Harper government in Ottawa had already called for intensifying sanctions against Iran, declaring on November 18: "The question is not if, but rather the degree to which, we will act." True to form, the social-democratic NDP quickly hailed the sanctions as "very important," calling to "cut the financing mechanism" for Iran's nuclear development program.

The stated purpose of these moves is to stop Iran's purported attempts to develop nuclear weapons, which the Iranian government has always denied. Taking aim at Iran's central bank and petroleum industry, the sanctions aim at making the country's economy scream, threatening to further pummel working people who are already suffering from rampant inflation, widespread unemployment and mounting shortages. Ottawa's push to tighten the imperialist economic stranglehold on Iran is also part of an increasing effort by the Canadian rulers to project a hardline pro-Zionist profile on the world stage.

Last year, the Iranian government responded to prior sanctions, which had cut almost 2 percent off the annual growth of Iran's GDP, by taking an ax to government subsidies of fuel and other essential goods. The price of bread quickly tripled, while gasoline prices shot up fourfold. Now, Washington targets the Iranian Central Bank (ICB) as a "money laundering concern," while Britain announces it will deny Iran access to the financial hub in London. The imperialists aim to further restrict the ability of countries to pay for Iranian oil and gas, the source of 75 percent of that government's revenue.

The latest sanctions come two weeks after a November 8 report by the UN's International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) on Iran. In 2007, the IAEA stated that Iran had dismantled efforts to build an atomic bomb four years earlier. Now, contradicting that conclusion, the same agency coyly speaks of "indications" that "some activities" related to nuclear weapons may have continued after 2003 and "may still be ongoing."

On November 18, just hours after the IAEA in Vienna adopted a resolution condemning Iran for its alleged nuclear program, the UN General Assembly in New York voted overwhelmingly to demand that Iran cooperate with an investigation into the crackpot story that Tehran had plotted to assassinate the Saudi ambassador to the U.S. The bizarre

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Down With Imperialist Sanctions!