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April-May 2006

No. 23

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Internationalist



Racist Provocation Against Ghetto Youth

France: Workers and Youth Revolt



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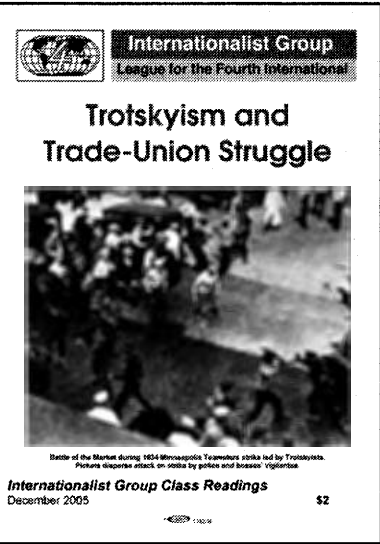
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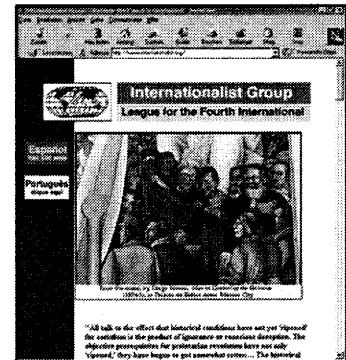
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The Internationalist



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April-May 2006

French Government Forced to Back Down on Youth Jobs Laws



Christophe Ena/AP

Youth occupy rail yards at Paris' Gare du Nord station, March 30.

After ten weeks of massive demonstrations followed by escalating road and rail blockages, on April 10 French president Jacques Chirac was finally forced to annul the “first job contract” (CPE) which set off the worker-youth revolt that convulsed France from north to south. It was a humiliating retreat for Chirac, with his majestic airs, his haughty aristocratic prime minister Dominique de Villepin and hard-line interior minister Nicholas Sarkozy. In particular, it was a heavy blow to the presidential ambitions of Chirac’s *dauphin* (anointed successor) de Villepin, who had vowed not to retreat or even substantially modify the widely hated law. But the government sought to limit the damage by only withdrawing one article of the egregiously misnamed “equal opportunity” law and rushing through a “professional insertion” clause (CIP). The CPE is dead, long live the CIP, they declared.

The union bureaucrats and their counterparts in the parliamentary left, notably the Socialist (PS) and Communist (PCF) parties, cried victory. After several years of defeats, their aim was limited to knocking a hole in the regime’s shield of seeming invincibility. The reformists’ real aim was to prepare the way for an electoral victory for a new “popular front” coalition in the upcoming 2007 legislative and presidential elections. The students and youth were less effusive, vowing to continue the struggle to get rid of the entire youth jobs law, which includes clauses authorizing apprenticeship beginning at age 14 and night work from age 15; and to overturn the “new job contract” (CNE) passed last summer, which essentially gave small business owners the same right to fire young workers without cause for up to two years. But without the backing of the union and left parties, the youth protests and university strikes fizzled out.

**No New Popular Front of Class Collaboration –
For a Revolutionary-Internationalist Workers Party!**

The protests were the largest since 1968, larger even than the 1995 mobilizations against pension “reforms.” According to the union count, 1.8 million demonstrators came out on March 19 to protest the CPE; 2.6 million on March 28; and 3.1 million on April 4. As the government and opinion pollsters took almost daily surveys to gauge the pulse of the nation, two-thirds of the public disapproved of the government’s handling of the affair and found its explanations “unconvincing” while almost as many supported the protests. So when students blocked highways leading south out of Paris, police were stupefied when many of the stranded motorists applauded and raised their fists in solidarity. One truck driver said, “I understand them... I encouraged my son to go on strike – it’s his future, after all” (*Le Parisien*, 1 April).



Internationalist photo

Social workers on March 28 in Paris protest youth labor law that would create a “disposable generation” whose jobs can be thrown away like Kleenex.

During the mass marches, most banners were home-made. There were endless word plays on the initials CPE (“first swindling contract,” “first screwing contract,” “contract for slavery,” etc.). With the pervasive talk of a general strike (*grève générale*), the most popular sticker on March 28 was “*rêve générale*” (general dream), in imitation of the lyrical slogans raised by students in 1968. People sang “*le printemps sera chaud, chaud, chaud*” (this Spring will be hot, hot, hot), the anthem of ’68. But politically, the dominant tone was the call to return the left to office. As marchers passed by the La Santé jail March 19, prisoners called out, “Chirac to prison, Villepin to the dungeon, Sarkozy in solidarity, the left to power!” (And, they added, “general amnesty in 2007,” when elections are to be held.)

The youth showed plenty of determination. When students occupied the Sorbonne, France’s premier university, on March 9, it took a veritable street battle for the cops to retake the installation two days later. The government thereupon locked out the students, erecting huge solid steel barricades in the surrounding streets. But imagination and determination are not enough to win a hard battle against the capitalist state. It was necessary to *mobilize the working class*, which has the power to cripple the bourgeois system. Hundreds of thousands of workers did indeed march in the protests, although union leaders went all out to prevent a general strike. But above all, what was needed was a *revolutionary program and leadership* that would take the struggle beyond the initial battle over the youth jobs law and broaden it into a struggle against capitalism.

While three-quarters of France’s universities were on strike at one point, it was not just university and secondary school students who walked out. During the several mass marches, many unionized sections of the working class struck as well.

On March 28, this included not only the public sector, such as the railroads (SNCF), Air France, Paris metro (RATP), teachers, state radio, post office and even the Eiffel Tower and the Opera at the Bastille, but also many in the private sector, including half the Total oil refineries, more than half the workforce of France Télécom, Alcatel electronics plants, Renault and Peugeot. In 1995, only public sector workers struck.

The widespread support for the protests is partly due to the fact that the already-massive youth unemployment and lack of job security affect not only the working class but also large sectors of middle-class youth *and their parents*. Official statistics reported in the *Nouvel Observateur* (30 March) show that the number of youth between the age 15 and 24 who are married has fallen from 23.5 percent in 1975 to 2.3 percent in 2003; and that 65 percent of young men over the age of 24 still live with their parents! Even without the CPE, almost all young workers only have temporary job contracts, and the new law would have made it far easier to fire them. Under the CNE, there were reports of young women being fired for becoming pregnant and workers losing their jobs for refusing overtime.

Another factor in the broad scope of the revolt was the division within the governing troika of Chirac-Villepin-Sarkozy and the conservative majority in parliament. At one point, the Paris daily *Libération* ran a psychoanalysis of the prime minister concluding he was a narcissistic egomaniac with Napoleonic pretensions. When Villepin refused to submit to questions in the National Assembly, François Bayrou, leader of the UDF, one of the smaller bourgeois parties that had been part of the government, stomped out of the chamber complaining, “You can’t run a country with sheer obstinacy, above all when there are hundreds of thousands of people in

the street.” Foreign minister Hervé de Charette reportedly asked at a meeting of the ruling UMP (Union for a Progressive Movement): “Is the President of the Republic really deaf and the Prime Minister really crazy?”

Ex-Far Left in the Popular Front Swamp

During the protests, the various components of what is conventionally known as the “far left” were active, although most of their members marched with union or student contingents. This was a deliberate tactic to counter accusations of trying to take over the movement. The Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire (LCR) issued a special issue of its newspaper *Rouge* for the March 28 demonstration. Unlike its earlier leaflets, which just called to withdraw the CPE, this supplement added a series of reform demands (ban layoffs, monthly stipends for student youth of 800 euros, end “social segregation” by stopping the dismantling of social services, etc.). It included an article, titled “Strike, Strike, General Strike,” calling for a general strike to “put a stop to the liberal offensive” – i.e., to put the parliamentary “left” back into office, nothing about a fight for workers power.

But the LCR’s real message was in the front page headline, “Dehors!” (Get Out), calling to turn the “social crisis” into a “political crisis,” by demanding the “departure of an illegitimate team,” Chirac, Villepin and Sarkozy. No mention, of course, that the LCR voted for the conservative president in the 2002 elections, as did almost the entire left. Chirac went from 18 percent on the first round of voting to 82 percent in the runoff, and the right’s absolute majority in parliament is largely due to the left’s support for Chirac against the fascist Le Pen. The government has charged ahead as if it had a real mandate for its rightist agenda, but it keeps running up against massive resistance. Now the LCR, like the PS and PCF, wants to use the government’s defeat over the CPE to prepare the way for a “left” bourgeois government in 2007, a new popular front.

Lutte Ouvrière (LO) pushed the same utopian reformist notion of demanding that the bosses apply their profits to security jobs rather than paying dividends to stockholders. As we noted in our leaflet, “France: Workers Beat Back Attack on the Youth,” page 6), this won’t happen under capitalism, which is based on production for profit. But LO is more than just cock-eyed economism, it has a pronounced streak of populist chauvinism running through its politics. Thus in a special issue of *Lutte Ouvrière* for the April 4 demonstration, one article sharply criticized “radical” actions by the youth such as “blocking highways, railroads – even whole city centers.” Horrors! While these may be spectacular, LO argued, they could annoy train passengers. “Don’t become unpopular,” was its sage reformist advice.

Worse yet was a second article calling for “Defense Groups for Self-Protection.” Against what? The police? No, against “thugs,” the word Sarkozy used to smear ghetto youth. LO cynically pretends that they are talking about all sorts of thugs, including skinheads, undercover police provocateurs, right-wing militants. But in reality, it was a call for vigilante squads against gangs who would “steal cellphones” from demonstrators. Talk-

ing of keeping out “people who have no business being there,” LO joined the outcry from the bourgeois media and capitalist politicians against *casseurs* (hooligans) in the demonstrations, making a big deal about very little. This is the same racist refrain taken up by the PCF and the reformist union tops who beat up minority youth and turned them over to the cops (see “Paris Demonstrators Demand: ‘Free Our Comrades!’” page 10). It is the police who have brutally beaten demonstrators and arrested thousands of youth over the last two months.

The Ligue Trotskyste de France (LTF, part of the International Communist League [ICL]), for its part, distributed a March 15 leaflet whose main headline simply calls, like the rest of the left, for “Down with the CPE!” and the “equal opportunity law.” While it did call for defense of ghetto youth, in contrast to the overtly chauvinist LO, the LTF leaflet presented no program for revolutionary struggle except for the call for a sliding scale of work hours. Instead it had a lengthy explanation that “Today we are not in 1968.” This is explained by the ICL’s refrain that counterrevolution in the ex-USSR led to “an enormous political demoralization among the workers,” so that “the working class at this time does not see revolutionary socialism as a viable alternative to capitalism.”

So, later for the revolution, *dixit* the ICL, which holds that the crisis of revolutionary leadership is no longer key but rather, “the working class must again understand and make Marxism its own.” (As if prior to 1989 the mass of French workers, supporters of the reformist PCF and PS, saw revolutionary socialism as a viable alternative to capitalism!) So now the left centrists of the ICL content themselves with proclaiming “down with” this and “down with” that, without a revolutionary subject (having written off the demoralized working class) and *sans* transitional program to lead from the present struggles to the “new October Revolutions” which it talks of in the abstract.

The counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union and restoration of capitalism throughout East Europe is indeed behind the onslaught against workers’ living standards and social gains in West Europe and throughout the world. Reckoning that it no longer has to stave off a “communist threat,” the imperialist bourgeoisies have sought to roll back social programs with a vengeance, jacking up their profits as they intensify the drive to global war. The answer is not to proclaim that “we are not in 1968” and preach to the working class that, alas, it is no longer socialist. Rather, what’s called for is a fight by a genuine Trotskyist vanguard against the misleaders to *bring socialist consciousness to the working class in the course of the class struggle*. We need to prepare the way “For a new May ’68 that goes all the way! For workers revolution!” as the League for the Fourth International called for in our leaflet put out for the March 28 demonstration in Paris.

In France in particular, the capitalists have periodically run up against resistance from the working class, despite the weakened condition of the unions, in 1995 and again today. But instead of leading to broader class struggle, that resistance has been channeled into the dead-end of class collaboration by

continued on page 14

Racist Provocation Against Ghetto Youth Spearheads Capitalist Offensive Against the Right to a Job

France: Mobilize Workers' Power to Beat Back Attack on the Youth

The following is a translation of an article by the League for the Fourth International that was distributed at the March 28 mass mobilization in Paris.

MARCH 25 – As was to be expected, the response of the reactionary Chirac/Villepin/Sarkozy government to the revolt by youth of immigrant origin last fall has been to launch an attack on all youth and the workers movement as a whole. The “first employment contract” (CPE – *contrat de première embauche*), which was rammed through the National Assembly on the night of February 8 and approved a month later as part of the so-called “equal opportunity” law, lets bosses fire young workers (under the age of 26) easily, without giving the least justification. According to Prime Minister de Villepin’s argument, this would help to resolve the problem of youth unemployment which (according to official statistics) reaches 23 percent nationally and over 50 percent in the housing projects of the working-class suburbs. As a young protester said of the head of government in a March 24 demonstration in Paris, “he claims to be doing social work for ghetto youth, but in fact he is ladling out gravy to the employers.”

The capitalist logic is as perverse as it is simple: to encourage hiring, they must make it easier to lay off workers when there is a downturn in the business cycle. Obviously, the same argument could be used to eliminate any protection of job security, for older as well as younger workers. This is precisely what the bosses in Medef, the French employers association, want when they demand, as they have done for quite a while, that labor contracts must be more “flexible.” That is the real purpose of the Villepin Law. And that is why



Contingent of CFDT truckers union at March 28 protest in Paris against youth employment law.

opposition to the CPE, and to its cousin, the CNE (“new job contract,” which permits firing without cause for companies with less than 20 employees); can’t be limited to reestablishing the status quo, driving out the prime minister or even bringing down the government. The working class is targeted in a worldwide offensive by capital, and therefore the response must be a counteroffensive by the exploited and oppressed against the capitalist system.

To achieve this, it is necessary to bring together in struggle the college and high school students of the big cities, workers in the public and private sectors, and youth of North African and sub-Saharan African origin living in the desolate high-rise housing projects where they are subjected to ceaseless police repression. De Villepin, Sarkozy and Chirac are perfectly aware of this, and assiduously try to set each against

**Not a New Popular Front – What’s Needed:
A May ’68 That Goes All the Way! Workers Revolution!**



League for the Fourth International distributed at Paris demonstration. Picture display reads:

To Sweep Away Capitalism, Job Insecurity, Exploitation:

- Workers' action to stop layoffs! Turn temporary jobs into permanent jobs! Workers control of hiring!
- Jobs for all! For a Sliding scale of wages and work hours!
- Union training and hiring programs for youth subject to discrimination!
- Full citizenship rights for all immigrants!
- Toward a general strike and workers government!

the others. They whisper to the youth of the *banlieues*, the suburban ghettos¹, that the students demonstrating in the streets only want to hold onto their "privileges" and keep youth of immigrant origin from getting jobs. The government consciously provokes the blind violence that grows out

¹ In contrast to the United States, where "inner city" has become a code word for ghetto, in France the poor are concentrated in working-class suburbs (the *banlieues*) around the major cities. Immigrant laborers were housed there during economic boom times, but since the 1980s they have been condemned to long-term unemployment and segregation. The ghetto youth who revolted last fall are largely of immigrant origin, but usually second and third generation.

of desperation, in order to label all demonstrators *casseurs* ("smashers")². These are the insults that are always used by counterrevolutionaries, like de Gaulle in 1968, who accused the youth of creating a godawful mess (*chienlit*), or the partisans of the *Ancien Régime* (the Old Order) in 1789, for whom the revolutionary crowd were nothing but scum (*canaille*). Sarkozy called the young rebels in the suburbs "thugs" (*voyous*) and "rabble" (*racaille*), but the real thugs and smashers are sitting in the Elysée presidential palace, at the Matignon prime minister's office and the Place Beauvau HQ of the minister of the interior.

All these demagogic appeals by the bourgeoisie and attempts to stigmatize those who fight against its rule must be rejected. The most conscious militants of the *generation précaire* ("precarious generation," lacking stable jobs), of aging sixty-eighters, of militant trade-unionists and residents of the suburban ghettos who have hatred (*la haine*) of the system must band together on the basis of a class-struggle program and under a genuinely communist leadership to prepare workers revolution.

The insistence of Prime Minister de Villepin on the CPE is not "incomprehensible stubbornness," nor was the proclamation of a state of emergency by President Chirac during the revolt by ghetto youth last November, nor the brutal curfew (in reality, lockdown) imposed by Interior Minister Sarkozy which turned housing projects outside Paris, Lyon and Toulouse into concentration camps. The postal worker trade-unionist who was beaten and kicked by the murderous CRS³ riot police, and who today lies in a coma, hovering between life and death, is not the victim of a "blunder," as the bourgeois media claim in unison. What's going on is that the government, this executive committee for managing the affairs of the ruling class, has declared war on "immigrants," youth and working people. And in order to win this *class war*, what's needed is to mobilize a superior force, that of the working class, and not just in well-mannered parades to celebrate springtime.

A Transitional Program Leading to the Struggle for Power

This mobilization must be undertaken for transitional objectives which lead from the present struggles toward the taking of power by the working people. While the large majority of organizations of the left simply call for withdrawing the "equal opportunity" law, the present status quo doesn't give anything to millions of youth condemned to long-term unemployment under capitalism. We have already experienced innumerable "reforms" promising to provide jobs for those unable to find work, with no success. Full employment laws have become a dead letter during periods of recession. Oth-

² After the 1968 youth and worker revolt in France, semi-anarchist groups protesting police repression often lashed out in frustration, leading to a hysterical media campaign against "hooligans" and a draconian "anti-casseur" law that jailed hundreds for the "crime" of being in the vicinity of a smashed store or car window.

³ Compagnie Républicaine de Sécurité, special units of paramilitary police that operate out of barracks and are used to break up protests. In 1968, demonstrators chanted "CRS = SS."

ers, like the Aubry Law instituting the 35-hour workweek⁴, have even been used by the bosses to “restructure” their workforce and lay off employees. It is not enough to talk of an “anti-capitalist” movement – it’s necessary to go further in the struggle for jobs and against racial exclusion to directly attack the system of production for profit.

In the Transitional Program, Leon Trotsky raised among his main demands the call for a *sliding scale of working hours*, to provide jobs for all. This embodies the principle of a socialist planned economy of dividing up the available work among those who seek it. A sliding scale of working hours must be accompanied by *workers action to stop mass layoffs*, such as those now threatening the jobs of tens of thousands of workers at Renault auto plants and France Télécom. Striking the affected plants will have little impact, so the struggle must be waged at the level of the entire industry, even Europe-wide. At the same time, in order to avoid abuse by the employers, which is inevitable with any youth jobs plan in the present framework, it is necessary to struggle for *workers control of hiring*. Impossible? It once existed in the printing industry, with the CGT Printers Union Federation. What is true, however, is that we can’t achieve these goals by the good graces of the (capitalist) state, it must be extracted from the bosses by the action of the workers movement, and such measures necessarily point toward workers revolution.

To combat the racist discrimination faced by the youth of the suburban ghettos, it is not enough to fight for demands that are common to all. While right-wing pro-business elements sometimes talk of “positive discrimination” against exclusion, they seek to divide the working people. But rejecting any special measures against ethnic discrimination smacks of “republican” color-blindness. That is why we fight for *trade-union training and hiring programs* for sectors of the youth that have historically faced discrimination and deprivation. This can be quite concrete: for example, there are Citroën and Renault auto plants, SNCF railway yards, the Roissy airport and other large establishments right near towns in the Seine-Saint-Denis district outside Paris that were the scene of riots last fall. A determined effort by workers in these sectors to attract youth from the near-by housing projects, to provide them with professional training and permanent jobs, not just temporary contract work with no outlook for stable employment, would go far in advancing the fight against racism and preparing a struggle of the whole of the working class against capital.

The struggle against racism also has a lot to do with the division between public and private sector workers, which has long bedeviled the French workers movement. The weakness of the unions in the private sector is directly linked to the fact that there are millions of immigrant workers there who constitute a strategic sector of the proletariat but who lack the rights of their co-workers who have French citizenship. This fact played a big role in the defeat of past struggles, in the auto sector and

⁴ Named after Martine Aubry, Socialist Party minister of employment in the popular front Prime Minister Lionel Jospin, the *loi Aubry* was passed in 1997, calling for the standard workweek to be reduced to 35 hours by the year 2000.

elsewhere, and is also the result of the abandonment of whole layers of the working people by the trade-union bureaucracy with its labor-aristocratic mentality. This is even more the case for the hundreds of thousands of undocumented workers who are forced to work “off the books.” And yet they represent an important part of the workforce which the capitalists depend on to supply the labor necessary for their system of production. Thus the demand for *full citizenship rights for all immigrants*, whether their papers are in order or they are undocumented, would lay the basis for a struggle uniting the working class against its common enemy, and would restore a vigor to the union movement that it has lost in recent decades.

This isn’t the first time that there has been a large-scale struggle over a program purporting to solve youth unemployment. Remember the 1994 battle over the “youth minimum wage,” the so-called “introductory professional contract,” proposed by conservative prime minister Edouard Balladur, who was forced by mass mobilizations of the youth and the unions to withdraw it after the law had been passed by the National Assembly. Nevertheless, in the current struggle against the CPE, in the face of the determination of the government and the bosses, it is unlikely that victory can be won simply by a few big demonstrations. The logic of the struggle is heading toward a general strike – not a holiday with a parade, which is how the pro-capitalist labor bureaucracy conceives of it, but a real test of strength between the proletariat to determine who is the master of the house. Yet at present there are no ongoing strikes. To advance in this direction, what’s called for is to undertake strike movements in sectors linked to the fight against the CPE, beginning with education and enterprises affected by the government’s privatization offensive.

Teachers have had a strong presence in the recent mobilizations, but as was the case in the student struggle last year, although most of the universities and many *lycées* are on strike or “disrupted,” the teachers have so far not struck themselves. They should do so. It’s necessary to fight in the teachers unions (FSU, SNESup and others) for a national education strike, even if this begins with walkouts in traditionally “hot” sectors, as is always the case, for example, in the 93rd *département* (Seine-Saint-Denis). Workers at Gaz de France and the Suez water workers, whose jobs are threatened due to a fusion announced by the government in the name of “economic patriotism,” have already made connections between their struggle and that of the youth. But it is necessary to go over to action, and that requires a fight against the bureaucracy, which much prefers tête-à-tête discussions in the offices of the ministries to hard struggles in the plants. But the real stakes in the battle over the CPE are political.

Not A New Popular Front – For Workers Revolution!

The reformists look to the formation of a new “popular front,” a new class-collaborationist alliance with the bourgeoisie, whether it’s called the Union of the Left or something else, in order to chain the workers to their class enemy. Of course, they have their differences. The Communist Party

(PCF), in a family reunion of left-wing organizations held in the Mutualité meeting hall on February, is trying to cobble together a bloc which would extend to the Socialist Party (PS) and Left Radicals (PRG)⁵. That would mean overcoming – or rather, ignoring – major differences, for example over the 29 May 2005 referendum on the European Union constitution. There the PS leadership voted “yes” while the rest of the left (and much of the Socialists’ ranks) said “no.”

The Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire (LCR), on the other hand, is asking for an “antiliberal and anticapitalist bloc” (letter to the PCF, published in *Rouge*, 16 March) which would exclude the PS. But to pretend that an alliance with the PCF, the PRG and the Citizens’ Movement (MDC) of Jean Pierre Chevènement⁶ would be somehow “anticapitalist” is a lie, pure and simple. One way or another, these proposed alliances represent the scourge of the popular front, whose aim is to prevent independent action by the working class and to oblige it to respect the rules of capitalism.

The LCR says what’s needed is to “beat this government,” because “this power is illegitimate” (*Rouge*, 23 March). Now Alain Krivine and his comrades discover the illegitimacy of the regime, but back in 2002 the LCR encouraged voting for Chirac on the second round of the presidential election, in the name of beating Le Pen – as did the vast majority of the left, either openly or with a benevolent wink of the eye. For the LCR, this wasn’t entirely a novelty, since it had already given its backing to Chirac’s foreign policy during the war against Serbia in 1999, when it called on the European imperialists to watch over human rights in Yugoslavia. Today, the government that Krivine & Co. helped put in power, and for which they therefore bear their share of responsibility, is attacking the youth.

If the pseudo-Trotskyist LCR is seeking a repeat of the political bloc over the “no” vote on the European constitution, other groups which lay claim to the mantle of Trotskyism take refuge in reformist economism. Lutte Ouvrière (LO) calls for withdrawing the CPE/CNE because they are laws that aggravate job instability. Its solution: “The only way to really reduce unemployment is to ban layoffs and force large enterprises to devote their profits to financing job maintenance, rather than distributing them to shareholders” (editorial by Arlette Laguiller⁷ in *Lutte Ouvrière*, 24 February). With whose army, one is tempted to ask, does LO think it can require the state to “ban” layoffs and the capitalists to finance jobs instead of profits? Behind this demand is a dangerous social-democratic illusion in the “neutrality” of the bourgeois state, which in reality is the armed fist of the ruling class. Worse yet, during the revolt by ghetto youth last year, LO repeatedly condemned “violence” in

general, using Sarkozy’s language about “thugs” and expressing its solicitude for the police on duty in the suburbs:

“The daily violence in these neighborhoods is perhaps the product of thugs and drug traffickers. But these thugs have always been around, so why do they today have the support of a large part of the youth? Why do the explosions of violence bring many more youth up against the police than just the petty neighborhood gang leaders?”

–“Suburbs: Who is really responsible for the violence,” *Lutte Ouvrière*, 4 November 2005

What a disgrace! Even if LO puts the ultimate responsibility on the government, it is playing the game of racist reaction, just as LO has done in the past toward the fascists of Le Pen’s National Front (which it denies is fascist), toward the cops (who it wrongly considers part of the working class), and with its support to the racist exclusionary law against headscarves.

The current mobilizations against the CPE have taken up where the October-November 2005 revolts in the suburban ghettos subjected to racist and social segregation left off. If that revolt remained isolated, this was above all the fault of the reformist left, which didn’t lift its little finger to go to the aid of the youth in the projects besieged by Sarkozy’s cops. When the government whipped up a xenophobic and racist hysteria about an invasion of “Arab” and black youth descending on the elegant Champs-Élysées in downtown Paris, the LCR, LO and

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League for the Fourth International

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⁵ The Radical Party was the mainstay bourgeois party of the French Third (1870-1940) and Fourth (1945-1958) Republics, consisting mainly of government employees. The Left Radical PRG is a minor bourgeois “progressive” formation which has been part of just about every popular-front coalition for the last 35-years, where it plays the role of guarantor for the bourgeoisie.

⁶ The MDC is a small populist group whose hallmark is French imperialist chauvinism.

⁷ LO’s perennial presidential candidate.

No Collaboration – Cops Out of the Unions!

Paris Demonstrators Demand: “Free Our Comrades!”

APRIL 8 – After more than two months in the streets, mobilizations are continuing across France against the vicious law establishing a “First Employment Contract” (CPE) that would let employers dismiss young workers without cause for up to two years. After the mammoth marches which brought out millions to protest, youth and workers together, the initiative has shifted to “*operations coup de poing*” (quick strike actions) in which protesters converge on a road or rail line to halt traffic.

On Thursday, April 6, a couple hundred demonstrators blocked the rails at Paris’ Gare de l’Est in the early morning; the crowd growing to 500 moved on Saint-Lazare station, a commuter train depot, swelling to more than 5,000. The protest then headed to the Garde du Nord, where for an hour and a half they shut down rail traffic, holding a picnic on top of a Thalys express train. At Orly airport outside Paris, access roads were blocked by scores of protesters. On Friday, students attempted to “hold the Council of State for questioning,” while scores of *sans-papiers* (undocumented immigrants) sat down outside La Santé prison.

Meanwhile, caravans of CRS riot police race around Paris with sirens blaring, occupying the Latin Quarter, sealing off the National Assembly, even if no demonstrations are in sight, mainly intending to intimidate. Throughout France the mobilization has continued. On Thursday, in Caen (Normandy) in the northwest, more than 2,000 occupied the railroad station, while hundreds of demonstrators cut off rail lines at Toulouse in the south, where students and unionists blocked roads into Airbus airplane factories. Rail lines were also blocked for hours by hundreds of demonstrators in Narbonne and Lille, and highways and turnpikes were blockaded outside Nantes, Rennes, Strasbourg, Nancy, Clermont-Ferrand and elsewhere.

The principal demand of this round of demonstrations was to end the repression and free hundreds of youths being held by the police. Altogether since the beginning of the protests, 3,682 people have been held for questioning (*interpellés*) by the police during and after marches, more than 1,500 have been placed in police custody (*garde à vue*), and some 600 turned over to the courts for prosecution. More than 220 have been judged in instant “trials,” often within 24 hours of their arrest, sometimes without a lawyer present to represent the accused. At least 60 have already been sentenced to prison terms (from *Libération*, 5 April and *L’Humanité*, 7 April).

Similarly last fall, in the course of 22 days of ghetto youth



Police in Place de la République, Paris, March 28.

“riots,” more than 3,100 people were put in police custody, 729 tried in on-the-spot trials and 422 convicted. Three out of four youths convicted for “acts of violence” (like throwing a bottle) were sentenced to prison (figures from Yann Moulier Boutang, *La révolte des banlieues, ou les habits nus de la République* [2005]). This procedure of immediate trials recalls what happened during the May 1968 revolt in Paris, which turned the call to “Free our comrades!” into a watchword of the movement. Now, as the minister of justice demands “a judicial response marked by rapidity and firmness,” the same demand is echoing from one end of France to the other.

The government and the police pretend that mass arrests are the response of police to gangs of *casseurs* (“smashers”) infiltrating the demonstrations, snatching cellphones and MP3 players, beating photographers, and the like. This picture is utterly false. There were some highly publicized incidents of theft and random violence by bands of largely (but not exclusively) minority youth from the suburban ghettos during a March 23 protest and a few cases since. Students from various schools have since formed contingents with their own marshals to avoid or minimize such occurrences. But the arrests have overwhelmingly come at the end of the marches as riot cops use force to disperse demonstrators, deliberately provoking violence.

The smell of police provocation is heavy in the air as clouds of tear gas waft over the protests. In the March 28 demonstration in Paris, television cameras caught plainclothes policemen wearing stickers of the Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire (LCR) mixing in with marchers. LCR mar-

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Behind the War in the Antiwar Movement

Opportunists Squabble Over How to Tail After Democrats

Mobilize Workers' Power to Defeat Imperialist War!

The following article was distributed as an Internationalist Group leaflet at the March 18-19 demonstrations against the war on Iraq.

MARCH 17 – On the third anniversary of the U.S. invasion of Iraq, the imperialist invaders are in deep trouble. With close to 200,000 “coalition” troops and mercenaries, plus an Iraqi puppet army, police and paramilitary forces of over 350,000,

they have been unable to reduce the insurgency. Well over 100,000 Iraqis have died as a result of the war and occupation, in addition to 3,000 deaths among the occupation forces (U.S., “allies” and “contractors”). After every bogus gunpoint election, the corrupt quisling politicians are at each others’ throats, dispelling any pretense of “democracy.” The Iraqi economy is a wreck, with oil production, electricity and water supplies still well below the levels achieved by Saddam Hussein, despite United Nations sanctions. The Iraqi strong man (and former CIA hit man) has made a mockery of the show trial against him, using it as a platform to denounce the “victors’ justice” and call for resistance to the occupation. And day by day, the country lurches toward full-scale civil war between Shiite, Kurdish and Sunni communalists.



Sue Kellogg

Contingent of the Internationalist Group and the Internationalist Clubs at the City University of New York at March 18 NYC march against war/occupation of Iraq.

Meanwhile on the home front, popular support for the war has gone up in smoke. The most recent polls show that 57 percent of the American public think the Iraq war was a mistake, 60 percent say the war is going badly or very badly, two-thirds say George Bush doesn't have a clear plan for dealing with Iraq. Last November, the first leading Democrat, Pennsylvania Congressman and longtime war hawk John Murtha, came out for pulling U.S. troops out of Iraq. Now even far right-wing Republicans like William F. Buckley are saying that the U.S. has “failed” in Iraq and that Bush's problem is “acknowledgment of defeat.” Currently, the administration wants to deflect attention from its Iraqi debacle by rattling U.S. nukes at Iran.

Yet even though the U.S. war machine is mired in the quick sands of the Near East, the “antiwar movement” is in the doldrums. It has long been rent by squabbling that has

**Throw Military Recruiters Out of the Schools!
For Workers Strikes Against the War – “Hot Cargo” Military Goods
Break with the Republicrats – For a Revolutionary Workers Party!**

now escalated to an internecine war that oscillates between cold and hot. This weekend each antiwar group is holding its own separate protest. In New York, the *Troops Out Coalition* (TOC) and its parent, the International Action Center (IAC) led by the Workers World Party (WWP), will demonstrate on March 18 at the armed forces recruiting station in Times Square. Simultaneously, *Not in Our Name* (NION), led by the Revolutionary Communist Party, will be at the army recruiting station in the Bronx. International A.N.S.W.E.R., led by the Party for Socialism and Liberation (PSL – a 2004 split from the WWP) will go to the Bronx recruiting station the next day. The *Campus Antiwar Network* (CAN), led by the Internationalist Socialist Organization (ISO), is limiting itself to low-key campus actions. And the other major player, *United for Peace and Justice* (UFPJ), led by the Committees of Correspondence for Democracy and Socialism (CoC) along with the Communist Party (CP), is making its big push a month later, on April 29.

Yet in their demands, these outfits hardly differ at all. They all call for “stop the war,” “bring the troops home,” and some variant of “money for jobs, not for war” – as if the imperialist slaughter in Iraq was a matter of foreign policy, budget priorities and U.S. casualties. From the standpoint of Marxism, of the revolutionary internationalist program of V.I. Lenin and Leon Trotsky, these antiwar coalitions are all class-collaborationist “popular fronts.” They seek to “unite” reformist pseudo-socialists with bourgeois liberals on the basis of cleaning up the U.S.’ act, appealing to the “peace is patriotic” crowd with calls like “Support our troops, bring them home.”

The Internationalist Group and League for the Fourth International fight instead to *defeat* U.S. imperialism and *defend* the peoples and countries under U.S. attack. In contrast to the opportunists’ red-white-and-blue appeals to “bring the troops home,” we call to *drive the colonial occupiers out of Iraq and Afghanistan*. Rather than spreading pacifist illusions about “stopping” the war, we call for *class war against the imperialist war*. We defend the right of the theocratic Iranian regime and the North Korean deformed workers state to get any weapons necessary to defend against the imperialist warmongers. Instead of tailing after “antiwar” Democrats, we fight for *workers strikes against the war*, for transport workers to “hot cargo” military goods and for building a *revolutionary workers party*.

So what is behind all the sniping between the competing pop-front antiwar coalitions? In a statement last December 12, the UFPJ announced it “Rejects Future Work with ANSWER.” The stated grounds were complaints about organizational problems in the Washington, D.C. march last September 24 that was co-sponsored by the two groups. ANSWER responded on December 16 with its own complaints, but beyond disputes over who went over their allotted platform time or was responsible for the lead banner ending up in the middle of the march, it pointed to broader political reasons for the UFPJ’s decision to break off relations. These include the latter’s unwillingness to include slogans in defense of the Palestinians against Israeli occupation as central demands of

antiwar demos; and “UFPJ’s increasing orientation toward and flirtation with the Democratic Party.”

ANSWER noted that “In the core of UFPJ’s leadership are political parties and organizations that worked tirelessly for John Kerry and the election of Democrats.” It accused the UFPJ, from its inception, of being on a “relentless path of splitting the movement,” and traced the disputes back to the 1990-91 Gulf War, when the predecessors of the UFPJ called for U.N. sanctions instead of U.S. invasion. It pointed to the “great excitement about John Murtha’s disaffection with the war” in the UFPJ, which wrote that the Pennsylvania Democrat “deserves praise and support for his courageous leadership.” Murtha isn’t for withdrawal of U.S. troops from the Near East, ANSWER points out, only for their “redeployment” somewhere outside Iraq. But, it quickly adds, “fewer U.S. soldiers...in harm’s way” would be “a welcome development.”

It is certainly true that UFPJ tailors its politics to the measure of the Democratic Party and bourgeois liberals generally. Its political complaints against ANSWER (laid out in an article by Bill Weinberg of the War Resisters League, “The Question of International ANSWER”) echo the litany of right-wingers and professional red-baiters like Christopher Hitchens, pointing to the WWP/IAC’s adulation of Serbia’s Slobodan Milosevic, Iraq’s Saddam Hussein and the Kim dynasty in North Korea, and the WWP’s support for the crushing of the 1956 Hungarian Revolution. In fact, Workers World split from Trotskyism to embrace Stalinists from Mao Zedong to Fidel Castro and Kim Il Sung, as well as nationalist anti-communist butchers like Milosevic and Hussein. Yet the central leadership of UFPJ is chock full of Stalinists and ex-Stalinist social democrats who also supported the suppression of the Hungarian workers uprising, hailed Kim, etc. What hypocrisy!

Seeking to cohabit with liberal Democrats is no preserve of the UFPJ. Workers World and its various offshoots have always done it. In the 1990s, they were the “best builders” of demonstrations for black Democrat Jesse Jackson. In fact, *all* the antiwar coalitions are desperately seeking Democrats to grace their speakers’ platforms – class collaboration is the name of their poplar-front game. The UFPJ is just cruder about it than the IAC/ANSWER/TONC. Thus in the run-up to the 2004 election, the UFPJ sponsored the huge march outside the Republican convention in NYC on the slogan, “No to the Bush Agenda” – not-so-veiled support for the “anybody but Bush” agenda of voting for Democrat John Kerry (who wanted more U.S. troops in Iraq) or at most for xenophobic populist Ralph Nader. Equally blatant is the RCP/NION whose latest campaign, “The World Can’t Wait – Drive Out the Bush Regime,” is endorsed by Democratic Congressmen John Conyers, Bobby Rush and Maxine Waters, Jesse Jackson Sr. and none other than Brig. General (retired) Janis Karpinski, the war criminal who commanded the Abu Ghraib torture prison in Iraq. Talk about shameless!

Under pressure from the right, ANSWER has lately been affecting an “anti-imperialist” stance. At a March 11 session of the annual Left Forum in New York, the UFPJ’s Leslie

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NYC Transit Workers, Teachers: **Defeat Imperialist War Abroad and Bosses' War "At Home"!**

The following leaflet was distributed at a February 8 delegates assembly of the United Federation of Teachers.

After almost three years of imperialist war on and occupation of Iraq, and four and a half years of occupation of Afghanistan, the U.S. slaughter in the Near East continues. More than 100,000 Iraqis have died due to the occupation, more than 750 killed in January alone, while well over 2,000 occupation troops have been killed. The U.S. military has been unable to wipe out or even make a serious dent in the entrenched insurgency, no matter how many phony "elections" it stages to mask the reality of its brutal colonial rule. The Iraqi economy is in shambles, oil production is still below the pre-war level, and corruption is rampant, from war profiteers like the Hailliburton Corp. down to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the army of "contractors" that has swarmed over the country like a plague of locusts.

Meanwhile, in the U.S., the government at all levels (federal, state and local) created a man-made disaster in New Orleans, leaving over 100,000 overwhelmingly poor and black people to die in the floods after Hurricane Katrina, deliberately blocking aid efforts, putting the city under martial law, closing down public education and now "ethnically cleansing" tens of thousands of impoverished black residents who won't be allowed to return as the rulers try to turn the city into Las Vegas on the Mississippi. This isn't "negligence" or "incompetence," it is a racist war on minorities. And it goes hand in hand with a war on labor, as the union-busting offensive continues. In the Appalachian coal fields, miners are murdered by criminal bosses and their government who don't give a damn about workers' safety.

But workers have the power to *defeat* the imperialist war abroad and the bosses' war "at home." What's required is a leadership with the program and determination to take on a rapacious ruling class.

In New York City, the billionaire mayor, billionaire head of the Metropolitan Transit Authority and multi-millionaire governor, Republicans all, denounced the hard-working under-paid transit workers as "greedy," "thugs" and "rats" for daring to strike against the MTA's takeback demands. The Democratic attorney general slapped million-dollar-a-day fines on the Transport Workers Union Local 100, and thousand-dollar fines on each member under the union-busting Taylor Law. But the TWU membership courageously voted down the giveback contract agreed to by the Local leadership under Roger Toussaint, and the battle is still on. The transit workers' fight is everyone's fight, and particularly teachers', as Mayor Bloomberg vows to force all city workers to pay for health care.

After themselves negotiating a giveback contract last October that among other things added 2-1/2 hours to the work-

week, the United Federation of Teachers leadership claimed to be "supporting" the transit workers but pointedly refused to endorse their strike. In fact, according to behind-the-scenes reports in the bourgeois press, UFT president Randy Weingarten put the screws on Toussaint to put an end to the walkout, and was instrumental in cooking up the sellout "deal" that the TWU ranks just rejected. This reveals how hollow is Weingarten's sometime talk of maybe some day striking. Now the UFT Delegates Assembly is scheduled to hear a report from Toussaint. Instead of a lot of hot air, the UFT should initiate a labor mass demonstration against the Taylor Law, during working hours, and announce that the UFT is walking out if the TWU leaders are jailed.

After it was postponed at the last meeting of the UFT leadership, the February Delegates Assembly is supposed to vote on an antiwar resolution. The leadership has a motion "urging a commitment from our country's leaders to bring our troops home rapidly" and incorporating an AFL-CIO Executive Committee resolution that "supports the brave men and women deployed in Iraq." Of course, the UFT leaders like the AFL-CIO tops are hardly antiwar. From Vietnam to Yugoslavia and Afghanistan, they have supported the marauding U.S. imperialists. But since the occupation has bogged down in the quicksand of Iraq, some Democratic Party politicians, led off by Pennsylvania Congressman John Murtha, have decided to come out for withdrawal of U.S. troops sometime "soon." They don't want U.S. imperialism to suffer a humiliating defeat, as it did (in very different circumstances) in Vietnam, which would undercut Washington's ability to threaten to nuke Iran or North Korea.

But the UFT tops are not the only ones supporting this *social-patriotic* resolution. A bloc of leftist dissidents, UFTers to Stop the War, including supporters of various would-be socialist or even communist groups, wants to *amend* the leadership motion by stiffening it a little, changing the call for a "rapid" withdrawal to "immediate" withdrawal. They want the UFT to "publicize and provide resources for the upcoming antiwar demonstrations," and to join U.S. Labor Against the War. Their amendments do *not* remove the repeated references to the "brave" U.S. occupation forces. Does that include the military torturers at Abu Ghraib, or the forces that laid waste to Falluja? While many poor and minority youth get seduced or induced into the military by promises of paying for college and other bribes, and although the real criminals are their commanders, from the top brass in the Pentagon to the White House and the capitalist politicians in Congress that voted for the war, the fact remains that this is a "volunteer" army.

Yes, the government is paying tens of billions on the war

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Government Backs Down...

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the reformist Socialist and Communist parties as well as the major components of the (not very) "far left," which after the experience of the Mitterrand popular fronts of the 1980s and '90s have long since become housebroken parliamentary and union reformists. Whether modeled on Mitterrand's "Union of the Left," Jospin's "Plural Left" or some other variant going back to the 1930s, such popular fronts with sections of the bourgeoisie will only serve as roadblocks to revolution.

While there may be red flags in the recent French demonstrations, these struggles have in fact reawakened radical strivings among the youth. On the night of March 31, as Chirac announced his promulgation of the CPE (two weeks before he was forced to rescind it), thousands gathered in the Place de la Bastille to hear his talk. After loudly booing the president-who-would-be-king, columns of marchers took off for the Elysée presidential palace, the National Assembly and City Hall, only to be blocked by cordons of police. Passing the Palace of Justice, they chanted "Free our comrades." At the Opera, they cried out to attendees in formal attire, "The penguins are with us!" Finally they headed up to the Montmartre Heights, the cradle of the Paris Commune, where in 1871 the workers revolt was drowned in blood. And there they joined in singing, at 4 a.m., the Internationale.

To achieve a real victory, the combativity and élan shown in the recent revolt must be led by a conscious vanguard to become a struggle leading toward workers revolution. This includes raising demands for workers action against layoffs, union control of hiring and union training and jobs programs for groups subject to discrimination. Against Sarkozy's new immigration law, which would let France dispose of "surplus" immigrant workers just as Villepin's CPE would let employers dispose of young workers "like Kleenex," it is necessary to fight for full citizenship rights for all immigrants. Real workers self-defense groups should be formed in the course of defending the besieged residents of the suburban ghettos from police assault.

The struggles of youth and workers in France must be joined with those of working people throughout Europe. On the same day as 700,000 people marched in Paris on March 28, 1.5 million British workers struck over attempts by Tony Blair's "New Labour" government to gut their pensions, while German public workers have been on strike for weeks. Workers and youth throughout Europe must take up the struggle against the police-state measures of their rulers, who want to put the whole of society under 24-hour video surveillance. The fight over jobs must be part of a struggle to defeat the imperialist war drive, not only the U.S./British-led invasion and occupation of Iraq, but also the colonial occupation of Afghanistan and of Bosnia and Kosovo, in which all the NATO imperialists are involved.

Above all what's needed, in France and everywhere, is an authentic Bolshevik-Leninist vanguard nucleus, key to building a revolutionary-internationalist workers party in the struggle to reforge Trotsky's Fourth International as the world party of socialist revolution. ■

Mobilize Workers...

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the rest of the "far left" of yesteryear preferred to hold small, belated demonstrations in the Tuileries gardens and in the Latin Quarter instead of intervening in the unions to march on the housing projects and liberate the residents encircled by the police. As for the PCF and PS mayors and elected representatives in the former "red belt" around Paris, they called for police reinforcements even as they criticized the state of emergency as useless. No left group, to our knowledge, put forward the elementary demand at that time of *cops out of the projects!* That was also the case of the left-centrist Ligue Trotskyste de France (LTF), although it did raise the correct slogans of "French troops out of Africa" and "Cops out of the unions." Nor did the LTF call for workers mobilizations in defense of the ghetto population, or for union measures to combat the racist exclusion of youth of immigrant origins from obtaining jobs.

A frontal clash is looming between the workers and the bourgeoisie, unless Chirac and the deputies of the "presidential majority" decide to dump the unelected prime minister, this ambitious would-be Napoleonic figure, and drop the CPE in order to save their own skins in the next electoral round. The presence in the streets of hundreds of thousands of youth and working people is an important asset in the resistance against the government's attacks. De Villepin is openly playing for time, hoping the situation will deteriorate, but without success. So far, his tough talk hasn't succeeded in breaking the movement or weakening the mobilizations. Yet the union bureaucrats are ever-ready to seize offers for "dialogue," and we have seen them weaken when invited to join the prime minister in his office at Hôtel Matignon. These labor lieutenants of the bourgeoisie, whose job is to grease the gears of the capitalist state machinery, fear class conflict and hate revolution "like the plague."

While the newspapers insist on the fact that this is not "another 1968," that the struggle of the youth is above all defensive for now, it is obvious that only a revolutionary outcome, "a May '68 that goes all the way," can wrench out the right to jobs for all and sweep away racism, which is inherent in capitalism. Even as they refuse to say the words, the union tops of the CGT, FO and CFDT labor federations are well aware, as is the government, that things are heading toward a general class confrontation. They barely avoided this in 1995 in the battle over Alain Juppé's pension "reform" (when de Villepin, then Chirac's presidential chief of staff, reportedly urged the prime minister "not to give in to the street"), sacrificing the struggle in favor of a prospective popular-front government under the baton of Lionel Jospin. They are trying to do the same today. Thus in order to take this class battle forward to a successful outcome, it is necessary above all to fight for a revolutionary policy and leadership which rejects class collaboration and popular-frontism *on principle*, and which poses the task of forging a revolutionary and internationalist, Leninist-Trotskyist, workers party, to lead the struggle for international socialist revolution. This is the program of the League for the Fourth International. ■

Murder in a Non-Union Mine – Blood for Profits

Capitalism Killed West Virginia Miners

Bob Bird/AP



Sago Mine where blast killed 12. Non-union mine had over 350 safety violations in 2005.

JANUARY 12 – While most of the country was sleeping off New Year's Eve parties and New Year's Day bowl games, at 6:30 a.m. on January 2 two teams of workers at a West Virginia coal mine were headed down into the shaft. Suddenly a huge explosion sent sheets of mud, coal and chunks of rocks hurtling with the force of a hurricane, blowing down concrete barriers set up to direct airflow. The second team was able to don respirators and grope along the wall back to the surface and safety. But the advance team of 13 miners was cut off by the blast, and sought to take refuge in an isolated corner of the mine, putting up plastic sheeting in an attempt to keep out the deadly carbon monoxide as they waited for rescuers. *Forty hours later*, rescue teams finally reached the crew, all dead but one, who remains in critical condition.

Those miners did not have to die. This was not an unforeseeable accident but *cold-blooded murder for coal company profits*. For all the talk of a high-tech economy, the country runs on energy, and as King Cotton was built on slavery, King Coal runs on workers' blood. Just as it did back when Rocky Mountain miners and their families were shot down by Rockefeller's gun thugs and state troopers in Ludlow, Colorado in 1914. Just as it did when the Appalachians were wracked by the coal mine wars like the 1920 Matewan massacre.

Sago was a non-union mine, and everyone knew it was unsafe: the mine owners knew it, the government knew it (they cited it for hundreds of safety violations), and the miners knew it – but they went to work anyway, because they feared for their jobs. Up to the 1970s, miners in the United Mine Workers (UMWA) union had the right, won through hard class struggle, to simply walk off the job if they considered conditions to be unsafe. Not so today. The worst West Virginia mine disaster in almost 40 years is the product of the destruction of labor unions and shredding of union gains throughout the U.S., and particularly of the downfall of the UMWA. And *that* is the direct result of the lack of a revolutionary leadership of labor with the program and determination to take on and defeat the bosses in the unrelenting class war.

The murder at Sago mine poses fundamental issues for the entire working class, not least New York City transit workers who courageously struck over issues vital to all (health care, pensions) only to be sold out by their union leaders who vainly sought reach an accommodation with billionaire bosses and politicians who were out for workers' blood.

Twelve miners did not have to die. They could have had hand-held radios with antennas in the shafts, like at the Willow Creek mine in Price, Utah, where miners were alerted to

escape when a fire broke out in 1998. Military imaging technology which today is used to detect and murder Iraqis could have been used to locate the trapped miners. New technology could be developed to replace oxygen canisters and ventilation equipment that haven't changed in 20 years. Century-old technology could be used to wipe out debilitating diseases like "black lung" which still takes 1,500 miners' lives a year. But this won't happen under capitalism, which extracts its profits from workers' blood. Always has and always will. *We need a revolution.*

Sago: A Death Trap Mine

The Sago mine disaster quickly became notorious as millions around the country watched the unfolding tragedy on television. We saw the callousness of the mine bosses and state officials, who reported that 12 miners were alive, even claiming they were being examined by doctors, and let this go uncorrected for hours after they knew the report was false. While the families were singing "Amazing Grace" full of hope and preparing dinners for their loved ones, the CEO was holed up in the company offices plotting "spin control." When he finally emerged to announce that there had been a "miscommunication" and the miners were dead, anguished family members cried out "liar" and "hypocrite." One woman lunged at the company president, who was quickly spirited out the door by state police.

The unfolding tragedy was broadcast as a real-life "reality TV" show, with Fox's Geraldo Rivera invading the sanctuary of the Sago Baptist Church to shove a microphone in the faces of the miners' families, CNN's Anderson Cooper trying for a repeat of his emotional Hurricane Katrina coverage and anchor Paula Zahn interviewing the local pastor in the aftermath saying that it was all part of "god's plan." No, it was part of a *company* plan, to boost profits by cutting costs. "It's not an act of god, it's an act of guys – guys exploiting other guys!" spat out labor chronicler Studs Terkel (*Chicago-Sun Times*, 6 January). What about the couple hundred safety violations at the mine last year, he asked, for which the company was fined between \$60 and \$440 each? "It's like 2 cents" for a big corporation like the International Coal Group – chicken feed. Miners' deaths? They call in the insurance adjusters.

All down the line, safety measures that should have been taken weren't. Miners were not equipped with potential life-saving equipment. The company was a notorious asset-stripping outfit specializing in gutting and reselling formerly unionized plants. But beyond the specific abuses, neglect and crimes of the mine owners, the West Virginia miners were victims of a criminal *system* in which workers' safety and lives are sacrificed to bolster the companies' bottom lines, and the government is there to back up the murdering bosses. Like the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans, where 100,000 overwhelmingly black poor people were left to die; like the U.S.' imperialist war and occupation of Iraq, which has slaughtered tens of thousands of Iraqis, the Sago mine disaster laid bare the workings of *capitalism*, which feeds off the misery of its victims and mercilessly exploits those who produce the wealth.

Look at the Sago mine disaster in detail and you will see how *capitalism kills*.

For starters, *Sago had no rescue team*. Under the Mine Safety Act of 1977 there must be two qualified rescue teams at every mine. Too expensive, whined the coal bosses. So subsequent regulations permitted mine owners to contract out. By the end of 1999, of the 921 working mines in the United States only 80 had even one rescue team. The rest made arrangements with one of these mines, with a state-sponsored team or a private contractor. Although it is now legally required that there be a qualified rescue team within two hours of every mine, the first unit didn't arrive at Sago until four and a half hours after the blast. Even then, they were held back by company officials and rescuers did not enter the mine until almost 12 hours after the explosion, by which time almost all of the trapped miners had died.

Moreover, *Sago mine was cited hundreds of times for serious safety violations* by the U.S. Mine Safety and Health Administration, some 208 times in 2005 alone, 96 of them judged "serious and substantial." That's on top of 144 violations listed by state inspectors. On 18 occasions, inspectors issued "withdrawal orders," stopping production in parts of the mine. In 17 cases, the MSHA citations were for "unwarrantable failures," the most inexcusable cases, which the main operators were aware of but hadn't fixed. The latest one, on December 14, found coal in piles of six to eight inches deep along the walls and roadways, accumulations of highly explosive coal dust, and inadequate spreading of limestone to prevent it from igniting. "The operator has shown a high degree of negligence for the health and safety of the miners that work at this coal mine by allowing the conditions to exist," the MSHA inspector wrote (*Charleston Gazette*, 11 January). It is possible that on January 2, coal dust was ignited by escaping methane gas set off by a spark or a sudden drop in barometric pressure due to a lightning storm.

Under federal statute, a "fire boss" has to inspect the mine shafts before every shift. Twelve times last year, inspectors found pre-shift examinations of the Sago mine were inadequate. In addition, more than a dozen times in the last six months the mine reported accidental roof falls, an alarming rate. These frequent accidents produced an injury rate of 17 injuries per 200,000 hours worked, almost triple the national rate of 6.54 for similar mines (*Charleston Gazette*, 10 January). Ellen Smith, editor of *Mine Safety and Health News*, noted that several comparable underground coal mines in West Virginia (Kingston Mining No. 1, Mountaineer Alma A, Robinson Run, Blacksville No. 2, Loveridge No. 22) had rates ranging from 1.21 to 5.62, all below the national average, and that despite MSHA citations, things got worse at Sago in 2005.

For its violations, *ICG was fined a pittance* – \$24,000 last year, compared to profits of \$15 million in the first three quarters of 2005. *They just write it off as a cost of doing business*. Other coal operators don't even bother to pay. According to federal records, since 2000 some 84 mines have not paid any citation against them exceeding \$10,000, but nothing is done about it. In Pike County, Kentucky Midgard Mining has had

more than \$350,000 in accumulated fines since 1996; they paid \$700 in 1998, and since then nothing. When asked why potentially life-saving technologies were not used, the head of safety for the National Mining Association replied cavalierly that it was not their responsibility to develop safety equipment: "We're not in the self-rescuer manufacturing business" (quoted in the *New York Times*, 11 January).

A long-time mine safety inspector and expert, Tony Opegard, told the *Charleston Gazette* that the violations at Sago were so flagrant that they "should be referred to the U.S. attorney for possible criminal prosecution." Another expert, Jack Spadaro, who was head of the MSHA National Mine Safety and Health Academy in Beckley said the Agency should have closed down the mine for the egregious pattern of safety failures. MSHA chief Bob Friend said that it would require many months to establish a pattern of violations. The ICG is hiding behind the claim that it only completed its takeover of Sago mine last fall. Yet *Gazette* reporter Ken Ward Jr. established that ICG owner Wilbur Ross has effectively controlled the mine since 2001, when he acquired 47 percent of Anker Coal Group, the previous owner. *But to expect the bosses' government to shut down the coal bosses is to sow dangerous illusions.*

Mine Owner, a Notorious "Vulture Investor," Is a Democrat

The story of this death trap mine in Upshur County, West Virginia leads straight from the Appalachian hills and hollows to Wall Street, the heart of international finance capital. The boss man at Sago is Bennett Hatfield, but the ultimate owner, Ross, is a New York billionaire and "vulture investor." He specializes in buying up bankrupt or near-bankrupt plants, stripping their assets, dumping pension plans, slashing wages, cutting safety measures and then selling off the now "profitable" company at a huge mark-up. Ross was notorious as the "bankruptcy king," as *Fortune* magazine labeled him in 1998, or the "bottom feeder king," as *New York* magazine called him in 2004. The ICG was formed in 2004 as a holding company, which now owns 21 mines, all non-union. (Sago used to be unionized when it was owned by Pittston.)

Before forming the International Coal Group, Ross organized the International Steel Group, put together out of the Cleveland steel mills on other assets of the bankrupt LTV Corp., in the process eliminating pension and health benefits of 82,000 retirees. Later he added Bethlehem Steel. In 2003, he formed the International Textile Group by acquiring the bankrupt Burlington Industries and Cone Mills in North Carolina. An article by Andrew Pollack on "The Man (and the System) Behind the Mining Murders" that appeared on *Monthly Review's* MRzine (6 January) notes:

"Some may see Ross's story as one of a particularly avaricious man savaging the workforces of one industry after another. More accurately, however, it is a story of the system whose cyclical nature creates the need for men (and women) like Ross, who drive its component parts through inevitable reorganization required by the destruction of old, and the creation of new, capital (concentrating and centralizing it in the process)."

The "robber barons" of the late 1800s – J.P. Morgan in rail, John D. Rockefeller in oil and coal, Andrew Carnegie in steel – used similar and even more energetic methods, snatching up bankrupt companies to build their industrial empires.

Various Democratic Party liberals, labor reformists and pseudo-socialists have sought to portray the West Virginia mine murders as basically another crime of the George W. Bush regime. "George Bush's cutbacks and the greed of Wilbur Ross killed them," declares the International Action Center. This is also the editorial line of the *Charleston Gazette*. Former Clinton administration mine safety officials have been scathing about the deterioration of conditions in recent years. The Bush administration has certainly done its best to gut miners' safety, notably by putting mining industry officials in charge of the MSHA, slashing mine inspectors' jobs and dropping a mine rescue improvement initiative in 2002. Up to a few years ago there was an Agency rescue unit available in nearby Morgantown, for example, but no longer. Yet the assault on occupation safety is a bipartisan effort by the capitalist parties. The United Mine Workers has been bitterly complaining about the "depletion" of the rescue units since 1995, when the Democrats controlled the federal government.

Moreover, International Coal Group owner and "vulture investor" Wilbur Ross is no Bush Republican but a prominent Democratic Party money man. Ross was a big-time contributor for Bill Clinton, and is friends with John Kerry. He also funded the campaign of his (now ex-) wife, Betsy McCaughey, who ran as the Democratic candidate for governor of New York against Republican Pataki in 1998. Not only that, Ross was able to use his ties with Democratic Party union leaders to leverage his way into buying up the bankrupt steel and textile mills. United Steelworkers (USWA) chief Leo W. Gerard said that he found "a breath of fresh air" from Ross. "Wilbur and his people actually cared about what we had to say" (*Business Week*, 22 December 2003). UNITE HERE president Bruce Raynor was even more effusive, gushing: "I really think the future of domestic manufacturing is people like Wilbur Ross."

Labor "Reformers" Chained UMWA to the Capitalist State

So the bankruptcy king promises to deliver a few hundred union jobs (after *thousands* were laid off), with big cuts of wages and benefits, and the bankruptcy king gets thumbs up from the pro-capitalist labor fakers. (The USWA was so "flexible" that at Ross's ISG, workers went for more than a year without a union contract.) But in coal, Ross insisted on shutting down union operations. When the ICG and Massey Mining carved up Horizon Natural Resources in 2004, they eliminated medical coverage for 1,000 active miners and 2,300 retirees, mainly in Kentucky. The Sago mine murders are a result of this union-busting offensive, and miners know it. John Bennett, whose father James was killed in the mine, told Matt Lauer of the NBC Today (4 January) show, "It's not just the men that go down there every day that know the mines is unsafe... we have no protection for our workers. We need to get the United Mine Workers back in these coal mines, to protect [against] these safety violations, to protect these workers."



Cops battle striking West Virginia miners in Charleston, 25 August 1975.

That is certainly true, and every class-conscious worker has to ask: *why* isn't the UMWA in those mines now? The steady string of union defeats over the last three decades is a direct result of the sellout policies of the leadership. Instead of waging hard class struggle against the bosses, their politicians and their government, the labor bureaucracy which presides over the unions subordinates the workers to capitalists like Wilbur Ross, to the capitalist state in general and to the capitalist Democratic Party in particular. What's more, various supposed socialists and self-proclaimed "revolutionaries" who posed as alternatives to the hidebound bureaucrats helped tie the workers to sectors of the ruling class. In the UMWA this came to fore in the early 1970s with the rise of Miners for Democracy (MFD) and the victory of its candidate, Arnold Miller, in 1972.

The MFD arose in response to the corrupt and gangster-ridden regime of Tony Boyle, who had ordered the mob rub-out of his union rival Jock Yablonski when he ran for UMWA president in 1969. Boyle was a real pal of the coal operators, praising Consolidation Coal for its "safety-mindedness" right after the 1968 explosion at the Consol No. 9 mine in Farmington, West Virginia when 78 miners died. What was called for then was to build a powerful class-struggle opposition against the Boyle gang among rank-and-file miners. Instead, advised by Democratic Party lawyers, the MFD asked the government (in this case, the Labor Department under President Richard Nixon!) to overturn the Mine Workers election and order a rerun. This is crossing the class line, bringing the bosses' government into the workers movement. We say: Labor must clean its own house!

When the courts ordered a new election and "reform" candidate Miller was elected, the result was to place the union under even more direct government control. The vast majority of the left at the time supported the MFD, including the Communist Party, Socialist Workers Party and others. In no time, Miller was sabotaging miners' struggles, such as the bitter 1973-74 strike at the Brookside mine in Harlan County, Kentucky. (Miller's betrayals are shown, but not explained, in the movie *Harlan County, U.S.A.*) Soon after, Miller was clamping down on huge wildcats involving up to 80,000 miners that swept through the West Virginia coal fields in 1975-76 demanding the right to strike over local grievances – in particular, safety

issues. Prior to the '74 contract, miners' Health and Safety Committees had the right to make unannounced mine inspections and workers had the right to walk off the job over dangerous working conditions. (We raised the demand for union safety committees with the power to shut down unsafe operations in last month's NYC transit workers strike.)

Even after the combined efforts of union misleader Miller, the Bituminous Coal Operators Association (BCOA) and the courts barely managed to defeat of the '75-'76 wildcats, and another two-month strike in the summer of 1977 over the BCOA's elimination of company-paid medical cards, the miners kept fighting. The battle came to a head in the 110-day coal strike of 1977-78, when mine workers twice voted down sellout agreements negotiated by Miller, faced down murderous company gun thugs and defied back-to-work orders under a Taft-Hartley injunction from Democratic president Jimmy Carter. Militant miners burned the contracts and burned Miller in effigy. A sign declared, "If this so-called *contract* is ratified it will *destroy* us and the UMWA." Only after almost six months on strike (counting the earlier wildcat) were the bosses able to defeat the miners, above all for lack of a class-struggle leadership adequate to the task of defeating the capitalists, their courts, their politicians and their puppet Miller.

Recently, an ex-New Leftist and a Maoist who were active organizing among West Virginia coal miners in the early to mid-1970s have posted articles about the Sago mine disaster on the Internet (*CounterPunch*, 4 and 7 January). One noted that the breakdown of safety conditions can be traced back to the elimination of the right to strike in the '74 contract negotiated by Miller: "To add insult to injury, it was the militant miners operating under the name Miners for Democracy that had elected these officers." True, but he might have added that the fake-leftists, including the Revolutionary Union (forerunner of the Maoist Revolutionary Communist Party), also gave "critical support" to Miller and the MFD. The Trotskyists, in contrast, including the founders of the Internationalist Group, refused to call for votes to the MFD which chained the once-powerful union to the bosses' government.

Oust the Bureaucrats, Break with the Democrats, For a Revolutionary Workers Party!

Leon Trotsky, co-leader together with V.I. Lenin of the Bolshevik Party which led the Russian October Revolution, underscored in his last, unfinished essay on "Trade Unions in the Epoch of Imperialist Decay" (August 1940) the need for a revolutionary opposition in the unions:

"The primary slogan for this struggle is: *complete and unconditional independence of the trade unions in relation to the capitalist state*. This means a struggle to turn the trade unions into the organs of the broad exploited masses and not the organs of a labor aristocracy....

"The second slogan is: *trade-union democracy*. This second slogan flows directly from the first and presupposes for its realization the complete freedom of the trade unions from the imperialist or colonial state....

"The trade unions of our time can either serve as secondary instruments of imperialist capitalism for the subordination

and disciplining of workers and for obstructing the revolution, or, on the contrary, the trade unions can become the instruments of the revolutionary movement of the proletariat.” The Internationalist Group fights to build a genuine class-struggle opposition in the unions, based on a revolutionary program for the working class to break from the stranglehold of the capitalist parties and forge a workers party that fights for a workers government.

Back in the 1940s, the United Mine Workers stood up and fought against the government. In World War II, when the American Trotskyist leaders (and leaders of the Minneapolis Teamsters) were jailed for their opposition to the imperialist slaughter, long-time UMWA leader John L. Lewis defied the wartime no-strike pledge to wage bitter and successful coal strikes. After the war, shortly after Congress passed the union-busting Taft-Hartley Act outlawing “secondary strikes” and purging “reds” from union leadership positions, Lewis defiantly ordered a six-day walkout over the 1947 disaster that killed 111 miners in Centralia, Illinois. But Lewis was at bottom a pro-capitalist labor bureaucrat, and after first lining up with Democrat Franklin Roosevelt when the militant Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) was founded in 1936, he later broke with Roosevelt only to go over to the Republicans.

The fact that the mass opposition to the corrupt pro-company UMWA leadership under Tony Boyle was channeled into building a “reform” movement that was tied to the capitalist government was what crippled the miners union. The right to strike over safety was eliminated, and today the UMWA is a shadow of its former self, barely existing in West Virginia where its membership has fallen from 120,000 to a few thousand miners at most. Most mines, even in this heartland of coal field unionism, are today non-union. The mining companies do as they please, chopping off the tops of mountains, polluting creeks and rivers, and running mines like Sago that are literal death traps. Now the Democrats are calling for investigations by the Congress and the West Virginia state legislature, which will predictably go nowhere.

Sago miners were victims of the bosses’ war on the working people and the oppressed. This is the same war that is slaughtering Iraqis, and black poor people in New Orleans. We have to defeat this bosses’ war, both abroad and “at home.” Only by directly taking on the coal companies, the Democratic Party politicians like phony “friend of labor” West Virginia senator Jay Rockefeller, and the bourgeois state from George Bush on down will it be possible to prevent new Sago disasters. The struggle for a revolutionary workers party is key. ■

Mobilize Workers’ Power...

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Cagan faced off with ANSWER’s Brian Becker, who declared that it was necessary to go back to the Bolsheviks in World War I, that the Democrats supported the war, etc. But as a spokesman for the Internationalist Group noted in the discussion, ANSWER has always sought Democrats as star speakers for their antiwar demos. If they can’t get Jesse Jack-

son they’ll go for Dennis Kucinich, Al Sharpton or Charles Rangel. And, the IG speaker pointed out, in claiming to be guided by the Bolsheviks, Becker leaves out a key point: Lenin’s call for the *defeat* of “one’s own” imperialism in an imperialist war.

Anyone serious about combating imperialist wars would demand *capitalist politicians out*, as they are *all* defenders of a system of war, poverty and racism (and this goes for minor bourgeois parties as well, like the Greens and New York’s Working Families Party, who seek to keep the discontent of those who can’t stomach voting for the Democrats safely within the bourgeois electoral system). It is necessary to fight for the revolutionary class independence of the workers from all wings of the capitalist ruling class.

We Trotskyists call to *mobilize working-class struggle against the war*. In New York City, where Transport Workers Union Local 100 gave a demonstration of workers’ power in a three-day transit strike in December, a refusal by dock workers to handle war cargo or any strike action against the war by the transit workers would be worth a thousand “peace crawls” dominated by bourgeois politics.

Unlike fake leftists who call for “unity of the antiwar movement,” we say the capitalist war machine cannot be stopped by voting out the current war party or having a bigger peace parade. It’s not just “Bush’s war,” it’s a bipartisan war drive. It’s not just “neo-liberalism,” it’s capitalism. It’s not just “globalization,” it’s imperialism. It’s not a policy, it’s a system that will keep producing war after war after war until it is *smashed by international socialist revolution*. ■

Transit Workers, Teachers...

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while education is starved of funds. But this is not a question of budget “priorities” – what’s going on in Iraq is an imperialist slaughter. Class-conscious workers must defend the Iraqi peoples against the death and devastation being inflicted on them, and hail every blow against the colonial occupiers. Workers in the United States should fight against the war by using their class power, including launching strike action against the war. A refusal to handle war cargo by longshore unions, or a work stoppage by NYC transit workers would have many times the power of the toothless peace marches. Moreover, the various antiwar “coalitions” are once again squabbling even though they all call for “out now” and will all feed into the Democratic Party election campaigns in the fall.

Teachers and the UFT in particular should use their power to kick military recruiters out the schools, an issue the “progressive” amendments to the UFT tops’ motion doesn’t even mention.

Above all, it is urgently necessary to fight to break the working class from the stranglehold of the capitalist parties and politicians – Democrats and Republicans alike, as well as minor actors like the Greens, Nader, or shells for the Democrats like the “Working Families Party.” What the poor, minority, immigrant and working people need is a workers party fighting for a workers government. ■

“Free Our Comrades” ...

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shals confronted them and demanded that the undercover cops remove the badges. Yet a few hours later the same squads were again sporting LCR, Lutte Ouvrière, CNT (anarchist) and other union stickers on their jackets. In addition, a number of cops put on dreadlock wigs to disguise their presence (*Le Monde*, 5 April). Several of the photographers were beaten not by *casseurs* but by the police.

How the cops seek to instigate violence could be seen on March 28. At the end of the march at Place de la République, demonstrators were effectively trapped, with four of the six streets leading out of the square sealed off by police vehicles. This left thousands of people milling about in the large square. Squads of cops would periodically charge into the crowd to grab some youths. After a while, lines of police began pushing demonstrators back (although they had nowhere to go). As dusk fell a water cannon was used to drench the demonstrators.

Union Marshals Do Cops' Dirty Work

After the previous big demo, on March 18, where a similar police corral led to a couple of cars getting trashed, there was controversy over Interior Minister Sarkozy's plan to send cop “snatch squads” into the demonstration to grab “troublemakers.” Union officials objected, and said their *service d'ordre* (marshals squad) would take care of things inside the demo. But, outrageously, what this meant in practice was the union marshals doing the cops' dirty work. According to a report in *Libération* (29 March) CGT union goon squads went after some gangs of mostly black and Arab youths from the heavily immigrant poor and working-class suburbs:

“Suddenly the CGT [union federation] pounces on some ‘z’y va’ [referring to bands of ghetto youths], leading with fists, kicks and billy clubs. The ‘rogues’ take some heavy blows. The marshals squad of the CGT Printers Union finishes the job by handing over the troublemakers to the gendarmes stationed on the main streets leading into Place de la République. The collaboration was prepared by the Ministry of the Interior, the Paris Police Prefecture and the union marshals' squads.”

The next day, *L'Humanité* (30 March), the mouthpiece of the Communist Party, bragged that “Union marshals and police deployment were able to control violence along the line of march.” The article continued: “At 5 p.m. a line consisting of plainclothes police and union marshals diverts demonstrators arriving at the square. Separate anti-CPE militants and those looking for a fight. ‘We got them like in a mouse-trap,’ explained Joaquin Masanet,” head of the UNSA police “union.” More than 500 people were seized by the police that day, “a mixture of overdressed youths, anarchist militants, bystanders and journalists,” admits *L'Huma*.

This is a disgusting case of the union bureaucracy acting as deputy sheriffs for the machinery of capitalist state repression. It recalls how in the late 1970s the Italian Communist Party acted as finger men for the bourgeoisie against the Red Brigades and union militants in the factories. This is a graphic expression of what the “popular front” means in practice: the



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CGT and other unions ordered their marshals to go after “troublemakers.” Union goons beat youths with sticks and turned them over to police.

reformist, pro-capitalist left acting as guard dogs for the ruling class. This is the logic of organizing “unions” of police, the armed fist of the bourgeoisie. In contrast, revolutionaries demand: *Cops out of the unions! Release all those arrested in connection with the protests against the CPE! Drop all charges and annul all sentences against those arrested at anti-CPE protests and during the youth revolt in the suburbs last fall.*

The authorities are trying to set poor immigrant youth and white middle-class youth against each other. The oppressors fear that if those they oppress come together with working-class support it could threaten the regime. Yet what their heavy-handed tactics have achieved is to educate a new generation of youth in the harsh realities of the class struggle. Hundreds of thousands of youths have seen what the role of the police is.

Now the government wants to institutionalize its heavy-handed repression. A bill introduced on March 29 by Eric Raoult seeks to reintroduce key provisions of the 1970 “*anti-casseurs*” law, which was abrogated in 1981 for contradicting the principle of individual responsibility. Today “collective guilt” is back. Under the bill, organizers of demonstrations where there is violence against persons, or “destruction or damage caused to property” could be jailed for up to two years, even if they had nothing to do with the alleged actions. In addition, protest organizers who fail to order that the demo disperse after such destruction could also be jailed, as well as individuals who continued to participate in the gathering.

After ordering a “state of emergency” during the youth revolt last year, the government of the aging Gaullist warhorse Chirac, his would-be Napoleonic prime minister de Villepin and top cop Sarkozy is reaffirming its bonapartist appetites. While the reformist left yearns for a new “popular front” of class collaboration, the response to mounting repression must be to organize mass mobilization of the working class. Already several regional union bodies have called for a general strike. Councils of workers and students should be organized to prepare and carry out sustained strike action, locally, regionally and nationally. The only solution is a struggle for workers revolution, to sweep away the bourgeoisie's corruption and violence for good. ■

Transit Strike 2005 – Three Days That Shook NYC

Labor Should Shut Down NYC Over Jailing of Toussaint Government Hands Off the TWU!

Shred the Taylor Law with Mass Strike Action!

APRIL 24 – For the first time in 40 years, a New York labor leader is being imprisoned for leading a strike. In a supreme act of ruling-class vengeance, Judge Theodore Jones, at the instigation of the Metropolitan Transportation Authority, sentenced Roger Toussaint, president of Transport Workers Local 100, to ten days in jail for the NYC subway and bus strike. In addition, a \$2.5 million dollar fine was imposed on the Local, and the automatic payroll deduction of union dues was suspended, in a deliberate attempt to bankrupt the union. The bosses want to break the back of labor militancy, but New York City is still a union town. Now is the time to show it.

As Toussaint heads off to The Tombs, ironically named the Bernard B. Kerik Complex, after the corrupt former NYC Corrections Department chief and Rudolph Giuliani's chief of police, he will be accompanied in a march over the Brooklyn Bridge by hundreds and possibly thousands of transit workers and trade unionists. AFL-CIO chief John Sweeney will head it up along with Democrats Jesse Jackson and Al Sharpton. It is a sign of the widespread indignation over this "public flogging" of the union, as Toussaint called it, that Democratic Party politicians are scrambling to grab a place in the front lines. Of course, they won't mention that it was Democratic Attorney General Elliot Spitzer who issued the anti-strike injunction against the union under New York's Taylor Law.

But the fact that a union leader is going to jail and business continues as usual is an abomination. The entire New York City union movement should have struck over this vindictive attack on labor. In coming days, as different



Internationalist photo

Transit workers picket West Farms Road bus depot, December 21.

unions and TWU divisions show up in front of the jail on Centre Street, this should not be a peaceful "vigil" but a noisy, boisterous demonstration of opposition to the vicious union-busting Taylor Law. That slave-labor legislation must

Arbitration or an Imposed Contract? Hell No! Break with the Democrats – For a Class-Struggle Workers Party!

FORGE A CLASS-STUGGLE LEADERSHIP

Transit Workers, Fight to Win!

FEBRUARY 28 – The December New York City transit walkout was the first solid East Coast strike in years, and the first to defy a strikebreaking injunction in almost a quarter century: since the 1981 PATCO strike and the 1980 NYC transit strike. This year's three-day strike tied the city in knots. The ranks of Transport Workers Union Local 100 showed that not only does the TWU move New York, it can also bring New York to a screeching stop. Yet union members were sent back to work not because they had been defeated, or because of the union-busting Taylor Law, but because of the sellout by the Local leadership and the backstabbing of the International union tops. Local 100 president Roger Toussaint accepted a giveback contract which would force members to pay for their health care – a historic setback. But the union membership voted down the sellout deal.

What the strike showed above all was the need for a class-struggle leadership with the program and determination to take on the capitalist state and win. Yet not only the Local leadership, but also the union opposition failed to present such a program. The key to smashing the Taylor Law and winning the strike was to shut down all NYC transport. Metro North and PATH workers indicated they

would respect TWU picket lines, but neither the union leadership nor the dissidents sent pickets to key locations. As the union tops try to force the membership to vote again on the same rotten deal, and the MTA, city and state governments try to impose binding arbitration, transit workers should reform their ranks and prepare for all-out struggle. Key points of a program for victory include:

- Call Mass Membership Meetings to Set Demands
- Elect a Local 100 Strike Preparation Committee – No Secret Negotiations
- Form Committees in Every Barn and Shop
- No Cuts in Health Care or Pension, No Givebacks, Period!
- Appeal to Transit Unions (LIRR, Metro North, PATH) to Go Out with TWU
- Mobilize NYC Labor to Smash Strikebreaking Taylor Law
- Oust the Pro-Capitalist Bureaucrats, Forge a Class-Struggle Leadership
- Break with the Democrats – For a Workers Party and a Workers Government

be shredded, not by hat-in-hand lobbying in Albany, but by powerful strike action by workers throughout the state. The TWU must not be left to stand alone. Remember how Reagan busted PATCO while labor officialdom stood by.

Every union member had better know that the judicial vendetta against the TWU is aimed at all of us. The bosses figure that if they can stick it to Local 100, the powerhouse of city labor, they can stick it to anyone. In coming months they will try to use threats of multi-million dollar fines and jail time to intimidate union bureaucrats into swallowing giveback contracts, as Toussaint did, to his shame. But although the union chief called off the strike when it was going strong, the union membership was unbowed and rejected the sellout deal. Only after forcing a revote and waging a smear campaign against anyone who criticized the contract, was Toussaint able to shove it down their throats. Even then the MTA isn't buying. They're out for blood, and this won't be the end of it.

The three-day strike by more than 33,000 transit workers was a demonstration of workers power that shook the city's rulers to the core. Billionaire mayor Mike Bloomberg called the hard-working TWUers "greedy," and billionaire MTA chief Peter Kalikow didn't deign to show up at the bargaining table until an hour before the deadline, and then threw a "take it or leave it" "offer" on the table. When transit workers stood up and fought back, the capi-

talist politicians and bourgeois media tried to whip up an anti-strike frenzy, labeling the strikers "rats" and "thugs." But most New Yorkers stood by the transit workers, and the strikers held tough. It was the union leadership that buckled under the threats.

Various pundits have opined that Toussaint hopes to become a martyr by going to jail, speculating that it may help to get him reelected as Local 100 president in union elections later this year. Perhaps that is why the union executive board refused to appeal the jail sentence, while appealing the fine and suspension of the dues check-off. Be that as it may, jailing a union leader – even a sellout misleader – over a strike is a blow against all labor, and it must be vigorously fought. Remember the old IWW syndicalist slogan, "An injury to one is an injury to all!" Now more than ever.

The December 2005 New York City transit strike was a key battle for the workers movement throughout the country. The hard-line stance taken by the MTA, the mayor and governor is a harbinger of things to come. So, too, was the action by the union tops. New York City transit workers were seething over the previous wage-cut contract and the racist MTA discipline, the "plantation justice" in which half the membership gets written up every year. Thousands of TWUers streamed into the Javits Center to vote for a strike in early December. But although it put up a strike vote, the Toussaint

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Transit Strike 2005 – Three Days That Shook NYC

“A Bum Deal”: Rip It Up, Vote It Down! Workers Have the Power!

NYC Transit: Throw Back the Giveback Contract!

DECEMBER 28 – Nothing so concentrates the minds of Wall Street bankers, you might say, as much as the prospect of a New York City transit strike. So when the 33,700 workers of the Metropolitan Transportation Authority hit the bricks December 20, shutting down the largest mass transit system in the country, the reality of the walkout by Transport Workers Union Local 100 certainly got the bosses' attention. And everyone else's.

For two and a half days, the TWU strike was 100 percent effective. No subways or buses with passengers moved. The seven million riders who normally take the MTA daily had to scramble to find some other mode of transport. Or not. Many trudged on foot for miles. Even with elaborate emergency transportation plans, enforced carpooling and the like, Midtown Manhattan was tied up for hours with monumental traffic jams where nobody moved. There were scenes of mass chaos at Grand Central, Penn Station and Jamaica Station in Queens.

The union picket lines were large, spirited and solid, at more than three dozen sites in all five boroughs. At least a dozen locations had more than a hundred picketers each of strikers who came out every day. Holiday shopping took a nosedive and economists reported hundreds of millions of dollars a day in losses. Yet in spite of the hardships, and partly because of the racist vituperation against “greedy” and “thuggish” transit workers spewing out of the mouth of the billionaire mayor, the transit workers continued to enjoy wide public support.

According to an NY1 poll on December 22, more New Yorkers blamed the strike on the MTA than on the TWU, 54 percent thought what the union was asking for was fair, 51 percent though Mayor Bloomberg's handling of the strike was not so good or poor, and 69 percent gave Governor Pataki thumbs down. While white middle-class suburban commuters grouched about the strike in TV interviews, nearly three-quarters of blacks and Latinos, overwhelmingly poor and working-class, supported the TWU demands.

And yet, on Day 3 of the '05 New York transit strike, TWU Local 100 president Roger Toussaint caved in, called it off and ordered the strike lines taken down. TWU picket signs



Subway running again in Long Island City on December 23 after TWU Local 100 leaders call off strike. IG leaflet said: Transit workers move New York, they can shut down New York. Reject the giveback contract!

proclaimed, “No Contract, No Work,” yet Toussaint sent strikers back to work without a contract. Other signs proclaimed, “TWU Says: No Givebacks.” But yesterday, Toussaint presented a giveback contract which was rubber-stamped by a Local 100 executive board dominated by his supporters. *It was a sellout of the transit workers by their leadership.*

Sure, due to the strike, the MTA dropped its demand that newly hired transit workers pay 6 percent of their wages into the pension fund that management has underfunded for years. There's no two-tier contract with lower pay for new hires. Toussaint brags that they got “lifetime medical,” and “no broadbanding.” We'll see. The 3 percent, 4 percent and 3.5 percent annual pay hikes barely cover inflation. But now all union members will pay 1.5 percent of their wages for health care, previously entirely covered by the MTA. Plus \$1,000 fines for every TWU member under the anti-strike Taylor Law. All this, even though the MTA is sitting on a \$1 billion-plus surplus.

This is the proverbial camel's nose inside the tent. It's the opening wedge to stick transit workers with skyrocketing health care costs. Already, the *New York Post* (28 December) reports that the contract includes a clause saying “the union will have

Frank Franklin II/AP

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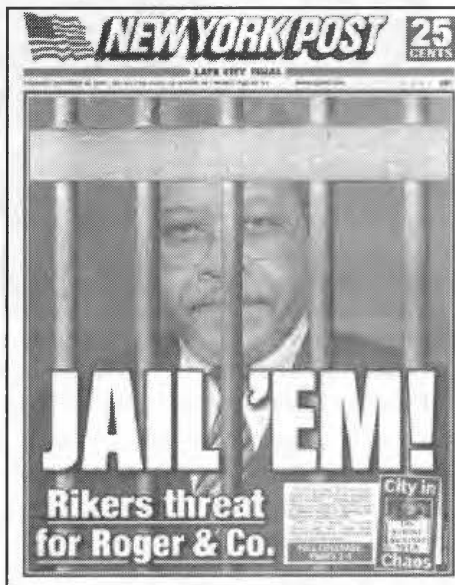
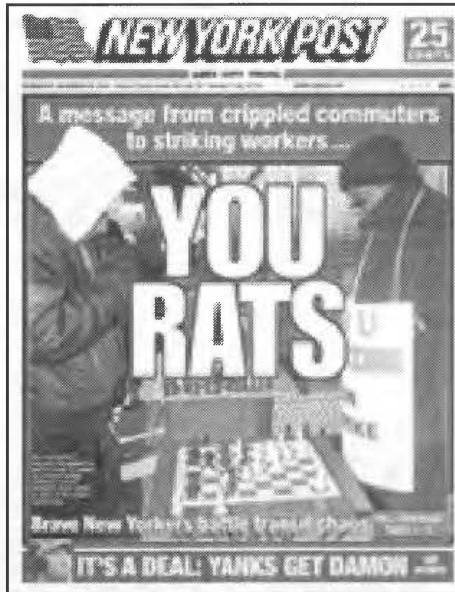
to kick in the difference if the cost of health care increases at a higher rate than their salaries do.” Soon Bloomberg & Co. will be demanding that all city workers be saddled with escalating medical insurance costs, and weaker unions will feel they have to follow the TWU’s lead.

But transit workers do not have to take this betrayal lying down. Today’s *New York Times* reported: “Earlier yesterday, negotiators from the union and the authority were discussing ways to sweeten the deal because of fears of widespread rank-and-file opposition. If the members vote down the settlement, it will put Mr. Toussaint and the transportation authority in a difficult position.” It sure as hell will. But pushing for a big “no” vote in a mail ballot is not enough. TWU Local 100 members must *prepare for an all-out struggle to win!*

A mail ballot is anti-democratic, isolating union members in their homes where they are subject to the blaring anti-strike propaganda from the capitalist media. Instead, TWU militants should demand that Local 100 call a *mass membership meeting to discuss and vote on the contract*. But this time, unlike December 10 at the Javits Center, the ranks should control the discussion instead of having a rally for the union tops. Bottom line: *no givebacks, period.*

If the giveback pact is voted down, an *elected strike preparation committee* with hundreds of members representing every subway yard and bus barn should be formed on the spot. This should be repeated at every union shop, electing delegates to a central strike council who can be recalled at any time, and forming local committees to mobilize the membership. But beyond the question of organization, what’s key is to have a *class-struggle program* going beyond demands for a few dollars more.

There was quite a lot of opposition in Local 100 to calling off the strike and there are several clots of dissidents in the leadership. This is not surprising since Toussaint was first elected in 2000 at the head of the New Directions “reform” slate, ousting the openly pro-management Sonny Hall/Willie James gang. The opposition groups which purport to be a more militant alternative to the present Local leadership actually share the basics of its program – they just ask for “more,”



Bosses’ press in foam-flecked frenzy over powerful NYC transit strike, calling to jail Transport Workers Union Local 100 president Roger Toussaint.

demands, begging for a few more crumbs from the table of MTA chief Peter Kalikow. Can’t trust Toussaint? They should know. They all supported him for Local 100 president, and ran on the same slate with him in 2000. They sued the union in the bosses’ courts back then, when the Hall-James crowd was running the local, and several of them are doing the same now with Toussaint, dragging the union into federal court over the undemocratic way Toussaint runs the union. This is crossing the class line to appeal to the enemy. We say: *Labor must clean its own house.*

An occasionally more militant-talking outfit is the Revolutionary Transit Worker, supported by the centrist League for the

like Toussaint did until he took office and began negotiating contracts for “less.”

Mike O’Brien, president of the TWU International, who showed up on the scene to denounce the strike and side with MTA management against Local 100, is an outright *labor traitor* who should be run out of the union movement. But even left-talking out-bureaucrats like New Directions end up carrying out pretty much the same program of cutbacks when they get into office. Soon they hang up their windbreakers and don expensive suits so they can socialize with Democrats like Hillary Clinton and Freddy Ferrer, who are all for using the Taylor Law against the TWU. These labor fakers are *agents of the bourgeoisie within the ranks of labor.*

Look at the programs of the union dissidents. The *Rank and File Advocate* put out a four-page tabloid earlier this month calling for a larger raise, better medical benefits, an improved pension, no givebacks, etc. Local 100 executive board member Steve Downs (a supporter of the social-democratic Solidarity outfit) wrote that “Toussaint cannot be trusted.” Local 100 E Board member Marty Goodman (a supporter of Socialist Action, another reformist outfit, and the moribund Transit Workers for a Just Contract) has put out several contract bulletins which “Demand 10, 10 and 10%! It’s Payback Time!!!” Goodman and John Mooney, Local 100 vice president for stations, put out a flyer for 10-10-10%, as did United for a Better Contract.

10-10-10%, “just contract,” “better contract” – these are all just *economist*

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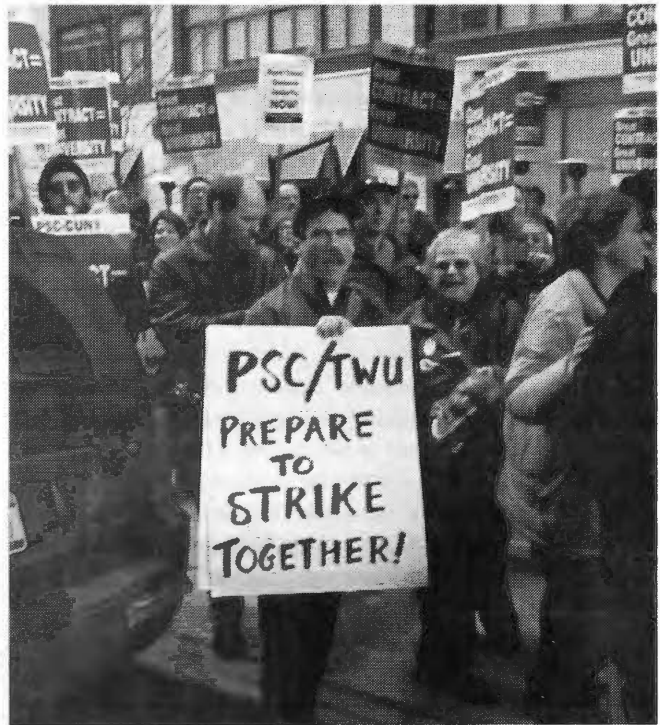
Revolutionary Party. RTW bulletins sometimes talk about socialism and revolution, but in practice, their program is the same as the leftovers from New Directions, only one step removed. While they [remnants of ND] ran on the same slate with Toussaint, the RTW and LRP gave “critical support” to ND, trying to pressure these dyed-in-the-wool social democrats slightly to the left. This time around, the RTW continues this pressure politics by calling in a December 13 leaflet to “Hold Toussaint to his promises” and headlining: “8%, 8% and 8%, No Givebacks or Strike!”

Most of the reformist left (Communist Party, Workers World, Socialist Workers Party, International Socialist Organization) was hardly seen at the strike. One ostensibly socialist group with supporters in transit is the Spartacist League. The SL, which played an active role in the 1980 NYC transit strike, has been notably passive in recent years, flinching before threats of repression and tailing after the union bureaucracy (while making pro forma criticisms from the left). In the 1999 showdown, when there was a big push for a strike, the SL at first called for a strike; then, when a judge issued a blatantly unconstitutional ruling banning even calling for a strike, these pseudo-“revolutionaries” knuckled under and issued a leaflet for the “right to strike.” In 2002, they didn’t call for a strike until after Toussaint had a union meeting vote to authorize one.

This year, the SL didn’t actually call for a strike until after it was launched, finally issuing a leaflet, “Victory to the Transit Strike!” on December 20. Its earlier article urging transit workers to “Prepare to Strike” (*Workers Vanguard*, 9 December) had zero specifics about what such preparations might consist of, making it clear that the real content of this call was *not* to call for a strike *now*. During the strike itself, teams of a couple *WV* salesmen would occasionally drop by a picket location, stand around selling their paper for half an hour and then depart. This pathetic response was hardly the action of an organization seeking to build a real proletarian vanguard.

In contrast, over the course of the strike, three different teams of Internationalist Group supporters went to several key picket lines each, marching for several hours and distributing 1,000 to 1,500 *Internationalist* leaflets daily with updates and lessons from the strike events, while talking with picketers. We were universally well-received, and our leaflets were eagerly snapped up and read from beginning to end by strikers who got almost no information from the union about what was happening in the strike. We met little overt anti-communism, and instead a good deal of curiosity about what “reds” had to say. On the third day of the walkout, at the 207th Street/Kingsbridge picket line of several hundred strikers, an IG supporter and activist in the Professional Staff Congress (the City University faculty union), got rousing applause when he told workers they were making history and argued for a joint strike to smash the Taylor Law.

Instead of tailing after the TWU tops, saying “Toussaint and his cronies on the Executive Board are vulnerable to pressure” even after the Local 100 president refused to strike af-



Internationalist photo

Members of City University faculty union, Professional Staff Congress, call for joint strike action with transit workers, February 16.

ter the December 15 contract deadline (RTW bulletin, December 19), what’s needed is an *open fight to oust the sellout misleaders and forge a class-struggle leadership* in the powerful transit union. Such a leadership would put forward a program going beyond economic issues to raise a series of *transitional demands* to serve as a bridge leading from the present struggles of the workers to a *revolutionary fight for power*, extending from the industry to society as a whole.

In transit there should be a fight for *workers control*. During the brief strike there were lots of chants about “union power,” about how the TWU is a “mighty, mighty union, a kick-ass union.” That power must be used or it means nothing. Take the linked issues of disciplines and safety. Bringing in an outside consultant to review disciplinary procedures won’t be any more effective in putting an end to the “plantation justice” than Toussaint’s earlier call for MTA execs to promise to cut down on disciplines. The union itself must act to protect its members, not through endless grievance procedures but by organized action on the job.

MTA management fired a union rep at the 240th Street barn after a supervisor claimed he was anti-Semitic for saying, “What am I, chopped liver.” When subway conduct Janell Bennerson was killed after her head slammed into a fence as she leaned out of the cab as the train was leaving a platform, the MTA blamed her for her death. When a track worker, Joy Antony, was killed while trying to flag and work on signals at the same time, under orders from management who sent out a three-man crew instead of the necessary four, the MTA tried to blame the

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supervisor instead of inadequate staffing. The examples of such victimization are endless. So how do you fight it?

Local 100 members should form *union safety committees* and insist that *they have the power to shut down unsafe operations*. The way to do that is to actually shut down a dangerous site, and bargain about it later. The TWU should also demand an *end to the “random” alcohol and drug testing*, which is a vehicle for arbitrary management harassment and victimization. Instead of trying to outdo the MTA and New York Police with scare propaganda about “terrorism” in the subways, as Toussaint has been trying to do, the *union should demand an end to the NYPD bag inspections* which are a blatant violation of the Bill of Rights “guarantee” against unreasonable searches as well as inevitably involving racial profiling. Class-conscious militants call for *cops out of the unions* – they are the armed enforcers for the bosses against the workers.

The Internationalist has called for *the TWU to open the MTA books* so that everyone can see the financial shenanigans being carried out by the bosses to disguise huge surpluses as losses. This is not one more in a long list of empty bargaining demands, but something that should be implemented by a union committee. The Authority’s finances are, after all, supposed to be public. With a 40 percent increase in riders in recent years and no increase in the number of workers, there should be a fight for thousands more transit jobs, through a *shorter work-week at no loss in pay*, with hiring to be done exclusively through a *union hiring hall*, along with *union-run training programs at full pay* to enable transit workers to move up to more skilled positions. It would be possible to win wide public support by calling for *doubling the workforce on weekends*, when trains are impossibly crowded and infuriatingly late.

Various left groups proposed to win public support for the TWU strike by calling for “No fare hikes or service cuts” (RTW) or to “roll back the fare to \$1” (Socialist Alternative). But why stop, or even start, there? The TWU has long had a paper position for *free mass transit* – that demand could be dramatized and popularized by literally *ripping out the turnstiles* in some prominent location in the middle of a hard-fought strike. Most importantly, it is vital to wage a campaign to *get rid of the strikebreaking Taylor Law through union action*. A week ago there should have been a mass mobilization by all of New York City labor in support of the TWU strike. Today, as transit workers face \$1,000-plus fines and Local 100 was hit with a million-dollar-a-day fine, while its leaders still face potential jailing, there should be a *union-based mobilization in the streets to demand the Taylor Law fines be cancelled*.

The deficits looming a couple of years from now are not the result of rising health and pension costs, but of the ballooning MTA debt to pay off the bonds for its ambitious expansion program while subway maintenance is a mess. The MTA bosses could *double transit workers wages* and the additional cost would be less than the cool \$1.5 billion a year they are paying to the banks in debt service. By 2020, one-quarter of all MTA revenue will go to pay off Wall Street loans. The Internationalist Group

calls to *repudiate* (refuse to pay) *the debt*, and for *massive federal and state financing* to fill any real deficit in the transit budget. But we also point out that it will take a socialist revolution to establish a modern, efficient, comfortable and *free* mass transit system. Then the MTA debt will be worth about as much as old tsarist bonds after the Bolsheviks took power in 1917, or Confederate bonds after the end of the U.S. Civil War.

New York City transit workers have real power. A strike shutting down the subways and busses can tie up the center of international finance capital, in this city where 54 percent of families do not have a car (far less than anywhere else in the United States) and 72 percent of people entering Manhattan come on mass transit. The bourgeoisie knows this and fears it. Yet they took the measure of the Local 100 leadership, which also knew the potential power of the union and was terrified of using it for fear that the ranks would get out of control.

In the end, the MTA deliberately provoked the strike (what else could it mean for Kalikow to show up an hour before the contract deadline and suddenly make a take-it-or-leave-it “final offer” including a 6 percent *pay cut* to pay for the existing pensions?) in order to drain off militancy among the union ranks. And that was what the Toussaint leadership of Local 100 ended up doing, as it sent the membership back to work without a contract, and then agreed to a giveback pact demanding that union members pay for health care. This necessarily had a demoralizing effect on the ranks, but the Local 100 membership still has plenty of fight left in it. As Yogi says, “it ain’t over till it’s over,” and this fight isn’t over yet.

There is no reason why TWU Local 100 couldn’t have won this battle hands down, except one: it was saddled with a leadership that was not prepared to do what it took to win. The first step in overcoming this crisis in working-class leadership is to draw the lessons of the setback. Lenin called the unions “schools for socialism,” and strikes a “school for (class) war,” because through these experiences, workers can draw conclusions about what’s necessary in order to win. And as the German communist Rosa Luxemburg wrote in her last article before she was assassinated in January 1919, “a revolution is the only form of ‘war’ ... in which final victory can only be prepared through a series of ‘defeats’.”

As in 1966 and 1980, a transit strike that could win has to be fought politically. Toussaint capitulated before the bourgeois offensive not because the union was overpowered – quite the contrary, the strike threw the city into convulsion – but because he, like all pro-capitalist labor bureaucrats, aspires to travel in ruling-class circles, to hobnob with the filthy rich and powerful, while helping the capitalists resolve their “labor problems.” *A class-struggle leadership of the unions would oust the pro-capitalist bureaucrats, break with the Democrats (and all bourgeois parties), and fight to build a revolutionary workers party.* That is the program of the Internationalist Group, and we encourage interested transit workers to join with us in studying the history of struggles of workers and the oppressed, in order to prepare for the coming rounds. ■

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Smash the Taylor Law with Mass Action!

Shut Down NYC With An All-Out Transit Strike!

Labor's Gotta Play Hardball to Win

Some 1,500 copies of this leaflet were distributed at a TWU Local 100 meeting December 10 and rally December 13.

DECEMBER 10 – As the New York City transit negotiations come down to the wire, city rulers are talking tough. Mayor Mike Bloomberg says he'll sleep over at the Office of Emergency Management bunker in Brooklyn and threatens to throw the book at Transport Workers Local 100 if the workers walk out. They pretend they can break a strike with New York's Taylor Law, which outlaws strikes by public employees. But the fact is that they can't run the subways without the transit workers. The Metropolitan Transportation Authority bigwigs' talk of running the trains with management personnel is so much hot air. The bosses know it: companies have already booked every hotel room in Midtown and Wall Street for their key personnel.

It's all a matter of power, and the TWU has it. The 33,000 transit workers can shut down New York City tight. It's high time to use that power, and the entire union movement should join the battle. The transit workers' fight is the fight of all NYC labor, and if they hit the bricks, everyone should be out there with them. Here is the chance to fight back and win against years of givebacks and management takeaways.

What's key is leadership. At a mass meeting at the Jacob Javits convention center December 10, Local 100 members will likely be asked to vote on authorizing the leadership to call a strike. But for the union leadership under Roger Toussaint, this is just a bargaining tactic. When transit workers voted in December 2002 to authorize a strike, the TWU tops "stopped the clock" and kept workers on the job past the midnight December 15 deadline. What they wound up with was the sellout contract that "won" a wage freeze in the first year and pay "raises" in the next two years that were below the rate of inflation. This time Transport Workers Union must turn its long-standing principle into reality: **"No contract, no work!"** As we said in a chant that was picked up by hundreds of transit workers as they marched across Brooklyn Bridge in December 2002, "Screw Mayor Mike, For a solid transit strike!"

The MTA management's usual pleas of poverty won't cut it this time. After they cooked the books to justify a whopping fare increase from \$1.50 to \$2 a ride, it was revealed that they were hiding their income with two sets of figures. This year, after claiming they faced a deficit for 2005, they announced that they have a ballooning surplus, currently es-



Thousands of transit workers came out for December 10 union meeting. More than 2,000 were kept waiting outside the hall. Union marshals confiscated opposition literature and private security guards were equipped with stun guns.

timated at over \$1 billion. So now they are claiming they will have a deficit *next year*. Meanwhile, the MTA chiefs tried to sell off prime Manhattan real estate for a pittance to Bloomberg cronies in order to build the failed West Side stadium. And MTA chief Peter S. Kalikow, former owner of the notorious labor-hating *New York Post*, tools around in his Ferraris. Transit workers should demand to **open the MTA books for union inspection** to expose the wholesale looting.

Transit management is trying to break union solidarity by demanding that newly hired workers would be stuck with a big *pay cut*. "New hires would fork over 2% of their wages for health insurance and 3% for pensions. And they would have to wait until they're 62 to collect full pension benefits - seven more years than current workers," reported the *Daily News* (8 December). They are also trying to get conductors out of their booths to walk through the train, supposedly as an "anti-terrorist" measure. In reality, this would be the first step toward the MTA's longstanding drive to cut train crews to a single person, who would have to act as driver and conductor. This would turn into a calamity the first time there was a serious accident, or trains were stuck in the tunnels, as they often are with the aging transit system. In addition, management bargainers are pushing for "broadbanding" with a vengeance, forcing subway and bus workers to do multiple jobs for which they are not trained. This is asking for a disas-

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Rob Bennett/Daily News



Leading up to the December 15 strike deadline, there were three large union demonstrations, showing the TWU membership's will to struggle and the potential for real labor solidarity.

ter, but safety is no concern of the MTA bosses.

The system chiefs are planning a multibillion dollar expansion, paid for through bond issues which pour billions in interest into the coffers of Wall Street banks. Meanwhile, the subways are in still in terrible condition. The switching system in many cases dates from the early years of the *last century*, the pumps are inadequate to stop flooding, the wiring is so antiquated that it periodically results in fires (which they then blame on train operators or the homeless), and many stations are overrun by rats on the platform late at night. Kalikow & Co.'s contempt for their "wage slaves" was gruesomely demonstrated this week when a worker, Lewis Moore, was found unconscious on a work train in the Bronx. Instead of taking him to a nearby station to the south, which would have delayed traffic, they drove the train seven stations north. Moore was dead by the time it reached 180th street. Meanwhile, the capitalist bosses try to terrorize the heavily black, Latino and Asian work force with "plantation justice," writing up workers on disciplinary charges more than 15,000 times last year.

Rather than confronting the anti-union offensive head-on, the leadership of Local 100 talks of being "partners" with the MTA bosses. Toussaint last time around gave up the "no layoffs" clause and this year his list of contract "demands" accepts the Authority's supposed right to get rid of "excess" employees as long as it offers them transfers first. Toussaint came to office as part of the New Directions slate following the debacle of the 1999 contract fight. But these "reformers" have played ball with the bosses. The former ND leaders who fell out with Toussaint have since wandered off to form a bloc with the old conservative Sonny Hall gang, and together they are suing the union leadership in the capitalist courts. This is crossing the class line, appealing for aid from the enemy. We say that the workers must clean their own house, and replace the sellout misleaders with a class-struggle leadership on a

program to fight the capitalists down the line.

Such a program would include fighting for a *shorter workweek at no loss in pay* to greatly increase the number of jobs. At present, the greatly increased ridership is being carried by a workforce that is smaller than five years ago, and cutbacks in service on the weekends have infuriated the public. All hiring should be done through a *union hiring hall*, and with *union-run training programs at full pay* to enable transit workers to move up to more skilled positions. Instead of constant fare hikes, the TWU should fight for *free mass transit – rip out the turnstiles*. Transit workers should demand an *end to all drug and alcohol testing* and establish *union safety committees with the power to shut down unsafe operations*. Rejecting the MTA's attempts to gut health care and retirement programs, the union should insist that there be *full medical coverage at no cost to workers*, and that *pensions be fully funded with no cutbacks*. And instead of leav-

ing control of this fight in the hands of pro-capitalist bureaucrats who seek an illusory "partnership" with the MTA bosses, there should be an *elected strike committee* made up of delegates who can be recalled at any time.

It is key for workers facing a tough battle to be clear on who are their friends and who is the enemy. Toussaint and his "team" love to stage photo ops with Democratic Party politicians like Hillary Clinton and Jesse Jackson. Yet Clinton is a certified warmonger, demanding *more* troops be sent to Iraq, and supported use of the strikebreaking Taylor Law against the TWU in 1999. The MTA chiefs try to use "terrorism" as an excuse to gut union jobs and harass passengers with a barrage of absurd rules, while the NYPD rips up the Fourth Amendment with their bag searches. Yet the TWU leadership has tried to outbid the bosses at this game, calling in Israeli "anti-terrorism experts" last summer to train conductors. Instead, a class-struggle leadership would make it clear that the war on Iraq and Afghanistan and the whole "war on terror" is in fact an attempt by U.S. rulers to impose their imperialist hegemony on the world, and that this is part and parcel of the capitalists' war on working people, minorities and immigrants in the U.S. And they should make it clear, as we wrote at the time of the last TWU contract battle: "*You Can't Run the Subways with Bayonets!*" (see *The Internationalist* No. 15, January-February 2003).

Mobilize NYC Labor to Bust NYU Union-Busters!

If transit workers do go on strike, they will immediately come up against the power of the entire capitalist state apparatus, from use of the Taylor Law to attempts to send the National Guard into subways. To defeat this threat, it is necessary to go beyond simple business unionism and place New York transit workers at the head of all the working people, poor, oppressed minorities and immigrants facing relentless attacks by the rul-

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**Labor's Gotta Play Hardball to Win –
Workers Action Can Smash the Taylor Law!**

Strike to Shut Down All New York City Transport!

**MTA Subways and Buses, Private Lines, LIRR, Metro North,
NJ Transit, PATH, Taxis, Livery Cabs, Ferries: Everybody Out!**

During the New York transit strike, the Internationalist Group put out daily strike bulletins, distributing 1,000 to 1,500 copies at a number of picket sites. The leaflets were eagerly read by strikers, who had little communication from the union leadership. On pages 28-35 we reprint the daily bulletins.

DECEMBER 19 – Midnight December 16 came and went, and the workers of the Metropolitan Transit Authority are still on the job. Drivers and mechanics at the Queens private lines (Triboro Coach and Jamaica Buses) walked out this morning and a new strike deadline has been set for 12:01 a.m. Tuesday. It's time to hold the line. "A Deadline Is a Deadline," as the Transport Workers Union Local 100 T-shirt says. "No contract, no work," as thousands of TWU members chanted at the union meeting December 10, and again at union rallies last week outside the "negotiations" charade going on at the Grand Hyatt on 42nd Street. Over and over, TWUers shouted "We have the power, union power!" Right, and now we must use that power – or lose it.

This is a showdown – everyone go out together! And not just the members of TWU Local 100. If subway and bus workers go on strike, they should be joined by the ATU drivers of the "private" commuter bus lines, by the Teamsters at Metro North, the UTU and BLE at Long Island Railroad, the unions at NJ Transit and the Staten Island ferry, as well as by taxis and livery car drivers. All working people will be affected by the outcome of this battle. With their demands to take away hard-won pension, health care and job rights, the MTA bosses and their bosses in city and state governments are putting the union and mass transit riders up against the wall. The capitalists and their politicians want to bust the union, but together we can bust the union-busters!

"Take it or leave it" is the arrogant line coming from the



Jason DeCrow/AP

Striking transit workers at Triboro Coach picketing on Monday, December 19. All mass transit workers must go out together.

city rulers. MTA chief Peter Kalikow, the billionaire real estate mogul, showed his disdain for transit workers by finally showing up at the bargaining table one hour before the contract deadline and tossing in his "final offer." Governor George Pataki skipped the state to hold a fundraising rally in New Hampshire. Multi-billionaire mayor Michael Bloomberg had his legal hired guns announce a lawsuit against the union and the workers, demanding a \$1 million fine against the TWU and a \$25,000 fine for every striker on the first day of a walkout, to double every day after that. An 11-day strike as in 1980 would leave every worker liable for \$25 million and the union for \$1 billion! The bosses are playing hardball, the union must also if it wants to win.

The MTA management, city hall and state house figure that by talking tough they can make the union eat it. But New York City is a union town, and we have the power to make the bosses eat their words. They threaten the TWU with the state's Taylor Law banning strikes by public employees. That

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law was passed in 1967 following the successful transit strike the year before. But the 1966 strike shredded an even harsher anti-strike law, the Condon-Wadlin Act. TWU leader Mike Quill declared, “The judge can drop dead in his black robes. I don’t care if I rot in jail. I will not call off the strike.” To win against the Taylor Law will take a mobilization of tens of thousands of union members in the streets of New York City, not just a few “labor leaders” on the platform.

The MTA chiefs are pleading poverty while rolling in dough. The official estimate for the Authority surplus is currently \$1 billion, but with their funny money accounting, it’s likely \$2 billion or more. And the day before the contract was due, they approved a new budget throwing away hundreds of millions on Christmas fare discounts and other gimmicks. Remember, this is the gang that cooked the books during the last round of negotiations and fare hike, claiming they had a \$2.8 billion deficit when later audits by the city and state comptrollers showed they were sitting on a \$500 million surplus. Now they are claiming that even though there is a surplus in 2005, they will have a deficit in 2006, or else in 2007, or maybe in 2008 or 2009. This is an old, old shell game.

Double-talking MTA negotiator Gary Dellaverson claims that they are not asking for any givebacks from any presently employed workers and this is not an attack on the whole labor movement. Nonsense. The MTA “final offer” is the opening wedge for a wholesale attack on city unions. They want to start by gouging 2 percent out of the wages of new hires to pay for pensions and medical coverage and raising their retirement age to 62 from 55. If they win that, the next step will be to reduce the benefits of retirees, claiming that the pension is “underfunded.” Meanwhile, they will go after the wages and benefits of other city workers with a vengeance. The time and place to stop this capitalist looting is here and now.

The bosses figure that TWU Local 100 leader Roger Toussaint doesn’t want a strike, but is under pressure from militant ranks. When union dissidents called for a 10 percent yearly raise, Toussaint responded by raising his wage demand to 8 percent a year. Yet already he is offering to settle for much lower, if only the MTA tops will give him some crumbs to toss to the membership. “The whole city will shut down” in a transit strike, Local 100 Vice President Neil Winberry said Saturday. But to do that means not only stopping the subways and MTA buses but every other form of transportation. During the 1980 strike, no subways or buses ran. In narrow trade-union terms, the walkout was effective. But the TWU tops under president John Lawe didn’t want a strike, and didn’t wage it politically. They let Mayor Koch whip up yuppies trooping across Brooklyn Bridge.

Bloomberg and Kalikow calculate that in a strike they can paint the TWU as “the grinch that stole Christmas.” Yet there is wide support in New York City’s population for the transit workers. Many know how hard, dirty and dangerous TWUers’ jobs are. The city has worked up an elaborate emergency transportation system, calling for car pools, taxis, liv-

ery cabs and vans taking on extra riders, etc. But that will all fall apart if the commuter rail and bus lines go out, if there are no taxis, livery cabs and vans available. Already there is talk of a walkout at Metro North, where union workers have been working without a contract for three years.

The Taxi Workers Alliance put out a press release calling on drivers to refuse to take extra passengers. This is not enough. Meanwhile, Fernando Mateo, whose New York State Federation of Taxi Drivers, organizes mainly livery drivers is preparing to act as a scabherder. Organizations of taxi, livery cab and van drivers should declare a strike to shut down all forms of public transport in New York in support of the TWU, and for their own demands. Among those should be repeal of the “Real ID,” the immigrant-bashing law which threatens the livelihoods of thousands of taxi drivers in New York.

Various left groups active in and around the transit workers have written about the current contract showdown. For the most part they have had little more to offer than pro-labor reporting and empty encouragement: “N.Y. Transit Workers Authorize Strike” (*People’s Weekly World*, 17 December), “Transit Union Seeks a Decent Contract” (*Workers World*, 22 December), *Workers Vanguard* (9 December), newspaper of the Spartacist League (SL), publishes an article headlined, “NYC Transit Workers Must Prepare to Strike.” But what does this strike preparation consist of? The article is silent, with no program for winning the transit workers struggle. Thus the only meaning of the SL call to “prepare” a strike was *not to call now for a strike*.

In contrast, in our December 10 leaflet, headlined “Shut Down NYC With an All-Out Transit Strike!” *The Internationalist* put forward a whole program calling for the formation of elected strike committees, to take the bargaining out of the hands of the sellout bureaucrats; for union action to open the MTA’s books, demanding a shorter workweek at no loss in pay; a union hiring hall and union-run training programs; for free mass transit – rip out the turnstiles; for an end to all drug and alcohol testing; for full medical coverage at no cost to workers, and for fully funded pensions with no cutbacks. We called for cops out of the unions and for capitalist politicians and representatives of police “unions” off of labor platforms. If the Taylor Law is used against the TWU, we called for a walkout by all public employees unions.

An opposition group in Local 100 that puts out the “Revolutionary Transit Worker” and is politically supported by the League for the Revolutionary Party (LRP) put out a leaflet last week (December 13) following the Local 100 meeting headlined: “8%, 8% and 8%, No Givebacks or Strike!” This is pure economism, reducing the struggle to a fight over a few dollars, rather than a full fledged class battle. It is part of the LRP’s whole program of pressuring the pro-capitalist union leaders like Toussaint. In the 1999 elections, the RTW gave “critical support” to Toussaint as part of the New Directions “reform” slate. Now it says that “Toussaint still hopes to reach a sellout

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Transit Strike 2005 – Three Days That Shook NYC

The Real “Thugs”: Bosses’ Courts and Politicians Try to Bankrupt the TWU Hang Tough, Spread the Strike! Bust the Union-Busters!



Gregory Bull/AP

DECEMBER 20 – Day One of the first New York City transit strike in 25 years has been a lesson in class struggle. As soon as Transport Workers Union Local 100 president Roger Toussaint announced at 3 a.m. that the strike was on, and picket lines went up around NYC, the city’s rulers rushed to court. They are relying on the state apparatus to try to crush the walkout. They imagine that cops, courts, jail threats and whopping fines against the union can defeat the TWU. But the union is not bank accounts – it is the workers who make it up. And the transit workers showed today that they have the unity and strength to tie up New York in knots. The people who run this city and this country think they are the masters of the universe. They want to bust the union, but New York is a union town and together we can bust the union-busters!

Billionaire mayor Michael Bloomberg grotesquely accused transit workers of being “selfish.” He claims the TWU is attacking the people of New York by defending its half-pay

pensions and health benefits from attempts by the Metropolitan Transit Authority bosses to gut them. This takes a lot of gall from a Wall Street tycoon who literally bought his office, twice, the last time around for a cool \$80 million. He called strikers “cowardly” and “thuggish” for refusing to bow to his threats to use the strikebreaking Taylor Law to bankrupt the union and its members. Now they’re threatening to throw union leaders behind bars. Who’s the greedy thug attacking the working people of New York? We say: **Screw Mayor Mike with a solid transit strike!**

In state court this afternoon, a judge imposed a fine of \$1 million a day on the TWU, charged with contempt of court for violating a Taylor Law injunction. Tomorrow he will rule on escalating \$1,000 a day fines on every member of the union leadership. Meanwhile, the state Public Employment Relations Board refused the union’s request for an injunction against the MTA to stop it from requiring changes in the pension system in

Transit Strike 2005 – Three Days That Shook NYC

its “final offer.” Yet that is explicitly barred by the same anti-union law. The MTA has requested that the PERB declare an impasse in the negotiations, which would allow it to order binding arbitration. But as a spirited group of 150 picketers chanted this evening at the East New York depot, “The Taylor Law is just a piece of paper, tear it up!” and “Workers’ power!”

All around town today there were militant mass pickets, the likes of which haven’t been seen here for years. At the huge Coney Island Yard at Avenue X in Brooklyn there were upwards of 500 strikers. TWUers angrily said that instead of the constant bashing from the bosses, workers “ought to be commended for years of hard work in unsafe conditions.... This has been coming for so long.” At the Jerome Avenue yard in the Bronx, 50 picketers kept up chants and songs in the bitterly cold early morning hours. “We move New York, we can stop New York,” they repeated proudly. Over at the 207th Street yard at the upper tip of Manhattan, some 200-300 strikers kept a boisterous and vociferous picket line moving for hours, demanding respect from bosses who don’t know the meaning of the word. Passing trucks and cars honked their horns in solidarity.

The Internationalist was on the lines distributing over 1,000 leaflets which were snapped up and read on the spot by strikers eager for news and support from the rest of the labor movement. The night before we handed out hundreds more at a 3,000-strong union solidarity rally outside Governor Pataki’s office in Midtown Manhattan. Naturally, the bosses’ press and TV showed almost nothing of this, and instead focused on Bloomberg prancing across Brooklyn Bridge in an expensive leather jacket and jeans, his latest attempt at a “man of the people” image (after the fiasco of his \$633 bike in 2002). But there was no stampeding herd of yuppies in the 25° winter weather as there was during the balmy 60° April days of the 1980 strike. And despite the media frenzy being whipped up against the TWU, transit workers have wide support in New York.

Transit workers warned they mean business. Today, there were four-hour waits at the Jamaica LIRR station in the a.m. getting into Manhattan, some 50,000 commuters stranded on the Penn Station platforms in the p.m. and a near riot at Grand Central. And city authorities say that New York businesses lost \$400 million today, as Christmas shopping and income from tourism plummeted. Meanwhile, the big business press is screaming for transit workers’ blood, and not just the rabid labor-hating *New York Post*. The liberal *Newsday* ran a banner headline declaring the strike “Midnight Madness.” Today’s *Daily News* published a snarling editorial calling to “Stop the Strike Dead in Its Tracks” and to “Jail Toussaint and his bull-headed lieutenants.” It accused the TWU of “irresponsible lawlessness” for “shut[ting] down the transportation system that is New York’s lifeblood.”

The more they scream, the more it shows the bosses are hurting. Our leaflet yesterday called for a “Strike to Shut Down All New York City Transport!” Not just MTA subways and buses, but also the private lines, LIRR, Metro North, NJ Transit, PATH, taxis, livery cabs and ferries: “This is a showdown – everyone

go out together!” Metro North and LIRR should be picketed out. Taxi drivers’ organizations should urge their members to stay home. Wall Street bigwigs who want to head to Midtown, “and step on it,” should get the answer, in the many languages spoken by the heavily immigrant drivers, “Fuggedaboutit!” At the Jackie Gleason bus terminal on Fifth Avenue in Brooklyn where 40 strikers were picketing this evening, one TWUer said: “Somebody had to start it off, so it’s us.” “Everybody should be out,” added the picket captain.

For all the hollering about transit workers’ “lawlessness,” the MTA bosses blatantly lied and violated fiduciary laws to hide the money during the 2002 transit negotiations and hearings on the fare hike. Yet no one has ever been tried for that, nor was the fare hike reversed or the first-year wage freeze for transit workers lifted. The capitalist rulers “break the law” all the time. Last night, President George Bush went on national television to declare that he had given himself the authority to order domestic spying, brazenly violating a slew of laws, not to mention the Bill of Rights – as does the U.S.A. Patriot Act.

The fact is, “the law” reflects the balance of class forces. As Marxists have explained, the government is the executive committee of the ruling class, and the capitalist state machine – police, army, prisons – is the instrument of the bourgeois rulers to keep those it exploits and oppresses under its heel. When it is convenient for the bosses to ignore or rip up the laws, they do so without hesitation. Since the 1980s and before they have been on the warpath, trampling on workers rights, trying to crush the unions. If the TWU caves in before these threats, it will embolden the billionaires who govern the country to pass more anti-labor laws and destroy more union gains. Social Security is next on the chopping block.

The machinery of repression in the U.S. is inherently racist. The more than two-thirds black, Latino and immigrant transit workers know this well, as they face the brutal “plantation justice” of the MTA which hands out more than 15,000 disciplines a year and “says the way to get an employee to work is to stand with a whip over them,” as Toussaint remarked in an interview with the *Amsterdam News* (13 December). This is the same racist system that was laid bare following Hurricane Katrina. The government, from the Republicans in the White House to the Democrats in the Louisiana state house and New Orleans city hall, abandoned 100,000 black and poor people to die in the flood (see our article, “New Orleans Police State: ‘Ethnic Cleansing’ American-Style,” *The Internationalist* No. 22, September-October 2005).

At the same time as these would-be slave-masters are destroying the livelihoods of working people and the poor in the United States, they have launched an imperialist war to subjugate the world to their dictates. The bloody colonial occupation of Iraq is partly aimed at ensuring U.S. control of the Near East oil tap. Working people must fight to defeat this bosses’ war, both “at home” and abroad. The NYC transit strike is taking place in wartime – there is no getting around this fundamental fact. The capitalist media are already harping

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about the police having to guard empty subway stations against the threat of “terrorism.” Yet it is the U.S., state and city governments and the MTA that are trying to terrorize transit workers into submission.

To prevail against the capitalist state and its apparatus of repression requires a leadership with the program and determination to wage the class struggle through to victory. Since the very beginning, the unions were built by “reds,” including the Transport Workers Union. As the strike heats up, the press is once again red-baiting TWU founder Mike Quill, trying to tar the present Local 100 leadership with the same brush, including both Local 100 president Toussaint and “radicals” on the executive board. Outrageously, the TWU International has offered its services to the union-bashers, stabbing Local 100 in the back by refusing to sanction the strike. But there is widespread support for the transit strikers among New York unions.

In fact, Toussaint and his former allies are not fire-breathing radicals but came to office as a “reform” slate that only wanted a slightly more militant policy than the previous Local 100 leadership. Because they don’t challenge the basics of capitalist rule, they are locked into a framework where a slave-driving management and their overseers are constantly seeking to undo hard-won union gains. The 2002 sellout contract Toussaint rammed through was the product of this program. An all-out fight to defend union pension and health benefits and lower the retirement age, to prevent dangerous “broadbanding” and other measures aimed at intensifying the exploitation of transit workers, requires a class-struggle program down the line.

We have emphasized that the onslaught against the TWU is not just the product of some Republican reactionaries, but of the twin parties of U.S. capitalism, Democrats and Republicans alike. Former mayor Koch’s diatribes about teaching transit workers a lesson underscore this. So does the fact that the injunctions against the TWU are being sought by none other than Elliot Spitzer, the Democratic state attorney general and leading candidate for governor. The transit workers’ struggle should be linked to the fight to break with the capitalist parties and build a workers party that fights for a workers government. It will take a socialist revolution to provide a modern, comfortable, safe *and free* public transit system that truly serves the working people. ■

Shut Down NYC...

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ing class. Right now, New York University graduate students are on strike against a haughty administration which refuses to recognize their union, part of the United Auto Workers. While there have been gestures of solidarity, what it will take to win that strike is the mobilization of thousands of union workers from all over the city to shut down NYU so that it cannot function. Meanwhile, City University teaching personnel in the Professional Staff Congress have been working without a contract for over three years. The PSC should strike together with the

transit workers. *If the Taylor Law is used against the TWU, all public employees unions should walk out.*

TWU leaders remarked after getting the MTA demands that this was a “declaration of war” on the union. True enough. But to fight this war it is necessary to have a program to mobilize labor’s power. That means, no more capitalist politicians on labor platforms, and no more representatives of police or detectives’ “unions” either. We say: *cops out of the unions* – they are the armed fist of the bosses. And that means getting the revenue and “property protection” cops out of the TWU. The next time cops gun down an innocent person, like African immigrants Amadou Diallo and Ousmane Zongo, for which no cop has done a day of jail time, the *unions should mobilize their power in the streets and the TWU should shut down mass transit against police terror.* Democrat Freddy Ferrer, who was backed by the TWU, said that the 41 shots fired at Diallo were “not a crime.” We say a union leadership dedicated to winning the class war would break with the capitalist parties, Democrats and Republicans alike (as well as their satellites like the Working Families Party and Greens), and build a *revolutionary workers party* to fight for a *workers government.* ■

Strike All NYC Transport...

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deal,” but declares “the ranks must pressure Toussaint to keep his promises.” Rather than economist pressure politics, what’s needed is to forge a class-struggle union leadership.

At bottom this is a *class* battle, and as Karl Marx wrote in the *Communist Manifesto* more than a century and a half ago “Every class struggle is a political struggle...a more or less veiled civil war.” That is certainly how city rulers are approaching it, and this is how transit workers must wage the battle. The enemy is not just Republicans Bloomberg, Kalikow and Pataki, with Bush behind them in the White House. The strikebreaking in the 1980 strike was led by Democrats, Mayor Ed Koch and Governor Hugh Carey. Today Democrat Jesse Jackson speaks from TWU platforms, leading call and response phrases like “job security is national security.” Yet a transit strike is already being attacked as threatening “national security,” by tying up the center of international finance capital.

In the countdown to the 2002 contract, the big business press accused the TWU leadership of being “terrorists” and today they will attack the union as threatening the “war effort” in Iraq and Afghanistan. The response of the workers movement must be to forthrightly fight to *defeat* the U.S. imperialist war in the Near East which is the same as the bosses’ war on working people and on democratic rights here in the U.S. Hillary Clinton, the favorite Democrat of Local 100 president Toussaint, is a tub-thumping warmonger over Iraq and last time around supported the use of the strikebreaking Taylor Law against the TWU. Transit workers and all working, oppressed and poor people must break with all the capitalist parties, and take up the struggle to build a revolutionary workers party that fights for a workers government. ■

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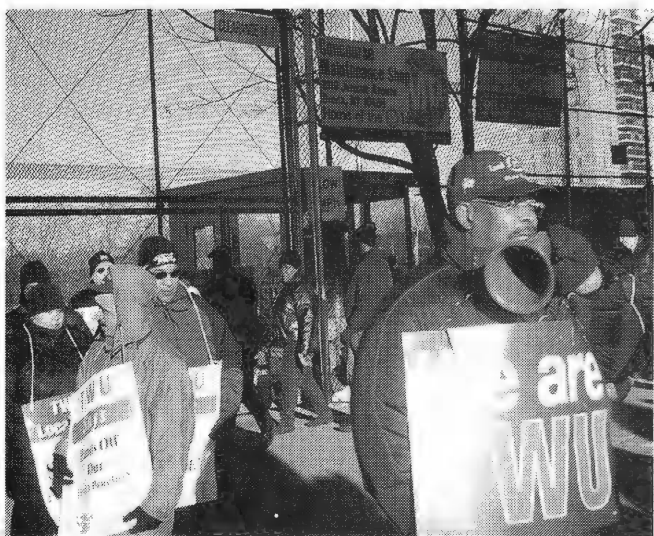
What the Labor-Hating Bosses' Press Doesn't Show You

DECEMBER 21 – On Day 2 of the New York transit strike of 2005, city rulers escalated their campaign to demonize Transport Workers Union Local 100. Labeling the TWU “selfish” and “thuggish,” billionaire mayor Bloomberg hurled a barrage of racist vituperation against the largely black, Latino and immigrant union. TV and newspaper reports focused on the plight of commuters hoofing it to work. And tomorrow, a state judge is threatening to jail Local 100 leaders for striking.

What the bosses' kept press didn't show were the large and

vigorous TWU picket lines, and the popular sympathy they have received. At a half dozen strike locations around NYC Internationalist Group supporters distributing strike updates saw strong picket lines ranging from scores to several hundred strikers, as well as numerous examples of solidarity from truckers, teachers and, in several cases, neighbors who spontaneously brought coffee and hot chocolate to the strikers.

We print below several photos of the strike's militancy and solidarity that you won't find in the bourgeois media.



Clockwise from top: (top left) Pickets at Jerome Avenue yard in the Bronx on the day the strike began, December 20. (Top right) Pickets at 177th St.-West Farm Road in the Bronx. (Below, left)



Internationalist photos

Angry strikers surround van scabbing on the strike near Broadway Junction station, Brooklyn. (Below, right) Picketers march at Coney Island shops near Avenue X.



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Solidarity from CUNY: Transit Strikers' Fight Is Our Fight!

The strike of New York City transit workers is our fight too – that's the word at the City University of New York. Thousands of courageous members of Transport Workers Union Local 100 are hanging tough against the Republican mayor and governor, Democratic state attorney general, a hate campaign in the big business press, huge fines and vicious threats. Come down to the picket lines with us – Victory to the transit strike!

CUNY students are the sons and daughters of NYC's multiethnic working class, and a big part of its future. We have the same enemies. The gang attacking the TWU is hiking tuition every year, pushing thousands of working-class and minority students out. That gang has a name: the ruling class, a/k/a capitalists. The government (city, state, federal) is their tool.

Together, let's beat them this time! Shut it all down! Bring out the LIRR, Metro North, PATH, NJ Transit, taxis – and the Professional Staff Congress (CUNY faculty union) too! They're trying to break the TWU with the Taylor Law – the same slave-labor law the CUNY administration threatens against the PSC, which has gone three years without a contract. PSC signs read "Right to Strike, Right to Organize" – this right will be won only through hard class struggle, together with decisive sections of the working class, and the time is now. This is also how to smash NYU's attempt to break the striking grad students' union.

In militant support of the TWU strike, members of the CUNY Internationalist Clubs are bringing students to picket lines around the city and helping distribute *The Internationalist*. It's a great lesson in class struggle! At East New York, an activist from Bronx Community College started chanting, "The Taylor Law Is Just a Piece of Paper." The workers responded: "Tear It Up!" and "We Run New York, We Can Stop New York." Another favorite is our chant "Screw Mayor Mike with a Solid Transit Strike!"

At West Farms Road in the Bronx, a black bus driver and army veteran was glad to hear about our fight to drive military recruiters off the campuses. "They're recruiting blacks and Hispanics to go fight in Iraq," he said, "and this is not our war."

The rulers of this country tried to "shock and awe" the people of Iraq into submission, and now they're trying it against labor "at home." They go after the TWU because it is the bedrock of NYC labor – but in mobilizing around the power of the striking transit workers, all working people can defeat the arrogant ruling class, which finds itself in a jam over the war, and win our own demands. While Bloomberg & Co. scream that the TWU "broke the law," the MTA lies, cheats and steals. "Law"? Bush vows to keep up the latest spy program no matter what any law or Constitution says. And the Democrats? Hillary "I Love the Iraq War" Clinton



Internationalist photo

CUNY Internationalist Clubs on TWU picket lines.

loves the Taylor Law too. Our war is the class war, it's going on right here, and we fight to defeat the capitalist rulers from the streets of New York to Iraq.

One more thing: like many New Yorkers, CUNY students (and adjuncts!) worry where they will get the money to pay for their MetroCards. The subways and buses should be free – tear out the turnstiles! But that requires a society based on what we need, not capitalist profits. This means breaking from Democrats, Republicans and all the capitalist politicians. It means joining in the fight for a revolutionary workers party – for a workers government. As transit workers chanted at the East New York depot shop in Brooklyn: "Workers Power!"

21 December 2005

Students: get in contact with us to come down to the picket lines!

CUNY Internationalist Clubs and Bronx Community College Revolutionary Reconstruction Club. We publish the paper *Revolution* in accord with the Internationalist Group, U.S. section of the League for the Fourth International

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TWU Union Tops Cave, Call Off Strike

DECEMBER 22 – Under pounding by the capitalist politicians and an orchestrated anti-union hate campaign in the bourgeois media, this afternoon the leadership of Transport Workers Union Local 100 caved in and called off the mass transit strike that in three days has thrown New York City into turmoil. The walkout, the first NYC transit strike in 25 years, shut down the largest subway system in the world, transporting 7 million passengers a day. Yet although the strike was 100 percent effective, Local 100 president Roger Toussaint accepted a state “mediator’s” recommendation, which was then endorsed by the union executive board, to send the members back to work. No details were released, but there was no provision for amnesty for strikers against penalties under the state’s strikebreaking Taylor Law.

TWU leaders proclaimed that “a deadline is a deadline,” but then ordered the membership to stay on the job past the midnight December 16 contract deadline. The union has a longstanding principle, chanted over and over by the strikers, of “no contract, no work.” No contract agreement was reached, but the membership was ordered to take down the picket lines anyway. The press hints at a deal worked out behind the scenes, yet the executive board was given no specifics: they blindly voted on faith. Class-conscious workers reject secret deals negotiated behind the backs of the union ranks. And it should be clear to all that TWU workers are in a far weaker position to reject a giveback contract with the strike called off. The TWU leaders’ termination of the strike imperils the livelihoods and futures of the membership.

On the picket lines, supporters of the Internationalist Group have been given a warm welcome throughout. Our call for an all-out New York transport strike and daily strike updates have been well-received by hundreds of strikers at key locations around the city. Today at the mass picket outside the Kingsbridge bus depot and 207th Street subway yard in Upper Manhattan, TWUers cheered remarks by a member of the Professional Staff Congress at the City University of



Sellout: Transport Workers Union Local 100 president Roger Toussaint calls off strike after two and a half days with no contract, and no provision for amnesty for strikers.

New York who called for the PSC to go out on strike alongside the TWU to smash the strikebreaking Taylor Law. Meanwhile, public opinion polls show that despite the media barrage and the racist smear campaign of the capitalist politicians, a majority of New Yorkers support the TWU’s demands, and more blame the Metropolitan Transportation Authority than the union for the inconvenience of the strike.

The powerful economic effect of the strike rattled city bosses. The militant sentiment among the thousands of TWU picketers at dozens of locations around New York worried both MTA management and the TWU Local 100 leadership. Many Local 100 activists were unhappy over the back-to-work order. A worker at the 207th Street yard remarked: “We’ve been lied to and deceived” by the MTA and “I don’t trust them. Bottom line: I’d rather wait.” Union members there said if the bargaining doesn’t come up with an acceptable agreement, they may go out on strike again. At the Casey Stengel bus depot in Queens where IG supporters leafletted in the afternoon, a driver remarked: “I feel like we lost if we go back to work without a contract.”

We salute the New York transit workers for waging a powerful strike in defiance of draconian anti-labor laws, and urge the TWU ranks to throw back any giveback deal, insist on the union principle of “no contract, no work,” and forge a class-struggle leadership.

Outpouring of Support at CUNY Defeats Prosecution Demand for Prison Time

Miguel Malo Is Not Going to Jail

The following statement was issued by CUNY Action to Defend Miguel Malo on December 13.

In Bronx Criminal Court this morning, Hostos Community College student leader Miguel Malo was sentenced to probation and community service instead of prison. As Miguel walked out of the court room, he was surrounded and joyfully embraced by scores of supporters who had come out to show solidarity with him. Gathering across the street afterwards, they gathered in front of a banner proclaiming, "Miguel Malo Is Innocent – CUNY Is Not a Prison." They ended with a vigorous chant, "*¡Miguel Malo, inocente – y libre!*"

More than 1,300 students, faculty and staff at the City University of New York had signed petitions saying "Miguel Malo should not spend one day in jail." Close to 100 letters to the court were sent by CUNY professors and others asking that he not be imprisoned. The University Faculty Senate voted (by 60 to 1) to ask that he not be jailed. And while three years probation is onerous, Miguel is not behind bars today. This is a direct result of the mobilization of support at Hostos and other CUNY campuses. Miguel Malo is walking the streets of New York this afternoon because the people he defended came out to defend him.

During the presentations in the sentencing hearing, the prosecution asked for 30 days' jail time in order to "punish the criminal." Miguel's attorney, Karen Funk, pointed to the overwhelming support for Miguel at the City University, including a crowd waiting outside in the corridor. Judge Catherine Bartlett delivered a long lecture against "violence" and said she was "leaning to incarcerate" Miguel, but that she had "taken into account" the numerous letters, petitions, and the fact that Miguel was already performing community service, at a Bronx agency, Part of the Solution (POTS), where he has been serving food to 250 homeless and needy people a day.

Miguel Malo was arrested in August 2001 for the "crime" of holding up a sign protesting cuts and fee hikes in bilingual and English as a second language (ESL) programs at Hostos, a college that was set up to service Spanish-speaking residents of New York City. He was then charged with assaulting the campus "peace officers" who in fact brutally assaulted him. After four years, well over 50 court appearances and two trials (the first ended in a mistrial), the vindictive prosecution was able to win a conviction October 24, on bogus



Internationalist photo

Supporters of Miguel Malo outside Bronx Criminal Court, December 13.

charges of "reckless assault" and disorderly conduct – but they were unable to send him to jail.

The Bronx District Attorney's office and City University chiefs doubtless figured that with the guilty verdict, the case would be over. Instead, the opposite occurred. Letters poured in from faculty and students concerned not only that sending Miguel to jail would ruin his life, but also about the consequences of his imprisonment for everyone at CUNY. The message that people who protest could end up doing time in Riker's Island would certainly chill the exercise of free speech and make a mockery of "academic freedom." Indeed, the purpose of the vindictive prosecution, which cost tens of thousands of dollars, was to criminalize protest.

Speaking at the rally afterwards, spokesmen for CUNY Action to Defend Miguel Malo emphasized that while we were able to beat back the concerted drive to imprison Miguel Malo, it would be light-minded to consider this a complete victory. This is a "capitalist injustice system" which last night executed Tookie Williams, the death row prisoner at San Quentin, because he dedicated his book, *Life in Prison*, to Nelson Mandela, Mumia Abu-Jamal, Malcolm X, Assata Shakur, George Jackson and other class-war prisoners. It is a system in which the killer cops who gunned down African immigrants Amadou Diallo and Ousmane Zongo go free.

The persecution of Miguel Malo has been part of a generalized offensive against immigrants and minorities, as the unionized immigrant workers understood who repeatedly came out to defend him at protests over the last several years. It is part of escalating repression that is part of parcel of the U.S.' "war on terror" whose purpose is to terrorize the world into submission to U.S. dictates. As one protester's sign declared, "War on Iraq, CUNY under attack." Thus the fight to defend Miguel must be part of a broader fight for all the oppressed. ■

Free Abortion on Demand! Women's Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!

Defeat the Anti-Abortion Crusade

We print below an edited talk by Marjorie Salzburg at a forum sponsored by the Hostos Internationalist Club at Hostos Community College in the Bronx, New York, on March 9.

The flyer announcing this talk is headlined, "Working Women Fight for Their Rights." What I'd like to stress is that, from women working in Wal-Mart for the minimum wage with no health care, to women in Iraq who are subject to U.S. occupation and now are living under a constitution which deprives them of their fundamental rights as human beings, *the question of the liberation of women is a class question.*

Just to illustrate that, two weeks ago, Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, the president of the Philippines, imposed a state of emergency there – what amounts to military rule. And to celebrate International Women's Day, 10,000 women marched in the streets of Manila calling for the ouster of Gloria Macapagal Arroyo's anti-woman, anti-worker government!

The flyer for the forum also called for "Free Abortion on Demand." Abortion, of course, is also a class question. Rich women have always had, and will continue to have abortions. I used to work in the obstetrics-gynecology department at a major New York medical center, and when the Saudi princesses needed abortions, they got them – in New York.

We are now on the front line of the struggle to defend abortion rights. An indication of just how politically contentious this issue is, when you try to look up information on the Internet from computers in New York schools you can't get it. It is off-limits, they have put a block on the subject, just like they put a firewall around the word "breast" so you can't look up breast cancer, supposedly to block pornography.

It is 33 years after the passage of the Supreme Court's *Roe v. Wade* decision legalizing abortion and taking women out of the hands of the back-alley butchers who performed clandestine abortions. And today this right is more than threatened, we are in the throes of a huge drive to reverse it. The conservatives have their chess pieces in place, and now they're moving them. With the new make-up of the high court, state laws outlawing

Working Women Fight for Their Rights



David Bacon

Workers at Angelica Laundry in Antioch, California protest labor law violations, April 2005.

abortion are being rushed through in order to take the issue directly to the Supreme Court. They expect that *Roe v. Wade* will be overturned or turned into a dead letter.

As the battle is joined, it's important to realize that it's not just the right-wing Republicans, but also the Democrats who are responsible for this onslaught against women's rights. The Democrats are not merely gutless, they are joining in the assault. Take Hillary Clinton, who is positioning herself for a presidential run. She supports the war on Iraq, she supports the U.S.A. Patriot Act, she's a hawk's hawk. And now she's gone half-way to adopting an anti-abortion agenda.

On the day of the big anti-abortion rally in Washington, D.C. in January of last year, Hillary Clinton made a speech in which she called for seeking "common ground" with "right to life" reactionaries. In her talk she declared that abortion is a "tragic choice" that "either does not ever have to be exercised or only in very rare circumstances." "Not ever"?

In 1992 and '96, Bill Clinton campaigned for president saying that abortion should be "safe, legal and rare." Now Hillary Clinton is running on a platform for abortion to be "safe, legal and never," as William Saletan summed up her "strategy" in the Internet magazine *Salon*. Recently Saletan wrote in the *New*

York Times (22 January), that “it’s time for the abortion-rights movement to declare war on abortion” – on the grounds that even saying the word gives it bad press – and to declare that we are “all are pro-life,” we just want to limit unwanted pregnancies.

Let’s be clear about who Hillary Clinton wants to find “common ground” with. The so-called “pro-life” anti-abortion movement is led by fascistic elements like Joseph Scheidler of the Pro-Life Action League, who invaded a Pensacola, Florida abortion clinic in 1986 with his “god squads,” hurling the clinic administrator down the stairs. The founder of Operation Rescue, one of the main anti-abortion groups, was Randall Terry, who started out working for Guatemalan president Efraín Ríos Montt, the godfather of the death squads in that country. Terry resurfaced later as the spokesman for the parents of Terri Schiavo, the brain-dead woman in Florida who became an icon for Christian “right-to-lifers.” Randall Terry declared his goal is a “Christian-based nation,” and that “When I, or people like me, are running the country,” doctors providing abortions had “better flee, because we will find you, we will try you and we will execute you.”

This “pro-life movement” also includes Christian terrorists like the “Army of God.” It includes Michael Griffin, who shot Dr. David Gunn to death outside his Pensacola, Florida abortion clinic in 1993. It includes John Salvi, who murdered Shannon Lowney and Leanne Nichols at two abortion clinics in Brookline, Massachusetts in 1994. It includes James Kopp, who gunned down Buffalo abortion doctor Barnett Slepian in his kitchen in 1998. These “right-to-lifers” are killers. For years they had an Internet web site where they listed the names, addresses and license plate numbers of hundreds of doctors who performed abortions. It was a “hit list” for assassination. When doctors were murdered, their names would be crossed off with an “x”; those wounded were shaded in gray.

Showdown Over Abortion

So this confrontation has been coming for a long time. It’s part of what the bourgeois press call the “culture wars.” What that really is, is the attempt reverse the gains of the civil rights movement, gains in the rights of women, the threadbare restrictions on domestic spying, the resistance to imperialist war following the U.S. debacle in Vietnam, and so on. It is a broad-scale onslaught and it is proceeding at an accelerated pace right now. Just in the last week, South Dakota passed legislation outlawing abortion, Congress voted to accept warrantless wiretapping and made the police-state measures of the U.S.A. Patriot Act permanent, while the Supreme Court ruled against university bans on military recruiters.

The point is, the rights under attack cannot be defended piecemeal, but only by grasping the big picture. And that is that this onslaught is a function of capitalism and imperialism, and it is being carried out by both major capitalist parties. It’s not just “Billary” Clinton. Recall that in 1976 Democratic president Jimmy Carter signed into law the Hyde Amendment that eliminated funding for abortions under



Carmel Zucker for The New York Times

South Dakota’s only abortion clinic, in Sioux Falls, has to bring in doctors from Minnesota. Through intimidation, legal restrictions and murder of providers, abortion has already been eliminated in large parts of the United States.

Medicaid, remarking, “many things in life that are not fair, that wealthy people can afford and poor people can’t.” To fight the assault on our rights, we need a struggle against Democrats *and* Republicans. We need a workers party, a revolutionary workers party to defend the rights for all the oppressed through socialist revolution.

So the battle over abortion is on. The composition of the Supreme Court – one swing vote, Sandra Day O’Connor, gone and now two arch-conservatives added, both hard anti-abortion advocates. They tried to sidestep the issue during the Senate confirmation hearings, but the evidence is there for all to see. John Roberts’ wife is a lawyer for the “Feminists for Life.” And he wrote in a legal brief, when he was Deputy Solicitor General under the administration of George Bush the father, that “Roe was wrongly decided and should be overruled.”

Then there was the nomination of Judge Samuel Alito, the supposed “sleeping candidate.” Except you’d really have to be asleep to miss where he stands on abortion. Alito was author of a 1985 memo when working for the Reagan Administration that the strategy to go after *Roe v. Wade* was “piecemeal.” He added: “What can be made of this opportunity to advance the goals of bringing about the eventual overruling of *Roe v. Wade* and, in the meantime, of mitigating its effects?” No question about where he stands either. Even his mother said he’s opposed to abortion, and that once confirmed he would “do the right thing.” But Alito dodged and danced around his positions in the hearings, and the Democrats let him get away with it.

For the past 20 years, the anti-abortion forces have been following Alito’s strategy, chipping away at the right to abortion piecemeal with such laws as parental notification, delay clauses, requiring “counseling,” bans on abortion in the third trimester, and so on. This was kind of a softening-up bombardment, but now they’re ready for “shock and awe,” the frontal assault.

Incidentally, anti-abortion reactionaries have been frustrated in some of their ploys, like on parental notification. It turns out

that this has not slowed abortions, but increased them slightly, because many parents understand what unwanted pregnancy can do to a young woman's future. But between legal restrictions, besieging abortion clinics and killing abortion doctors, the "right-to-life" bigots have managed effectively to eliminate the right to abortion in large parts of the country. They have also managed to limit the availability of the "morning-after" emergency contraception pill, known as Plan B, by the Food and Drug Administration blocking over-the-counter distribution (leading to the resignation of the head of the FDA's Office of Women's Health) and many pharmacists refusing to stock it even for those with prescriptions.

Now they have passed legislation in South Dakota outlawing virtually all abortions, even in cases of rape. Already there isn't a single doctor in the state who does abortions. The only clinic, in the largest city, Sioux Falls, has to fly doctors in from Minnesota. But there is resistance. Planned Parenthood is circulating a petition to put the sweeping abortion ban on hold and let the voters decide in a referendum next November.

In late February, the Supreme Court agreed to consider the constitutionality of the so-called "Partial-Birth Abortion Ban Act," a measure passed overwhelmingly by Congress in 2003, but rejected as unconstitutional by three federal appeals courts for not providing exceptions for a woman's health. That may be followed up by consideration of the South Dakota law, or a similar measure in Mississippi, and it will move through the courts with the speed of a Nazi blitzkrieg.

So let me say a couple of things about abortion. First, abortion is not some horrendous affair, like the reactionaries and Democrats like Hillary Clinton make it out to be. It is a simple medical procedure, one of the simplest and potentially safest surgical operations. An estimated 100,000 women around the world die every year because of botched abortions, but *none of them have to die*.

A lot of abortion rights groups pussyfoot around this issue. First they stopped saying they defended abortion, and instead were only for the *right* to an abortion. Then they dropped that, saying they were for "choice." This is just capitulating to the reactionaries. It is buying into the loaded language of the anti-abortion bigots, who call abortion murder, who talk about "unborn children." That is all religious claptrap to make women feel guilty, that terminating an unwanted pregnancy is somehow committing a crime. No, forcing a woman to bear a child she is not prepared or able to take care of – *that's a crime*. Forcing women to go to quack doctors or use coat hangers to prevent their future from being taken from them – *that is a crime*.

What about this so-called "concern for life"? As a letter writer from Seattle, Lori Keys Pender, wrote to the *New York Times* (28 February) wrote about the South Dakota abortion ban:

"Anti-abortion activities in South Dakota claim to be concerned about the '8090 children aborted' in that state each year.... Apparently their concern stops at birth.

"According to the Children's Defense Fund, more than 27,000 children live in poverty in South Dakota: 18,000 have no health insurance; and two-thirds of fourth graders perform below grade level in math and reading.

"The state's ranks regarding infant mortality, prenatal care and education spending per pupil are abysmal.

"Where is the legislation to improve the lives of children already living in South Dakota?"

Let's get down to basics. There is no such thing as an "unborn child." Until birth it is a fetus, growing inside the woman's body. It is her decision, and no one else's, whether to have that child. Otherwise, we're still in the Dark Ages. And, in fact, hundreds of millions of women around the world live in a dark age of domestic slavery, without rights.

This is a fundamental democratic question, that women have the right to control our own bodies. A woman must not be obliged to have a child she doesn't want. If she is condemned to do so, it is a fundamental violation of her rights as a human being, making her a machine to produce babies. This issue is closely bound up with religion, the family and the drive by reactionary forces to build a society based on exploitation of workers, of women workers, on oppression of racial and ethnic minorities and oppression of the majority of humanity. And you cannot fight for liberation from one form of oppression without fighting for all.

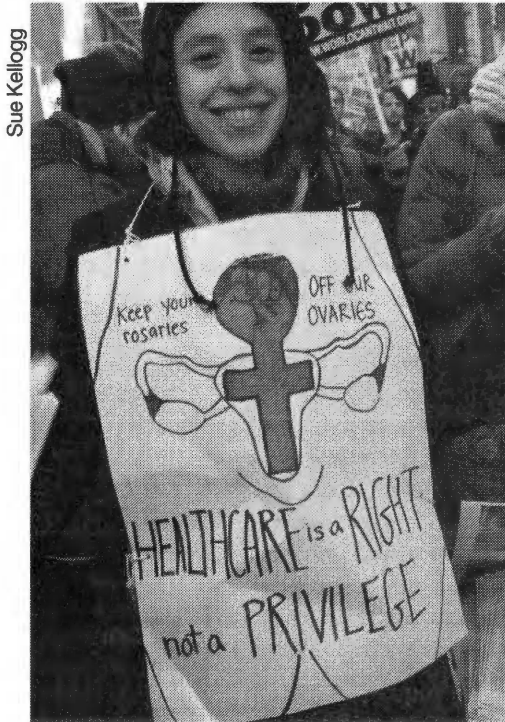
This is a class issue – the rich are never going to stop abortions. It's not about concern for children. There is another agenda that is operative here. It's about the oppression of women, the attempt to drive women back into the home – an agenda shared by Hitler, for example, in his slogan, "*Kinder, Kirche, Kuche*" – a woman's place is with children, in the church and kitchen. Well, we say, that the place of working woman, of those genuinely fighting for the liberation of women from age-old oppression, is in the class struggle.

Class Struggle and Women's Liberation

Interestingly, if we look at the reasons for the Supreme Court's *Roe v. Wade* decision in 1973, it was not just because of the women's movement – which I was active in, as a founding member of the first radical women's group, Redstockings – although that did play a role. But the fact that the whole society was experiencing an enormous explosion of social struggle from the civil rights movement to the antiwar movement, to the beginnings of gay liberation with the Stonewall "riot." The women's movement grew out of that turmoil and upheaval.

Black people won the right to vote in the South and were rebelling against police brutality and poverty in the North. The U.S. was sinking in the first *losing* imperialist war in its history, in Vietnam. Those were key factors in why women won the right to abortion. But as Marxists we know that under capitalism, such partial victories will only be temporary. Ever since 1973, the reactionaries have been trying to roll back this gain for women, to turn the clock back. A lot of them would love to go back to slavery, but a civil war settled that issue.

Marxists are not feminists. We see the oppression of women rooted in the capitalist system. We hold that the fight for women's emancipation is the task of all working people, of all the exploited and oppressed, not just women. We know that the oppression of women is rooted in the family, and that women cannot be freed from the burdens of domestic drudgery and slavery until a revolution overturns capitalism. From



Sue Kellogg

For free abortion on demand. Abortion rights protester at March 29 antiwar march in New York.

the outset the mainstream feminist groups looked to the courts and the Democratic Party to stand up for women's rights. And look what happened.

Yes, the feminists won some gains for bourgeois and petty-bourgeois women. There was a big increase in the number of women lawyers, professors and to a lesser extent doctors. In the corporate world some women became "upwardly mobile" ... until they hit the "glass ceiling." A select few became CEOs, whereupon they (like Carly Fiorina, former chairman of Hewlett-Packard) proceeded to fire thousands of women and men. But working-class, poor and minority women have taken a beating. Millions of single mothers were thrown off welfare and forced into minimum and sub-minimum wage jobs where they have no medical care. And while wages of white women rose some (to 75 percent of those of white men), those of black women (65 percent) and Latina women (54 percent) haven't budged in a decade. And now abortion rights are under full-scale attack.

It is the same story for black rights. After the Civil War ended in 1865, for eleven years under Radical Reconstruction, blacks had the right to vote. Then it was taken away, through Ku Klux Klan terror, poll taxes, literacy tests and Jim Crow segregation. In the 1960s, this right was won again through huge mobilizations and struggles. Now once more, blacks' right to vote is being taken away, discounting "hanging chads" and stationing police in front of polling stations in Florida, outright stealing of votes in Georgia and Mississippi, and denying the vote to anyone convicted of a felony (which under the racist "war on drugs" hits black men hardest). Then comes "ethnic cleansing" in New Orleans, abandoning more than 100,000 poor, black and older people in the flood after Hurricane Katrina, and now barring them from returning to their homes.

So we cannot rely on the courts, cops or capitalist politicians to protect our rights. If the Supreme Court narrowly

approved a right to abortion 33 years ago, they may take it back today if the balance of class forces is in their favor. And that balance won't be decided in the judges' chambers or hearing rooms but in the streets. Bourgeois feminists like the National Organization for Women, Inc. (NOW) got Democratic president Bill Clinton to pass a Freedom of Access to Clinic Entrances Act in 1994, prohibiting the use of force to block clinic entrances. They sued anti-abortion groups led by Scheidler and Terry under the Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations (RICO) Act. But these laws have rarely been used against anti-abortion clinic blockaders, and instead they have been used against strikes and to attack unions!

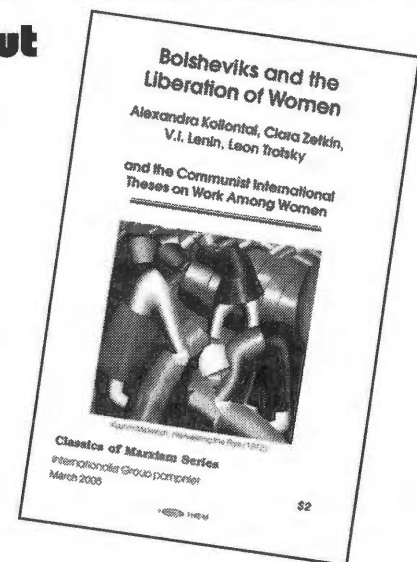
The Internationalist Group and League for the Fourth International stand for abortion that is legal, safe, free, and on demand. That is, if a woman, of whatever age, wants an abortion to prevent an unwanted pregnancy, then she has the right to have it. No politician, priest or police, or husband or boyfriend or parent or anyone else, should be able to force her to give birth. Period, end of story. Rather than looking to the state to protect abortion providers and their patients, we call for class-struggle defense of the clinics against the anti-abortion "god squad" thugs. We put forward this program in the United States, in Mexico, Brazil, Algeria and throughout the world as part of our program for women's liberation through socialist revolution.

Over 120 years ago Friedrich Engels dissected the subjugation of women in his book on *The Family, Private Property and the State*. He pointed out that women's oppression began with class society, that this gave rise to patriarchal structures which were intimately bound up with the need to protect private property and inheritance. To pass it on, you have to know who the father is, and to determine that you have to control the woman and make sure she only has one mate. Today, in the period of capitalism's decline, when declining real wages have sent millions of women into the workforce, the question of abortion is bound up with concern about a looming economic crisis. And as always in racist capitalist

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Behind Ruling-Class Opposition to Abortion

Racist Hysteria Over a "Birth Dearth"

The Nazis' watchword for women of "*Kinder, Küche, Kirche*" – children, the kitchen and church – is well-known. But they didn't invent it. Going back to the late 1800s, this was the program of the stolid German bourgeoisie for binding women to hearth and home. German Socialist August Bebel, in his 1879 book *Women and Socialism*, countered this, calling for achieving genuine equality of the sexes by freeing women from domestic drudgery and the constraints of the family, doing away with compulsory marriage (and its companions, illegitimacy and prostitution), and integrating women into social labor. Hitler revived the watchword of the German bourgeois philistines because he was worried about falling birth rates. He was building a war machine, and women were to be breeders to supply it with cannon fodder.

So the Nazi Third Reich established subsidies (*Kindergeld*) to encourage more children and also expanded Kindergarten (pre-school). Interestingly, at the very same time, Swedish Social Democrats Gunnar and Alva Myrdal published a book, *Crisis in the Population Question* (1934), which argued for instituting a host of social welfare measures including childcare facilities, school meals, home furnishing loans and other family subsidies. This program was soon enacted, marking the origin of the famed Swedish "welfare state." While it didn't force women back into the home, its ultimate purpose, like the Nazis' policies, was to jack up the fertility rate. For that reason, the right to abortion was sharply limited, and abortion for social reasons (to avoid being re-

duced to destitution) was disallowed, while the legal age for marriage was lowered.

Whether under fascist or "democratic" regimes, the ruling class' concern about abortion and the family is heavily influenced by its economic and political interests. If the Nazis wanted more "Aryan" babies, the U.S. bourgeoisie today is worried that American women – white women in particular – are not having enough children. And this concern is not limited to fringe elements in the anti-abortion movement. Establishment conservatives, liberals, even "social democrats" have explicitly raised this. A particular proponent is Ben Wattenberg, a neo-conservative ideologue at the American Enterprise Institute. Wattenberg, who has a weekly TV program on PBS, was a founding member of Social Democrats USA (SDUSA), an outfit set up in 1972 by the followers of Max Shachtman, who broke with Trotskyism on the eve of World War II, refusing to defend the Soviet Union against imperialist attack.

Wattenberg's book, *The Birth Dearth* (Random House, 1987), starts out provocatively with a chart of the number of children born for white women in the U.S. He writes:

"For about a decade and a half now the peoples in the nations of the free, modern, industrial world – that includes us in the U.S. – have not borne enough children to reproduce themselves over an extended period of time.

"We had a Baby Boom. Now there is a Birth Dearth....

"Modern capitalism has always been rooted in the eco-

America, the black question is key.

A lot of the opposition to the right to abortion is downright racist in character. These reactionaries are concerned that white women aren't having enough babies, that U.S. population growth is from black women and particularly immigrants from "Third World" countries. What's especially noteworthy about this filth is that it isn't coming just from backwoods ultra-rightists but from "respectable" conservatives and liberals. The former social-democrat and current "neo-conservative" demographic "expert" Ben Wattenburg, magazines like *Newsweek* and establishment think tanks are wringing their hands about a "birth dearth" among whites. And this isn't new, it goes back to the 1930s (see box above).

Communism and the Family

The fight to defend abortion, and to achieve the simple democratic right for women of *free abortion on demand*, runs head-on into the question of the family. As Marx and Engels noted in the *Communist Manifesto*: "Abolition [*Aufhebung*, or transcending] of the family! Even the most radical flare up at this infamous proposal of the Communists." The family as a functioning unit only exists among the bourgeoisie, they wrote, having been effectively destroyed for the working class, and it will "vanish with the vanishing of capital." In its stead,

the communists seek to provide socialized services – day care centers, dining halls, laundries, etc. – of the highest quality that can lift the burden of childrearing and maintaining the domestic economy from women's shoulders.

The Internationalist Group has just published a pamphlet, *Bolsheviks and the Liberation of Women*, with a number of key documents showing the communists' focus on the emancipation of women and the fundamental rights (to divorce, abortion, elimination of laws against homosexuals) and social measures instituted by the Bolsheviks under Lenin and Trotsky. These rights and social gains were then rolled back by the conservative bureaucracy which seized political power under Stalin. And when capitalism was restored in the Soviet Union and East Europe after 1989, women were the big losers, losing rights to housing, to work, to childcare and in many cases being forced into penury. This social counterrevolution led to an explosion in prostitution and trafficking in women. The "freedom" that the capitalist ideologues vaunt means slavery for women.

It has become almost a commonplace to cite Charles Fourier, who back in the early 19th century said you can gauge the general progress of society by looking at the position of women. But the corollary of this basic fact is often ignored – namely, that progress for women will come about through a

conomic fact of vigorously expanding domestic markets. That phase is ending....

"I believe it is possible that, because of the changing ethnic and racial that come along with the Birth Dearth, we may face some increased divisiveness and turmoil in America....

"I do not mean to sound apocalyptic, but the demographic forces now in motion may just yield a world – one in which we or our children will live – where the U.S. will no longer be 'the most important country in the world.' It could be a world where the alliance of Western nations will no longer shape either the political agenda, the culture, or the direction of the global community....

"We have lived through an era of free-falling fertility in the modern democratic world. The key question it yields may well be this: *Over time, will Western values prevail?*"

Wattenberg focuses on immigration and "the problem of race and ethnicity" explicitly, saying:

"Because they are more likely to be poor, blacks and Hispanics have substantially higher fertility rates than whites. Further, recent immigrants have higher fertility rates than other Americans.... Moreover, the great majority of immigrants these days come from Hispanic nations, Asian nations, Moslem nations, and black African nations."

This gives rise, he writes, to "the long-range question, troubling to many, of whether America will remain a nation that can continue to be characterized as one that is predominately of white European extraction."

Wattenberg brings out into the open some of the usually hidden themes – racism and geopolitical interests of U.S. imperialism – that underlie the battle over abortion. His views are echoed in the rants of right-wingers such as fascistic demagogue Pat Buchanan, in his doomsday book *The Death of the*

West: How Dying Populations and Immigrant Invasions Imperil Our Country and Civilization (2002). But this is not just a far-right or "neo-con" obsession. The same concerns were raised in an article on the "Birth Dearth" in the liberal *Newsweek* (27 September 2004), which seeks to stoke nativist chauvinism with talk of "the prospect of increasing ethnic tensions, as a flat white population and a dwindling black one become gradually smaller minorities in a growing multicultural sea." It cites Phillip Longman of the "centrist" New America Foundation, whose book, *The Empty Cradle* (2004) raises the specter that "the technologies by which it [the U.S.] projects geopolitical power ... may gradually become too expensive for a country facing massively rising social entitlements" due to falling birthrates, producing an aging population.

In addition to needing manpower to sustain the U.S. mega-arsenal of death and to pay for a growing number of retirees, as they pursue a crusade in the Near East, the rulers of American capitalism are worried about the "ethnic mix" in their "homeland." Among the factors that have contributed to falling white birth rates, Wattenberg lists education, working women, abortion, contraception, lesbianism, male homosexuality and "women's liberation." When the bourgeois politicians compete with each other to be identified with "family values," they are underscoring the key function of the family as a core unit of capitalist society. The family plays a vital role as a conservatizing influence, it provides various indispensable functions of childrearing, nourishment and housing that would otherwise fall to society as a whole to provide. And it is the key institution in enforcing the oppression of women.

general struggle for social liberation, not a particular struggle for women's rights alone.

Historically, struggles for social reforms which accept the capitalist framework maintain the divisions enforced by the bourgeoisie. For the most part, the suffragettes, bourgeois women who fought at the turn of the 20th century for the right to vote, did not fight for blacks' right to vote. On the other hand, many abolitionists, both black and white, who fought valiantly against slavery, turned their back on the fight for women's equality. In 1840 at the World Anti-Slavery Convention in London, women abolitionists were forced to sit in a curtained balcony.

And this is not just ancient history. In the 1970s, after the appearance of the contemporary women's movement as an outgrowth of the New Left, struggles of women, blacks, Latinos, gays and so on were kept largely separate due to the sectoralism and "identity politics" which held sway. Yet none of these "sectors" could achieve lasting gains without sweeping away, through common struggle, the capitalist system which is the origin of their oppression.

So a fight for women's rights must be a fight for a general emancipation and reorganization of society in which production is for social need not profit. You can't have free, safe abortion on demand without having quality socialized medi-

cal care for all. You can't have universal early childhood learning centers and childcare facilities in a society where public education is systematically starved of funds, threatened by escalating privatization and used to purvey reactionary bourgeois ideology. You can't advance the fight for women's rights in the United States without fighting to defeat the U.S. imperialist war that is enslaving Iraqi women, forcing them back into the veil and eliminating any semblance of equality under the law. You can't provide socialized institutions to replace domestic slavery even under the most advanced "welfare state" as long as capitalism remains.

Thus the fight for abortion rights must be a fight against both the partner parties of capitalism, and for building a revolutionary workers party. Today the bourgeois ideologues of feminism and "post-feminism," whatever that is, tell women "you can't have it all" – children, prosperity, rewarding work. Women are told that they must voluntarily choose their brand of oppression, "mommy track" or "career track." But women and all the oppressed *can* "have it all," through international socialist revolution. Our task is to realize the promise of the Bolshevik October Revolution of 1917 of genuine equality for women and all the oppressed. *For women's liberation through socialist revolution!* ■

Feds Invade Homes of *Independentistas* and Trade-Unionists, Steal Documents, Brutally Assault Journalists

FBI Puerto Rico Raids: Colonial Repression A Threat to All

FEBRUARY 13—On Friday morning, February 10, a task force of the Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI) launched an operation invading apartments and offices in six different places in Puerto Rico. With a helicopter of the Department of Homeland Security hovering overhead, federal police in military uniforms, some wearing ski masks to hide their faces, brandished high-powered weapons as they yanked people out of their homes so that swarms of FBI agents could rifle through their files and cart off computers. This is a continuation of the assassination last September of Puerto Rican independence fighter Filiberto Ojeda Ríos, leader of the Ejército Popular Boricua (Los Macheteros), by an FBI death squad. Targeted this time around were several *independentistas* who have been active in protesting that act of colonial state terror. Among them are well-known trade-union activists including the sociology professor Liliana Laboy and Norberto Cintrón Fiallo, who organized Ojeda Ríos' funeral.

Last Friday's raids were a naked act of state repression by the imperialists who for more than a century have subjugated the Caribbean island nation of Puerto Rico, which for many years was the largest remaining colony in the world. Today, the U.S. rulers are carrying out a brutal colonial occupation of Afghanistan and Iraq as well. Their drive to terrorize the world (and the U.S. population) into submission in the name of a "war on terror" not only affects *independentista* militants but the workers movement as a whole and the rights and liberties of all. As journalists were covering the raids in the capital, San Juan, an FBI official verbally abused them and sprayed pepper gas directly in the face of several photographers and TV cameramen. As the feds departed, youths yelling "abusers" pounded and kicked the vehicles and threw rocks at the retreating convoy.

When the FBI murdered Ojeda Ríos in cold blood, unleashing a hail of gunfire and then leaving him for almost 24 hours to bleed to death, the Internationalist Group and League for the Fourth International denounced this act of state terrorism and called on the workers movement and all defenders of democratic rights to protest the crime. We noted that this was also a deliberate imperialist provocation, car-



Angel O. Boutron/AP

FBI official pepper-sprays journalists during raid in San Juan, February 10.

ried out on the anniversary of the 1868 Grito de Lares, when Puerto Ricans first took up arms fighting for independence from Spain. Ojeda Ríos was assassinated by the same imperialist butchers whose military guard dogs and CIA hit men torture and murder prisoners at Abu Ghraib in Iraq, at the Guantánamo naval base stolen from Cuba, in Afghanistan and elsewhere. The government in Washington who dispatched these professional assassins to Puerto Rico is the same one that abandoned more than 100,000 poor, black and working-class residents of New Orleans to die in the floods following Hurricane Katrina. The U.S. rulers are the real terrorists.

The recent FBI raids are a particular threat to the workers movement. They give a taste of what this government has in store for trade-unionists in Puerto Rico and around the U.S. Already in August 2004, a squad of federal cops raided the headquarters of the Independent Authentic Union (UIA), accusing it of planning protests at the San Juan Airport, which under the U.S.A. PATRIOT Act would now be labeled a "terrorist" act. The UIA was protesting attempts by the Puerto Rican government's Water and Sewer Authority (AAA) to dismantle the union health-care fund. When the union went on strike over this attack, the feds struck again, on October 22. This time the FBI claimed it was investigating union "corruption," and accused the UIA of planning "sabotage" of the



Demonstration by striking water workers, 25 October 2004, protesting FBI raids against their union.

island's water supply. Federal agents cordoned off the union hall for 15 hours, held union officials hostage and confiscated boxes of documents.

The FBI has for decades engaged in frame-ups, sabotage and disruption of the Puerto Rican union movement. They are stepping up their repression today as labor struggles intensify, including by the powerful and militant electrical workers (UTIER) and teachers unions. The recent raids were described by the daily *Primera Hora* (11 February) as a "Preventive Strike." We call on the entire workers movement to join in protesting this assault on fundamental rights.

The government assault was directed against Puerto Rican nationalists, who have been the target of FBI/police provocation, including the infamous Cerro Maravilla murders and the *carpetas* (police dossiers) which were kept on no less than 100,000 Puerto Ricans. We demand that all U.S. military, intelligence and other agencies get out of Puerto Rico, including the FBI, CIA, DEA and the rest of the colonial repressors. We call as well for all Puerto Rican independence fighters to be released from prison. The Internationalist Group and League for the Fourth International stand for unconditional and immediate independence for Puerto Rico. But while many *independentistas* seek to build a Puerto Rican state like the various other bourgeois mini-states in the Caribbean, as proletarian internationalists we fight for a voluntary socialist federation of the Caribbean, in conjunction with the struggle for workers revolution in the imperialist citadel. ■

Hands Off the TWU...

continued from page 22

leadership was not prepared to wage the all-out battle that was required.

The TWU International was even worse, openly siding with the MTA and mayor and calling for breaking the strike. These despicable scabherders should be run out of the labor movement. But those who called for a more militant policy failed to deliver. Although opposition voices

are few in the Local 100 executive board, they do have an echo among the membership, as proved by the vote turning down the sellout contract. But the opposition failed to mobilize the ranks for real struggle. A determined group of strikers could have picketed out the Metro-North and PATH transit workers, who had said they would respect TWU lines. It would have dramatically changed the strike, but no pickets showed up.

In fact, Toussaint and the Local 100 dissidents all came out of the now-defunct New Directions opposition caucus, which took over after the 1999 election. New Directions is similar to a host of union reform movements that arose in the 1970s and '80s (Miners for Democracy, Teamsters for Democracy, Sadlowski in the Steelworkers, etc.). Their program was simply "militant" trade unionism. But when they get in power, they all buckle under. Why? Because at bottom they all accept the capitalist system, and play by the bosses rules. Even before taking office many of them (including Toussaint and the TWU oppositionists) showed their subservience to the bourgeoisie by suing the old-line union leaders in the capitalist courts.

We say: government hands off the unions! It is a betrayal to drag the unions into the courts, the same courts that are now jailing Roger Toussaint. Class-struggle unionists also oppose the compulsory dues check-off, which lets the government and management control the union's finances, allowing them to use it to blackmail labor, as the MTA and the courts are now doing to the TWU. The union should collect its own dues. But it is necessary to throw back the judicial war on the Transport Workers Union lock, stock and barrel. What is posed today is elementary defense of union independence from the bourgeois state.

Above all, it is necessary to wage this battle politically. The leadership of the TWU International, Local 100, the AFL-CIO chiefs and the whole of the NYC labor officialdom are all in the pockets of the Democratic Party – except for those like 1199's Dennis Rivera, AFSCME and UFT leaders who have openly or tacitly backed Republicans Pataki and Bloomberg. Enough of selling out the unions to the bosses' parties! What is needed is to oust the pro-capitalist bureaucrats and build a workers party, a party built on a revolutionary program of class struggle, to fight for a workers government.

Forty years ago, TWU leader Mike Quill went to jail while leading a strike. His defiant words, "Let the judge drop dead in his black robes!" became history. And the transit union won the strike. Remember: the only "illegal" strike is a strike that loses.

The battle is not over. The contract is not settled. The Taylor Law is still in place. Transit workers and all New York workers must prepare for hard struggle. As Local 100's slogan says, the TWU moves New York. It can also stop New York, as it showed last December. Now is the time for all of labor and all working people, minorities, immigrants and the poor to stand with the transit workers. The TWU's fight is a fight for all of us. ■



On the Elections in the Professional Staff Congress

To defeat the arrogant CUNY administration and city/state rulers, we need a class-struggle leadership

Union elections in the Professional Staff Congress (PSC) take place at a critical time for the workers of New York and their sons and daughters at the City University of New York (CUNY). Attacks on the right to education are escalating as an integral part of U.S. rulers' war on working people abroad and "at home."

The latest attack on CUNY: vicious new cuts in tuition assistance, with the new requirement that those receiving it carry a minimum of 15 credits. This would effectively exclude students from poor, minority and working-class families who have to work for a living, limiting financial aid to fulltime students. It would affect the great majority of students taught by members of the PSC, the faculty/staff union at CUNY, the largest urban public university in the United States.

The ruling class wants to root out any remnants of open admissions and impose racist elitism at CUNY and elsewhere; it seeks the piecemeal privatization of education, subordinating universities to business needs; as part of the war drive, it wants to regiment intellectuals as it did during the Cold War.

In January, the London *Economist* hailed the elimination of open admissions at CUNY, praising this as a "parable of elitism in universities." It quoted Chancellor Goldstein saying, "Elitism is not a dirty word." Now elements linked to the right-wing Manhattan Institute want to block programs aiding black men, whose enrollment figures at CUNY have fallen sharply since 1999.

Meanwhile, CUNY faculty have gone more than four years with no raise and three years without a contract, while the CUNY administration has bled the Welfare Fund in order to use this as a gun to the PSC's head. The situation for adjuncts in particular is unbearable, while 80th Street (and right-wing demagogues inside the union) try to set full-timers against part-timers.

The PSC elections are occurring at a time when big things are happening in the working class. Last winter's NYC transit strike showed the enormous power of the multiracial working class and gave the lie to those who pretended the class struggle had become *passé*. Now the same "slave-labor" Taylor Law that covers us at CUNY has been used to fine the TWU and sentence its president Roger Toussaint to jail. This attack ought to be answered with a united walkout by all city labor!

In recent weeks, several million immigrant workers have taken to the streets against racist persecution – and now the

migra (immigration police) has launched new round-ups in New York and across the country. The war in Iraq and the unending lies and sociopathic viciousness of Bush & Co. generate widespread discontent, while (despite the efforts of union leaders) many workers are disgusted with the other major ruling-class party, the Democrats, who have sought to out-Bush Bush on one crucial issue after another.

Playing by the Bosses' Rules Means Defeat

Like the crisis at CUNY, the transit strike and its aftermath have shown the crying need for a class-struggle leadership: that is, a labor leadership with the program and will to wage the class struggle through to victory. This is clearly *not* the case with the current leadership of the unions, from the hidebound hacks of the Labor Council to the Toussaint bureaucracy that sold out the transit strike to the leadership of the PSC. Our union leadership prides itself on "progressive" credentials – in contrast to the previous reactionary leaders – but it operates within the bourgeois framework of Democratic Party-chained "labor statesmanship."

PSC activists are right to be outraged and disgusted by the demagoguery, McCarthyite baiting and outright lies of the so-called "CUNY Alliance," the right-wing slate that popped up out of nowhere for these elections. They want to cut adjuncts and other part-timers out of the union (that's what it means when they say adjuncts shouldn't have to pay union dues). They say the union shouldn't address issues "outside" CUNY (i.e., protest the war on Iraq), as if the fate of this public university were not determined by what is going on in this country and the world.

Their mindset is reflected by the diatribes of the rightist "National Association of Scholars" (which has a chapter at CUNY) against open admissions and affirmative action, and the smears of "The Patriot Returns," an Internet sheet which echoes attacks against CUNY as "the unpatriotic university" (*Front Page, The Sun, Post* et al.) and the hate campaigns of the far-right. The "CUNY Alliance" pledges (truthfully in this case) to be as cozy as can be with management, and denounces "noisy street theatrics" like union demonstrations.

Right-wing mouthpieces can red bait 'til they're red-white-and-blue in the face. The obvious truth is that the incumbent New Caucus is *not* a bunch of rabble-rousing reds, but a social-democratic grouping that plays according to the rules laid down by the capitalist system. Yet what's needed,

in the face of the arrogant, hardball-playing millionaires and billionaires who control CUNY, the city, the state and the rest of the country are *real* reds! We cannot win by respecting the limits of "responsible," i.e., pro-capitalist unionism.

The New Caucus says it's all because of the anti-labor, anti-minority, anti-education austerity imposed by the city and state authorities. They even point out that this is directly connected to the U.S. war and colonial occupation of Iraq (and now the threats to extend the war to Iran). What this situation calls for is an all-out struggle, together with all city labor, students and the rest of the working people, to defeat the ruling-class offensive. The transit strike was the best opportunity in decades to do just that.

Instead, the New Caucus accepts the "framework" at CUNY and negotiates within the limits of what the capitalist rulers say they can afford. Literally. When CUNY negotiators said there is no new money, the PSC leadership opted for "working within this inadequate framework" rather than "walking away from the table." So they bargain to shore up the welfare fund with money taken from retroactive pay. Some "bargain"! From all reports, the contract being negotiated contains next to nothing for adjuncts and precious little for anyone else.

Republican Pataki says "screw you, I'm vetoing the education budget." The union tops' answer is to vote Democrat. This means actively supporting the capitalist system that is ripping up education all across the globe. In '04 the PSC leaders endorsed pro-war millionaire Kerry – who called for sending 40,000 more troops to Iraq and criticized Bush for not invading Falluja soon enough – and organized bus trips to round up votes for him in Pennsylvania.

But union-busting, like imperialist war and "homeland security" repression, is a bipartisan affair: it was Democratic state attorney general Eliot Spitzer who got the Taylor Law injunctions against the transit strike. The most fundamental and urgent need of labor is to break from the Democrats and all capitalist parties and politicians. Workers and all the oppressed need a party that fights for our class interests, a revolutionary workers party.

Last fall the PSC leadership talked of a "job action" over the contract. Yet since then, supporters of the New Caucus have argued that the union membership is not "ready" for militant action. It would be silly to deny that many college teachers are affected by academic elitism and the idea that "professionals" should not use "blue-collar" methods. Management is adept at using divide-and-conquer tactics in an institution whose arcane hierarchies breed status-worship.

Yet the members' response to the packed September 29 contract rally at Cooper Union told another story. Enthusiasm and militancy filled the room, and every mention of a possible strike was met by cheering and applause. But the momentum was allowed to dissipate. Talk of a strike remained just talk, with no real measures taken to prepare one. Even the popular protest outside Chancellor Goldstein's residence was not repeated. Nor did the leadership seek to mobilize escalating mass protests outside meetings of the Board of Trustees, drawing in students and other sections of the labor movement, or other

measures that could have been taken to build for a strike.

On essential issues facing teaching staff it has been all talk and no action. The leadership has criticized the firing of Mohammed Yousry and Susan Rosenberg, organized conferences on academic freedom, and criticized the destruction of open admissions. But it has not mobilized the membership to block these attacks. Efforts to mobilize students to support our union during the contract struggle have been feeble to nonexistent.

A crucial test came with the transit strike, the biggest chance in years for us to strike a real blow at the Taylor Law. There could have and should have been a de facto work stoppage in unity with the transit and other city workers, as we proposed during the TWU strike in December, and again when the transit ranks voted down the contract in February. But the leadership stood by as the Taylor Law was used to victimize the TWU. Like the rest of the labor tops, they accept the basic rules of this system.

As with New Directions in the TWU, once in power these and similar "reform" groupings in the unions are incapable of leading real struggle. They can only produce defeats, like in transit.

Thus we will not vote for the social-democratic New Caucus, nor for the McCarthyite "CUNY Alliance." What is needed, in the PSC and throughout the labor movement, is a leadership with a class-struggle program to mobilize the power of the working class and all the oppressed.

We believe that the union should fight for full restoration of *open admissions* and for *no tuition*, with a living stipend to make it possible for students without financial resources to study. While in its "security" frenzy the administration is trying to turn the 19 campuses of the City University into gated communities, we call to eliminate the turnstiles and get *all cops off campus*. The Board of Trustees should be abolished, and CUNY should be under *teacher-student-worker control*.

The situation of adjuncts, who teach most of the courses at CUNY and are paid next to nothing while being denied the most basic benefits and rights, is a barometer. There has been no advance on any of adjuncts' most pressing demands (while health care costs were actually hiked for many). Thus some part-timers have been mooted the idea of forming a separate union. That would be a big mistake, making part-timers even more vulnerable and cutting them off from the union (like the "CUNY Alliance" would like to do).

Adjuncts are right to be outraged. But to change the situation, part-timers as well as full-timers need to mobilize as part of the union and break the "framework" of submission to capital. We need to build a class-struggle leadership fighting for full parity, health care, job security and all our other crucial demands; full citizenship rights for immigrants; a break with the bosses' parties, to build a workers party to fight for a workers government, which will make the right to free, quality higher education a reality for all.

–Supporters of the Internationalist Group in the PSC and CUNY Internationalist Clubs

20 April 2006

Behind the Cartoons: Anti-Immigrant Crusade and Imperialist War Racist Anti-Muslim Provocations Trigger Storm of Islamic Reaction

In one of the stranger international incidents of recent times, a collection of crude anti-Muslim cartoons in a Danish provincial newspaper set off a whirlwind of Islamic outrage in the Near East and demonization of Islam in the West. The 12 cartoons published in the *Jyllands-Posten* last September were intended as an attack on Muslim immigrants in the context of the imperialist occupation of Iraq and Afghanistan. It was a deliberate attempt by right-wing xenophobic (anti-foreigner) racists to provoke a reaction. Islamic clerics then seized on this provocation to mount a diversion, channeling widespread resentment against Western domination into a fundamentalist religious furor.

Notably, the protests did *not* focus on the imperialist war, the tightening noose around the Palestinian people, or the mounting attacks on immigrants in Europe but instead on shadow boxing about religious symbolism. The Danish imams kept mum about the several hundred Danish troops in Iraq, who have been accused of torturing Iraqi prisoners, and Denmark's logistical support to the U.S. war machine. Marxists in the West direct our polemical fire in the first instance against the capitalist rulers who used this incident to whip up an anti-immigrant war frenzy. At the same time, we point out that the initial event has become a pretext for a "clash of civilizations" dear to reactionaries on both sides.

The thrust of the cartoons in question, although many were obscure, was to portray Islam as a terrorist religion and identify Muslims with bloodthirsty suicide-bombers. This was the clear implication of the drawing of Muhammad with a bomb with a lit fuse protruding from his turban. It was also the clear intent of the cultural editor of *Jyllands-Posten* who criticized the media for bowing to "intimidation in dealing with issues related to Islam." The newspaper is closely linked to the Danish People's Party (DF – Dansk Folkeparti), a racist right wing party that is part of the government majority. And the government itself is stepping up anti-immigrant repression.

It was hardly accidental that Denmark (like the Netherlands, another hot-spot in these "culture wars") is one of the few European countries actively participating in the colonial occupation of Iraq (as well as Afghanistan and Kosovo). But what catapulted this into headlines around the world was when a group of Danish Muslim imams sought to line up various



Danish troops in Iraq have been accused of torture.

Arab states behind a boycott of Denmark. Reactionary governments and Islamic fundamentalists sponsored fiery protests, sometimes in competition with bourgeois nationalists. The purpose was to pressure the Danish government into punishing the newspaper and banning publication of the cartoons. The Organization of the Islamic Conference and the Arab League called on the European Union to issue blasphemy laws.

With riots and demonstrations breaking out in an arc from Nigeria to Pakistan, with Danish butter and cookies piling up in warehouses, the stage was set for Act II. Acting in unison, the major European papers republished the cartoons amid a welter of propaganda in the imperialist countries depicting Islam as a uniquely totalitarian religion. Apologists for the U.S. military and its torturers prated about the "Enlightenment" and "democracy" – pretty rich considering that the hard core of the (shrinking) political base for the gang in the White House is composed of those yearning for a Protestant theocracy. Apologists for the Israeli theocratic state piled in to stoke up hatred of any and all Arabs and Muslims in the hopes of shoring up support for Zionism.

On the other hand, various "reasonable" and "moderate" voices opined that offending any form of organized superstition was to be avoided. This was the consensus in the bourgeois media in the U.S., where the vast majority of the population claims to believe in the existence of angels and the government blithely spent two-and-a-half million dollars to test the medical impact of prayer (observed results: negative). To make sure none of the major media got out of line, the State Department let it be known that publishing the cartoons would hurt the war effort, by making it appear that the U.S. was engaged in a crusade against Muslims, as Bush had let slip earlier on.

Various bourgeois liberals recalled the case of Salman Rushdie in 1989, whose anti-Islamic satire, *The Satanic Verses*, was targeted by Muslim reactionaries. But there is an important distinction. Rushdie, who was marked for assassination by Iran's Ayatollah Khomeini, was not baiting Muslims in the service of anti-immigrant repression and imperialist mass murder. Marxists defended Rushdie and oppose press censorship, while today emphatically denouncing the cartoons and the reactionary purpose they served.

No sooner had the carnival of reaction died down than

the case of Abdul Rahman arose. An Afghan convert to Christianity, Rahman was threatened in March with execution by the courts in "democratic" Afghanistan. This underlined the reality that the imperialists had removed the Taliban regime in Afghanistan only to bring in more subservient cliques of Islamic reactionaries. Karzai's puppet regime in Kabul got rid of the problem by quickly whisking Rahman off to Italy.

As Karl Marx put it in his *Critique of the Gotha Program* in 1875:

"Everyone should be able to attend to his religious as well as his bodily needs without the police sticking their noses in. But the workers' party ought, at any rate in this connection, to have expressed its awareness of the fact that bourgeois 'freedom of conscience' is nothing but the toleration of all possible kinds of *religious freedom of conscience*, and that for its part it endeavors rather to liberate the conscience from the witchery of religion."

In this imperialist epoch the bourgeoisies in every corner of the planet have mobilized the most retrograde superstitions and most murderous fanaticism to shore up their irrational system. The striking fact is that today it is only the revolutionary Marxists, militant opponents of all brands of religion and of the bourgeois order, who consistently defend the fundamental democratic principle of separation of church and state.

The League for the Fourth International condemns the anti-Muslim cartoons as a racist provocation against immigrants and an attempt to whip up war frenzy, while at the same time we oppose any censorship by the bourgeois state. We oppose blasphemy laws and laws outlawing "hate speech." Laws regulating publications, under which warmongering ideologue Oriana Fallaci is prosecuted for "defaming" Islam and fascist "historian" David Irving is jailed for denying the Holocaust, will inevitably be used against the left, banning appeals to "class hatred" or the like. Fascist Holocaust deniers and Nazi apologists or anti-Muslim racist acts should be dealt with by the power of the workers movement, not by appealing to the racist bourgeois state.

In Europe as in the U.S., the capitalist governments are introducing police-state measures against immigrants as part of a so-called "war on terror." This is the opening wedge to regiment the entire population, and calls on them to regulate speech can only intensify the repression. The main danger in the imperialist countries comes not from clots of Islamic fundamentalists but from "Judeo-Christian" religious fanatics who are armed to the teeth with "weapons of mass destruction" – in reality, not in cartoon drawings or doctored intelligence reports. And the imperialist and Zionist warmongers fully intend to use their arsenals in "preemptive" strikes.

Anatomy of a Provocation

The Danish cartoons came in a particular context. The European bourgeoisies have been ratcheting up repression against immigrants: the Sarkozy law on immigration in France, sharply limiting family regroupment; restrictive naturalization procedures in Germany; in Denmark, new laws effectively barring foreigners married to Danes from entering the country. 2006 was to be a year of anti-immigrant fear-

mongering. Although the mobilization of French youth and workers against a new jobs law threw a hitch into this scenario, the assault on immigrants continues.

The editors of *Jyllands-Posten* wrap themselves in the mantle of free speech. Yet it turns out that in 2003 the same paper refused to run drawings satirizing Jesus Christ. The editor said that there was no comparison, that those cartoons, unlike the anti-Islamic caricatures, had been unsolicited (*Guardian* [London], 6 February 2006). That's the point: these cartoons were solicited for a reason. These aren't freethinkers crusading against organized religion (in a country where Lutheranism is the official religion, at least partly supported by state funds, and there is still a law against "blasphemy" on the books). They are Muslim-bashing bigots.

One of the cartoons, which has received less attention although it is revealing, showed a seventh-grader who had written on a blackboard, "Jyllands-Posten's journalists are a bunch of reactionary provocateurs." The point was that an immigrant child was writing this message in Arabic letters, in Persian, in what was presumed to be a typical school in Copenhagen, sending the message that Denmark is supposedly being overrun by Islamic immigrants. This is a banal example of the sort of racist garbage which is now running rampant in Western European countries.

Thus two parliamentary representatives of the DF, the ultra-right party to which *Jyllands-Posten* is tied, both of them Lutheran pastors, have stated that Muslims are "a cancer on Danish society" (quoted by Jytte Klausen, "Cartoon Jihad" at Salon.com, 8 February). For them, satirizing Muhammad is a useful stick to beat immigrant workers and refugees. Yet despite the assumption of racists and Muslim clerics alike, there is little indication that the majority of these immigrants are in fact practicing Muslims. For that matter, the large-scale racist attacks on immigrant workers in Denmark in the 1970s went after Yugoslavs as well as Turks. What's going on here is the targeting of an exploited and segregated section of the working class.

Curiously, other cases of Muslim-bashing – for example, a cartoon of Mohammed in hell which appeared in an Italian magazine in April – have created much less of a furor. (The magazine in question was linked to Opus Dei. This ultra-reactionary Catholic semi-secret society, now known to millions through the comic-book treatment in Dan Brown's best-selling novel *The Da Vinci Code*, genuinely exists and really is bad news.)

But who the hell is this Flemming Rose, the *Jyllands-Posten* "culture" editor who set up this whole affair, anyway? He is a Ukrainian-born, right-wing hack journalist of Jewish descent who translated the autobiography of Russian counter-revolutionary Boris Yeltsin into Danish. After a stint as a reporter for the *Jyllands-Posten* in Moscow, Rose traveled to the United States in 2004 to sit at the feet of Daniel Pipes, a pathological Arab-baiting Zionist ideologue (continuing in the footsteps of his father Richard Pipes, a pathological anti-communist Cold Warrior).

While Daniel Pipes has dismissed allegations that he mas-

NATO Photos



Danish war minister Svend Aage Jensby meets with U.S. war minister Donald Rumsfeld in 2003.

terminated the *Jyllands-Posten* affair, the fact of the matter is that Rose returned from Washington to produce a hero-worshipping interview with Pipes about the “Islamic threat” which was published in *Jyllands-Posten*. This in turn provoked James Petras and Robin Eastman-Abaya to produce an article titled “The Caricatures in Middle East Politics” (February 2006), which has appeared on a number of websites. The article claims in essence that the cartoon affair is simply an Israeli plot.

Petras and Eastman-Abaya quote the former Mossad agent Victor J. Ostrovsky claiming that Danish intelligence is manipulated by the Israelis, and produce a list of list of alleged *sayanim* (volunteer helpers of the Mossad) ranging from British media mogul Robert Maxwell to the U.S. naval

researcher Jonathan Pollard. Although Petras may still claim to be an anti-imperialist and even a Marxist, the article he co-authored blames the Iraq war on a cabal of “civilian militarists in the Pentagon and U.S. Zionists in and out of high places in the Pentagon and civil society, in coordination with the Israeli state, which wanted Iraq to be destroyed as a viable nation,” while arguing that “there is no evidence that the major U.S. oil corporations pressured Congress or promoted the war in Iraq or the current confrontation with Iran.”

This is “the tail wagging the dog,” the idea that tiny Israel has hoodwinked the U.S. imperialist superpower into carrying out its agenda. Rather, Israel assumes such a prominent place in Washington’s Near East policy because in the American ruling class there is an all-sided bipartisan consensus, which has lasted half a century now, that the Zionist garrison state can serve as a gendarme for Western interests in the region (just as the Zionist leader Chaim Weizman offered in getting British foreign secretary Lord Balfour to sponsor a Jewish colonial-settler “homeland” in Palestine at the end of World War I).

The effect (and purpose) of such conspiracy mongering about the Iraq war as a Zionist plot – and the alternate, that this was just a “war for oil” – is to take the focus off the imperialist system. It alibis the U.S. imperialists and trivializes their drive for world domination, which went into high gear with the demise of the Soviet Union and is directed not only against Bush’s “axis of evil” but ultimately against the U.S.’ imperialist rivals. It is an appeal to “rational” American warmongers, like the retired generals now calling for the ouster of Pentagon chief Donald Rumsfeld, or the Democrats, or the first president Bush.

Sure, Zionists, “neo-conservative” war hawks, oil interests and military contractors all played a role in the genesis of the war on Iraq, in league with lunatic Christian fanatics who believe that it will usher in an apocalypse in which the true believers will be saved and non-believers (including the vast majority of Jews) will be packed off to hell. But at bot-

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tom the U.S.' "war on terror" is a war to terrorize the world into submission to the *diktat* of U.S. imperialism..

Racist Oppression in Denmark No Fairytale

While Rose, perhaps inspired by Pipes, was the agent, the cartoon ploy was part and parcel of an anti-immigrant drive being carried out by the Danish bourgeoisie and its parties. Rose put it bluntly: "People are willing to pay for a welfare state, but not for Ali who comes from 5,000 miles away," (*International Herald Tribune*, 13 February). As a matter of fact, the anti-Muslim campaign got the green light from a very high source indeed: Denmark's Queen Margrethe II. Last year, in an authorized biography, she was quoted as saying that Islam "is a challenge, which we need to take seriously. We have admittedly ignored it for too long. Because we are tolerant – and a little lazy" (*Copenhagen Post*, 14 April 2005).

The current campaign was preceded by smears from the previous prime minister, Poul Nyrup Rasmussen. The Social-Democratic leader linked immigrants to violent crime and talked of tiny Denmark being "inundated with foreigners" as the "left" stewards of Danish capitalism attacked workers' gains and slashed social services. In November 2001 they were replaced by a Liberal-Conservative coalition headed by Anders Fogh Rasmussen, even more fanatically dedicated to the "free market," i.e. capitalist austerity. This Rasmussen called for putting refugees in solitary confinement until they produced valid ID, and once in power he cut successful applications for asylum in Denmark in half. He governs with the parliamentary support of the Danish People's Party, which includes members who had formerly been in a fascistic grouping whose magazine hailed arson attacks on refugee centers as "patriotic acts."

This racist consensus has always had genuine fascist auxiliaries of a particularly murderous variety. In March 1992 a parcel bomb killed a member of the Danish Internationaler Socialister group. If there was any doubt about who had committed this atrocity, Danish skinheads were arrested in January 1997 for mailing parcel bombs to a leftist and to a white TV celebrity married to a black man in Great Britain. In fact, Denmark was so "tolerant" that it served as an offshore safe haven for German fascists until they and their propaganda apparatus were driven out of the towns of Kvaers and Kollund by the local population in 1994.

While Denmark has been traditionally pro-American (the Social Democrats supported Clinton's Balkan wars), there is massive opposition to the Iraq war in the Danish population. But Washington made it a good business deal for Danish capitalists, giving the container shipping company Møller-Maersk a juicy Pentagon contract to supply occupation forces as well as a contract to manage the Iraqi port of Khor Al-Zubayr. While it may lose some Near East sales of cookies, butter and cheese, the Danish ruling class is being well-compensated for its participation in the U.S. imperialist crusade.

The "fairytale" Danish kingdom – popularly known for Hans Christian Andersen's dreary moralizing stories, the Tivoli Gardens and the Little Mermaid sculpture in Copenhagen harbor – is a jackal imperialist power with its own skinheads and pro-Bush shipping tycoons. Just ask its

former colonial subjects in Iceland, currently being squeezed by Danish banks. Or Greenlanders, whose desire for home rule came up against Denmark's NATO commitments (notably the Thule Air Force Base leased to the U.S.) And Denmark has its counterparts elsewhere on the continent. There is the Netherlands, known for wooden shoes and tulips, which has been cracking down hard on North African immigrants. Or Austria, famous for its Viennese coffee houses and the "Sound of Music" myth of aristocratic anti-Nazi Catholics, where former SS officer Kurt Waldheim became president and the fascist party of Hitler admirer Jörg Haider was brought into the government in 2000.

When "Integration" Means Segregation

The smaller European countries often serve as forerunners and test cases for reactionary social measures and ruling-class offensives in their larger neighbors. The inclusion of Haider's Freedom Party in Austria's ruling coalition expressed in concentrated form the role of fascists and racist populists in whipping up popular support for police-state anti-immigrant measures by more "mainstream" bourgeois governments, whether of the "left" or the "right" (see "Sinister Fascist Haider Behind Rightist Government in Austria," *The Internationalist* No. 8, June 2000). And now anti-Islamic hysteria is being whipped up in Denmark and the Netherlands to attack "multiculturalism." When most of the bourgeois media across Europe reproduced the Danish cartoons, this signaled a continent-wide crackdown on Muslim immigrants. Already in Berlusconi's Italy, attacks on mosques have been spearheaded by supporters of Umberto Bossi's racist populist Northern League.

Throughout Western Europe in the second half of the 20th century, large numbers of workers from North Africa and the Near East were brought as cheap labor and segregated at the bottom of society. There was little talk of "integration" then, and the ruling class preferred to see "Muslim" proletarians at prayer rather than on strike. In France in the 1980s, the government encouraged setting up mini-mosques in the auto plants. Although in France (unlike Germany) the children of these immigrants received purely formal citizenship rights – both because of the heritage of the French bourgeois democratic revolution, and because they originated in former French colonies – they were condemned to an almost-hereditary ghettoization.

After the collapse of Stalinism in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe and the destruction of the bureaucratically degenerated and deformed workers states there, the "welfare state" – concessions granted to "contain" the perceived communist threat and in part obtained through working-class struggle – was slated for destruction. With the labor reserves of Eastern Europe to draw on and the living standards of "native" workers under assault, North African and Near Eastern immigrant communities became less essential to the capitalist exploiters and therefore perceived as more "alien." So they are now informed that only those immigrants who are prepared to assimilate to the "national culture" (whatever that is supposed to be!) will be tolerated. The drive is on to restrict and even expel the "Muslims." First to be targeted are youth of immigrant origin, almost all born in Europe, many of whom are far more familiar

with black American rap lyrics than Koran verses.

The revolts by the French ghetto youth last fall, provoked by daily police repression, were a fully indigenous expression of despair. An Islamic component could not be found even under a magnifying glass. And the most that French capitalism could offer them were a few slave labor jobs of limited duration. This social reality is behind the examples of the disintegration of the public school system in urban, largely immigrant areas. Contrary to bourgeois myths, education is not the motor force of social advancement, but rather accompanies it. Capitalist governments in Europe have steadily reduced expenditures on education while even "socialist" education ministers looking to this sector as a potential "profit platform" for partial privatization. They are hardly interested in spending valuable euros on a population they want to be rid of.

So immigrants, confronted with the slashing of social services and increased joblessness, are ordered to "assimilate" and "integrate" themselves. How? The arbitrary nature of this is perhaps best illustrated by the grotesque naturalization requirements for "Muslims" (and for them only) in the southern German state of Baden-Württemberg (requirements which the Social Democratic/Christian Democratic ruling coalition in Berlin wants to introduce in some form at the national level). Applicants are required to state their opinion, among other things, about gay marriages. With the Vatican under its new German pope on the rampage against gay marriage and homosexuals in general, quite a few people in largely Catholic Baden-Württemberg and neighboring Bavaria (where crucifixes hang on classroom walls) might well "flunk" this test. Would they be stripped of their citizenship rights? Hardly. But then the literacy requirements for voting in the segregationist U.S. South up to the 1960s were for blacks only.

Draped in the "secular" tricolor flag, anti-Muslim measures in France are little different. In March 2004 the French parliament voted a law banning the wearing of Muslim headscarves by girls in schools. The ban was supposedly covered the wearing of all religious symbols in schools and was the culmination of more than a decade of controversy. But as everyone knew, the focus was on banning Muslim symbols, not Christian crosses or Jewish yarmulkas. As Marxists we are against all religion, whether fundamentalist or "enlightened." We are utterly opposed to the veil and the religious obscurantism and subjugation of women it represents. We defend young women who courageously refuse to wear headscarves in their neighborhoods. But throwing girls out of school in the name of secularism for wearing the scarf is a hypocritical, racist, anti-democratic and anti-immigrant provocation. Its real character is symbolized by the detail that Muslim women, but not nuns, are stripped of their head-covering for official photo IDs in France.

American Gothic

The U.S. bourgeois media chose, by and large, not to publish the cartoons. (The one exception, the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, picked the most inflammatory one depicting the head of Mohammed as a bomb with a fuse.) Following the State Department line, they editorialized about being "responsible" and

in effect censored themselves. This is for two interrelated reasons: first, U.S. imperialism still likes to claim that it is combating "terrorists" rather than Muslims and secondly, critiques of any organized religion are more or less taboo in the mainstream media and academia. A department chairman at the City University of New York was driven from his position last year for stating the undeniable fact that "religion without fanaticism is a logical impossibility" (see "Witchhunters Target 'The Unpatriotic University,'" in *Revolution* No. 3, November 2005), the newspaper of the Internationalist Clubs at CUNY. What would they have done to the French 18th-century encyclopaedist Denis Diderot who wrote that "Man will never be free until the last king is strangled with the entrails of the last priest"? In the 1930s, British philosopher Bertrand Russell was not allowed to teach at City College because of his views on religion.

In the immediate aftermath of the 11 September 2001 attacks, none other than Karl Rove gave Hollywood executives a list of simple-Simon commandments including the injunction, "The war is against terrorism, not Islam." But this posture is wearing a little thin, as imperialist occupation troops in Afghanistan and Iraq have blasted away at one mosque after another. Furthermore, there is plenty of evidence that desecration of the Koran is standard operating procedure in U.S. imperialism's torture cells. *Newsweek* was put under heavy pressure to retract a report that a Koran had been flushed down a toilet as part of this "psychological warfare" and partially did so in May 2005. Yet less than two weeks later, the Pentagon was obliged to admit that a Koran had been urinated on, "accidentally" of course.

During the Cold War, U.S. imperialism enlisted every variety of non-Christian religious reactionary from the Dalai Lama to Saudi Wahhabis like Osama bin Laden in its anti-Soviet crusade. Besides bankrolling Solidarność in Poland, which was an imperialist-backed nationalist "union" under the thumb of the Catholic Church, and the massive support to the Islamic reactionaries in Afghanistan fighting the Soviet Army and the Soviet-backed petty-bourgeois nationalist regime in Kabul, Reagan even tried to line up the Iranian Shiite mullahs. Today the U.S. is sponsoring an Islamic regime in Afghanistan and attempting to cut a deal with at least a section of the Shiite clergy to bolster the occupation of Iraq (which despite current anti-Iranian saber-rattling would necessarily involve some kind of arrangement with the theocratic rulers in Tehran). It even had a Jewish professor write a draft Iraqi constitution enshrining Islamic law.

U.S. imperialism has no quarrel with Islamic reaction as such. The "neocons" might want "regime change" in Saudi Arabia, and the Democrats might posture as more anti-Arab than Bush over Dubai port concessions, but basically, Washington is fully prepared to accept Islamic reactionaries as conduits for its rule around the world. Yet imperialist war has its own logic. Slaughtering the civilian population of Iraq or Afghanistan from the air and on the ground, torturing prisoners at Abu Ghraib and Guantanamo, necessarily breeds racist ideology considering the U.S.' victims to be inferior beings. And imperialist war abroad has its domestic compo-

ment – the massive arrests and detention of immigrants from the Middle East in police-state fashion.

Furthermore, the bedrock of social reaction in the United States is to be found in Protestant Christianity, flanked by the Catholic Church. The Zionists allying with Protestant fundamentalists are living in a fools' paradise if they believe that they will ever be anything other than invited guests in this reactionary line-up. The most recent gross provocation on a religious basis in the U.S. was Mel Gibson's anti-Semitic splatter movie, *The Passion of the Christ*. When the Anti-Defamation League (which prefers to hound leftist and other critics of Zionism) issued a few mild critical remarks, it was firmly put in its place. Ted Haggard, head of the National Association of Evangelicals said, "For the Jewish leaders to risk alienating 2 billion Christians over a movie seems short-sighted" (CBS News, 26 August 2003). Haggard was also involved in the affair of religious bullying at the Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs last year, in which at least one Jewish student was called a "Christ-killer." Note also how this Protestant preacher sprang to the defense of Gibson, who is situated on the lunatic fringe of Catholicism.

Naturally, in this climate of reaction, there is no way that any serious critique of Christianity is going to be tolerated in the mainstream media. Even Franco Zefferelli's mildly humanizing version of the life of Christ which he made for television in the 1970s ran into trouble and sponsor G.M. withdrew its backing. Shrieks of fury and even arson attacks greeted Scorsese's *Last Temptation of Christ* in 1988. So the population is deluged with Christian religious obscurantism, in particular creationism (with Orthodox rabbis climbing on the "intelligent design" bandwagon). While TV pundits pontificate about Islam as a "terrorist religion," Pat Robertson gets to issue his very own "fatwa" (assassination call) against Venezuelan president Hugo Chávez. For decades fascistic Christian groups have waged a deadly war against abortion clinics and their doctors, and the drive against women's rights by clerical reaction continues unabated, as recently demonstrated by the abortion ban in South Dakota (see "Defeat the Crusade Against Abortion," on page 38 of this issue)..

The Left and the Cartoons

On the left, many of those claiming to be Marxist simply lined up politically in knee-jerk fashion with one or the other of the bourgeois camps, the "defenders of Western civilization" or the "defenders of Islam" against "blasphemy." Among the former, Sean Matgamna's very British Alliance for Workers' Liberty (AWL) is particularly gangrenous. In an introduction to a series of articles on "Marxism and Religion" (29 January), Matgamna declares, "...the existence of large Muslim minorities in Europe is making political Islam a force well beyond the traditionally Muslim world: the Islam which failed outside the walls of Vienna over 300 years ago is now a force in the great cities of Europe." This is mind-boggling: proletarians and youth from North Africa and the Middle East, even second- and third-generation immigrants, are equated with the Ottoman Turkish rulers who attacked Austria centuries ago! This imagery of "the Turk" being stopped at the gates of Vienna has been used by

fascist elements in German-speaking countries for decades. And by using it Matgamna has ceded political domination of these immigrant sectors to the mullahs and imams.

Deeply immersed in the Labour Party milieu, the AWL is susceptible to pressure to support Labour Prime Minister Tony Blair's participation in the imperialist occupation of Iraq. Matgamna's way of doing this is to support a "labor movement" being built under the bayonets (and with the tactic toleration) of the occupation forces. These trade-unionists have wisely focused their activity on British-occupied Basra, rather than the less hospitable environment under U.S. forces hostile to any unions. And needless to say, this "labor movement" is in no way fighting against the occupation. Indeed, in some cases they have called on occupation troops (concretely, the Italians in Nasariya) to clean out insurgents holed up in factories.

This is back-handed support to the imperialists. It is the direct continuation of Matgamna's "Third Camp" posture to justify its refusal to defend the degenerated and deformed workers states (despite their Stalinist bureaucracies) against capitalist counterrevolution. In recent years the AWL leader has become a latter-day disciple of Max Shachtman, the renegade who broke from Trotskyism refusing to defend the Soviet Union on the eve of World War II. Indeed, Matgamna goes out of his way to downplay the role of U.S. imperialism in creating the bin Ladens as a political force and instead mainly blames "Russian invaders," although the Stalinists were fighting, although half-heartedly and temporarily, against these Islamic reactionaries. Genuine Marxists and Trotskyists *hailed* Soviet intervention in Afghanistan in 1980, and denounced Gorbachev's 1989 withdrawal, which set the stage for the break-up of the USSR.

In contrast to the born-again Shachtmanite Matgamna, the seemingly opposite pole is represented by the League for the Revolutionary Party (LRP), a neo-Shachtmanite group based in the U.S. In a March 23 declaration, the LRP informs us:

"Most of the international far left, with a few exceptions, has taken the position of denouncing the cartoons as a racist and chauvinist attack on Muslims, while opposing legal bans. This is a correct appraisal. But the left generally dodges the point that the mass of Muslim protestors also object to the cartoons on religious grounds.

"For many Muslims, any depiction of Mohammed is blasphemous. As followers of Karl Marx we do not wish to insult the millions of people who consider Islam their only hope. It is especially horrendous to do so in a world where Western Christianity has come to symbolize imperialist domination and persecution."

While most of the left has not only condemned the cartoons but also ended up giving some kind of political support to Islamic reaction as expressing "anti-imperialism", the LRP stands out from the crowd by its unadulterated support to religious superstition! As for the millions who "consider Islam their only hope," the LRP is content to leave them with their illusions by expressly ceding to their religious prejudices. Yet not only is depiction of Muhammad considered blasphemous by "many Muslims," so is any hint of Marxism. Perhaps the LRP will hide that under its chador next. But at least it is being consistent: the "State Department socialists" of the LRP vehe-

mently opposed Soviet intervention in Afghanistan in the 1980s.

The Socialist Workers Party in Great Britain and their international allies are slightly less forthright, but don't have any problem in deliberately confusing opposition to the racist provocation with political support to the Islamic campaign. After all, they hailed Ayatollah Khomeini's 1979 seizure of power in Iran and supported the reactionary *mujahedeen* in Afghanistan against the Soviets. This came naturally to the current founded by the late Tony Cliff, another "third camper" who broke with Trotskyism with the onset of the anti-Soviet Cold War by refusing to defend North Korea in the Korean War. The main Cliffite theoretician, Chris Harman, wrote a lengthy article ("The Prophet and the Proletariat," *International Socialism* No. 64, August 1994) portraying Islamic fundamentalism as a kind of deformed anti-imperialism.

Lately the Cliffites have moved on to hailing Hamas in Palestine. The SWP and other reformist left groups even have their very own popular front in Britain ("Respect") with bourgeois Muslim forces who have the most retrograde positions on women's rights. Respect is represented in Parliament by George Galloway, who voted for Blair's "Incitement to Religious and Racial Hatred Bill," which supposedly protects Muslims from "Islamophobia." The SWP even voted down, in the Respect conference, a motion by Alan Thornett, leader of the British International Socialist Group (affiliated with the United Secretariat of the late Ernest Mandel) calling for opposing the bill. A lead article in the SWP's *Socialist Worker* (11 February) argues that "this is not about 'freedom of speech'." SWP leader Alex Callinicos argues in the same issue that free speech does not include "Freedom to spread hate," strongly implying support for censorship and using courts against those who "insult Islam."

The same position is taken by the International Socialist Organization (ISO) in the United States, formerly a part of the Cliffite international current. For its part, the International Action Center (IAC) led by the Workers World Party (WWP) cosponsored a rally with Muslim clerics outside the Danish consulate in New York on February 17. The IAC declared its "complete solidarity with the Muslims around the world" protesting the anti-Muslim cartoons. Does this "complete solidarity" include solidarity with the Egyptian government, the royal house of Saudi Arabia, the Syrian regime or those who called for "death to those who insult the prophet"? But this is par for the course for the WWP/IAC, which always tends to adopt the politics of whatever group it is defending at the moment. In the case of the 1999 war on Yugoslavia, it slid over from correct opposition to the imperialist bombing to providing a platform for Serbian nationalists, who spewed diatribes against the Kosovo Muslims from IAC plat-



Comrade Lenin Sweeps the Planet Clean (1920)

forms. But that was then, and opportunists always count on people having short memories.

In all of these cases, their current political line on the Danish cartoons is a reflection of a political betrayal in 1979. When Khomeini and the mullahs came to power in Iran, overthrowing the pro-Western monarchy of the Shah, the vast majority of the left in the imperialist countries hailed the "Iranian Revolution" as an anti-imperialist uprising. The late Nahuel Moreno of the Latin America-based Liga Internacional de los Trabajadores (LIT – International Workers League) wrote an entire book grotesquely hailing the *shuras* (committees) in Khomeini's Iran as the equivalent of soviets (workers councils) under the Bolsheviks. Yet within days of taking power, the Khomeinites were attack-

ing women who didn't wear the head-to-toe chador, stoning homosexuals to death and hanging and executing thousands of communists and tens of thousands of Kurds. And soon the *shuras* were enforcing Islamic fundamentalist orthodoxy in the factories. In contrast to the opportunists, Trotskyists called for "down with the shah, no to Khomeini" and warned against giving any political support to the Islamic reactionary forces.

Liberating humanity from "all the old crap," as Marx put it, remains the task of socialist revolutionaries in this epoch. The imperialist bourgeoisie, and the parasitic bourgeoisies in the semi-colonial and colonial countries actively promote religious obscurantism. Religion was born in humanity's seeming helplessness in the face of the nature, but is now fed by seeming impotence before the irrationalities and oppression of world capitalism. It is no accident that organized religion is increasingly dominated by aggressive explicitly political movements that have revived or invented absurd superstitions which fly in the face of scientific knowledge and every aspect of daily life in the 21st century. Their very frenzy is the proof that they are historically condemned.

Religious reaction must be combated and destroyed in the real, material world. The imperialists and the Islamic reactionaries want a world dominated by the "clash of civilizations" pitting Jew against Christian against Muslim, etc. Revolutionary class struggle can cut through all this. The mobilization of the power of the working class for the defeat of the imperialists in Iraq, even in the form of exemplary actions, would quickly reduce the whole cartoon controversy to its historically irrelevant proportions. So, too, would a vigorous defense in deeds, not just empty words, of the embattled immigrant communities besieged by reactionary governments, and often facing attack by fascist gangs. The way in which this racist provocation ballooned into crisis of global proportions while strengthening reactionaries on all sides underlines the stark necessity to forge a Trotskyist world party of socialist revolution, the Fourth International. ■

Full Citizenship Rights...

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II, the Vietnam War and up to today, imperialist war has always been accompanied by virulent immigrant-bashing. The bottom line is: to defeat the racist onslaught, you have to defeat the war and bring down the capitalist system that produces both.

The Internationalist Group, U.S. section of the League for the Fourth International, fights for full citizenship rights for all immigrants, documented or undocumented, and for the defeat of U.S. imperialism in its “war on terror” which in reality is an attempt to terrorize the world into submission to its dictates. We warn against placing confidence in any capitalist parties or politicians, defenders of a system that was founded on slavery and remains racist to the core. We seek to build a workers party to lead the struggle for international socialist revolution.

For the past four months, immigrant communities across the U.S. have grown increasingly alarmed over the prospect of immigration “reform” that could mean losing their jobs, imprisonment and deportation. The passage last December of the vicious H.R. 4437 bill introduced by Representatives James Sensenbrenner and Peter King – that would make all undocumented immigrants felons, make church workers who aid them criminals, and build a 700-mile wall along the Mexican border – has galvanized a population that was politically invisible. All immigrants are affected.

In recent weeks there has been a wave of massive protests in defense of immigrant rights: over 50,000 in Washington on March 7, up to 300,000 in Chicago three days later, and anywhere from 500,000 to 1 million in Los Angeles March 25. Now nationwide demonstrations have been called for April 9-10 that are expected to bring out several million participants. Never before in the history of the United States has there been such a huge political mobilization of immigrants. But what will be the outcome? What program should immigrants fighting for their rights defend?

The massive show of immigrant strength took the capitalist politicians by surprise. The maneuvering over immigration reform legislation was thrown into turmoil. Supporters of a bipartisan bill sponsored by Senators Ted Kennedy and John McCain felt they were on a roll. Republican Senate leaders scrambled to cobble together a “compromise” bill. The Spanish-language New York paper *El Diario-La Prensa* (20 March) headlined, “*Triunfamos*” (We Won). But faced with resistance from the racist hard-liners, suddenly the deal-making collapsed. Politicians fled the capital. Insiders declared immigration reform dead for this Congress.

Mainstream immigrant rights groups such as the Mexican American Legal Defense Fund (MALDEF), the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC), the National Council of La Raza and a host of local coalitions all call for “amnesty.” They are also all tied, one way or another, to the Democratic Party, one of the partner parties of U.S. capitalism. Most support the Kennedy-McCain bill, as do many unions. But we warn that amnesty is no solution, and the Kennedy-McCain



Internationalist photo

U.S. crossed the border: Reactionaries in the United States complain of “illegal” immigrants from Mexico, yet in the 1848 war, fought to expand slavery, the U.S. stole half of Mexico’s territory.

immigration “reform” is a trap that will make things *worse* for immigrants.

Why is that? In the first place, *all* the different immigration bills floating around the halls of Congress include the provisions for drastically increasing U.S. military action along the Mexican border, which is already the most militarized international boundary in the world. The compromise Senate bill supported by Kennedy and McCain calls for *doubling* the size of the U.S. Border Patrol and creating a “virtual wall” of sensors, cameras, vehicles and aircraft to monitor the U.S.-Mexico border. *This will mean many more immigrant deaths.*

Secondly, the Kennedy-McCain bill includes provisions for a “guest worker” program that would supply U.S. employers with several hundred thousand disposable workers, who would have no rights and would be sent back after six years (or if they lose their jobs). Contrary to the delusions of President Bush and others, not even a tiny fraction of immigrant workers already in the U.S. would sign up for such a program. More fundamentally, this is a form of indentured servitude, supposedly outlawed under the U.S. Constitution. In fact, “guest workers” would be worse off than the original indentured servants, who could stay in America. *This will mean many more deportations.*

Thirdly, the Kennedy-McCain bill calls for a crackdown on employers’ hiring of “illegal aliens.” In recent years, employer sanctions have seldom been enforced as the real policy on checking documents has become “don’t ask, don’t tell.” In 2004 there was a grand total of three actions against employers for employing undocumented workers. The capitalists know that they desperately need immigrant labor to keep up their profits. But the “bipartisan” immigration reform seeks to regain control of the labor supply. *This will mean many more factory raids.*

All defenders of immigrant workers’ rights should oppose



Imperialist war and anti-immigrant repression go together. Above: Over 1,000 striking miners in Bisbee, Arizona, led by the revolutionary syndicalist IWW, were rounded up in July 1917, loaded into box cars and stranded in the New Mexico desert. Hundreds were later deported. See “Reds’ and Immigrants: The Bisbee, Arizona Deportation of 1917,” *The Internationalist* No. 2, April-May 1997. An extensive exhibit on the Bisbee deportation is available at <http://www.library.arizona.edu/exhibits/bisbee/>

such slave-labor programs. Yet the bourgeois immigration coalitions support such programs as part of a deal to get “amnesty.”

So why don’t Marxists call for amnesty? Of course, even limited legalization can be a gain for immigrants who presently have no legal rights at all. But “amnesty” is no answer for immigrants on several counts. To begin with, it is asking forgiveness for committing a “crime.” Many in recent protests have held up signs and banners saying “immigrants are not criminals.” But their leaders, along with bourgeois liberals and reformist pseudo-socialists, tell undocumented workers they must beg for a pardon. Revolutionaries, in contrast, say all workers should fight for their rights.

Ever since *The Communist Manifesto* written by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels a century and a half ago, Marxists have held that “the workers have no fatherland.” But amnesty accepts the “right” of the capitalist rulers to police their borders. It does nothing to fight the massive militarization and police repression aimed at persecuting immigrants, whether on the Mexican border or in New York City. Moreover, any amnesty will grant limited rights to certain workers, those who arrived before a certain date, while going after the next wave of “illegal” migrants and those who don’t “qualify” under the bourgeoisie’s laws.

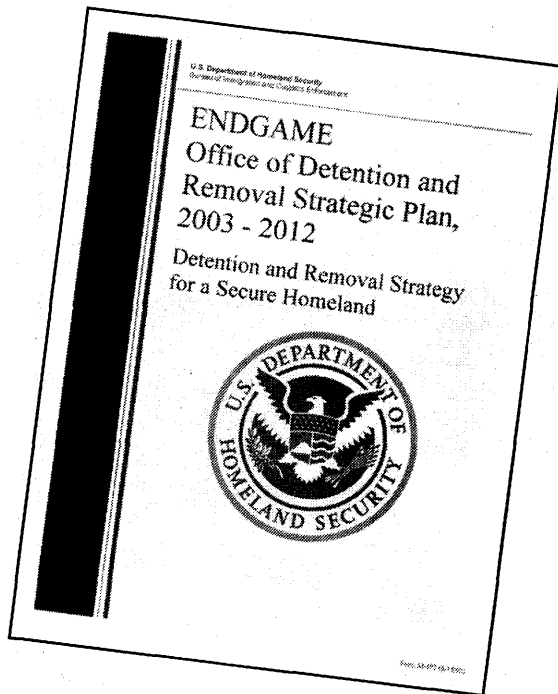
In fact, the present situation, with over 12 million people living in the U.S. without any legal rights, is the direct result of the 1986 amnesty. When he signed it into law, Ronald Reagan said that this measure would let the U.S. “humanely regain control of our borders” by tightening controls on those entering the country, while imposing civil and criminal penalties against employers who hired undocumented workers.

(This “humane” act was passed while Reagan was whipping up hysteria about a “red tide” of refugees from Central America crossing the Rio Grande River.) A new amnesty will just reproduce this situation a few years down the road.

The program of the Internationalist Group and the League for the Fourth International is straightforward. We don’t beg the rulers for amnesty, we fight for full citizenship rights for all immigrants, now, period. Otherwise the bosses will use the lack of legal rights to victimize undocumented workers and set one part of the working class against another. Anyone who lives here should have the same rights as everyone else. That’s what serious defenders of immigrant rights should be fighting for.

But in the imperialist epoch, the fight for basic democratic rights requires hard class struggle. The bourgeoisie is waging a war not only against Iraq and Afghanistan but also against working people, minorities, immigrants and the poor in the U.S. The rulers are systematically curtailing civil liberties while they drive down wages, slash social programs, shove the cost of health care onto workers and gut their pensions. Immigrants are often the first target of this capitalist onslaught, such as in the U.S.A. PATRIOT Act and the “Real ID” Act last year, the first step toward imposing a national identification card.

The same thing has happened during and after every imperialist war over the last century. In World War I, the liberal Democrat Woodrow Wilson jailed socialist opponents of the war and ordered the arrest and deportation of militant immigrant workers. Striking miners of the IWW (Industrial Workers of the World) in Arizona, most of them Mexican, were rounded up at gunpoint and shipped into the desert in box cars to starve



Concentration camps in the U.S.? Cover of DHS "Endgame" program for mass round-ups of "illegal aliens." Halliburton got contract to build the camps.

and die of thirst (see "'Reds' and Immigrants: The Bisbee, Arizona Deportation of 1917," *The Internationalist* No. 2, April-May 1997. After the war, the bourgeoisie launched a "red scare," deporting thousands of foreign-born communists. The Italian anarchist workers Sacco and Vanzetti were executed.

In World War II, the government jailed 18 Trotskyists, led by James P. Cannon, and leaders of the Minneapolis Teamsters for their revolutionary opposition to the imperialist war. At the same time they put tens of thousands of Americans of Japanese ancestry into concentration camps. After the 11 September 2001 attack on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, as the U.S. government launched a war on Afghanistan and Iraq, thousands of immigrants from the Near East and South Asia were locked up and held incommunicado. The City University of New York moved to drive out thousands of undocumented students by more than doubling their tuition, justifying this as a war measure.

Now U.S. rulers are preparing to launch anti-immigrant repression on a massive scale. The *New York Times* (3 February) reported that the Army Corps of Engineers awarded a \$385 million contract to the Kellogg Brown & Root subsidiary of Halliburton Corporation for the construction of a string of "temporary immigration detention centers," each holding up to 5,000 people. KBR would build these concentration camps for the Department of Homeland Security, to hold "an unexpected influx of immigrants," people fleeing from a natural disaster (another New Orleans), or "for new programs that require additional detention space."

And what might those programs be? This is part of a Homeland Security program codenamed "ENDGAME" which

is described by the DHS as "a mission first articulated in the Alien and Sedition Acts of 1798" (which the Supreme Court has never ruled on, although past Court opinions presumed them to be unconstitutional). Its goal is the capability to "remove all removable aliens," including "illegal economic migrants, aliens who have committed criminal acts, asylum-seekers" and "potential terrorists." Last year, the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) division of the DHS included the pursuit of a "fugitive population of 400,000 illegal aliens ordered removed" in its budget plans for Fiscal Year 2005.

This is what U.S. rulers have actually been planning – mass "removal," not mass legalization of undocumented workers. In fact, no major bourgeois politician has come out for amnesty. While liberal Democrats like Kennedy and Hillary Clinton say they are for providing an "opportunity to eventually earn citizenship," this would be after paying thousands of dollars in fines, thousands more in back taxes, and waiting up to 11 years. The mammoth immigrant demonstrations of the last month may have thrown a hitch into the plans for rounding up "illegal aliens." But as long as the protests are politically subordinated by immigrant community leaders to the Democratic Party, they do not pose a threat to ruling-class anti-immigrant plans.

There is an acute need for *revolutionary leadership* in the struggle for immigrant rights. It is necessary to explain that the struggle against plans to criminalize, jail and deport immigrants must be linked to a fight to *defeat* the U.S. imperialist war in the Near East and the capitalist war on working people, minorities and the poor in the United States. This requires mobilizing the power of the American working class, including the millions of immigrant workers who form a strategic sector. In many cases, coming from countries with a history of sharp labor and peasant battles, immigrants are among the most combative trade-unionists. But their potential militancy cannot be mobilized without a leadership committed to waging the class struggle to victory.

But rather than providing a *class* program for immigrants' rights, the bulk of the left in the United States is treating the recent demonstrations as the rise of another "new movement" to be tailed after. Reformist groups like the International Socialist Organization (ISO), the Socialist Workers Party (SWP), Workers World Party (WWP) and the Communist Party U.S.A. (CPUSA) call for "amnesty" just like the bourgeois liberals and pro-capitalist union bureaucrats. Others who adopt a more left-wing posture, like Socialist Action (SA), the Party for Socialism and Liberation (PSL) and even the left-centrist Spartacist League (SL), don't criticize calls for amnesty.

Most of the left has reported more or less uncritically on the recent immigrant marches, hardly mentioning the widespread waving of the American flag, for example. This was not a spontaneous thing but was on instructions from protest organizers, who in Washington told demonstrators to leave Latin American flags at home in order not to set off anti-immigrant yahoos. In Los Angeles, the Catholic church told demonstrators to wear white and carry U.S. flags. Certainly L.A. Cardinal

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Forge a Revolutionary Workers Party!

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Internationalist Group literature table at April 10 immigrants' rights march in New York, with red flags. More than 550 copies of special issue (above) of *The Internationalist* sold; 300 sold at earlier immigration demos.



Internationalist photo

Roger Mahoney's statement that if federal law bars aiding undocumented workers, he would instruct priests to disobey the law was a signal event. But the Catholic prelate's purpose was to keep angry protesters within the bounds of bourgeois politics.

A telling example of the opportunist left's capitulation to the bourgeois politics of the demonstration organizers is over the question of imperialist war. Every left group participates in antiwar demos, but *in their articles on the immigrant protests the ISO, SWP, WWP, SA, PSL and SL don't even mention the word Iraq.* This is not an accidental omission, given the flag-waving of the protest organizers. With their super-patriotic stance, the last thing the bourgeois immigrant leaders want is to be linked to opposition to U.S. war. Moreover, as we have pointed out, the "antiwar" policy of the left opportunists, all of whom push some variant of "troops out" or "bring the troops home," is designed to cozy up to growing *bourgeois* defeatist sentiment.

In contrast, the Internationalist Group has called forthrightly for the *defeat of U.S. imperialism* in Iraq and Afghanistan, to *drive U.S. troops out* rather than calling on the Pentagon to withdraw them (so that they can fight against Iran or North Korea). We have agitated for workers action to "hot cargo" war material to Iraq, and called for workers strikes against the war – as well as calling for workers mobilization to smash the fascist "Minutemen" anti-immigrant vigilantes. And because we have put the Iraq war front and center in our signs and leaflets, pro-Democratic Party leaders of immigration coalitions in New York have repeatedly excluded or attempted to exclude the IG from demonstrations.

It is worth noting the sharp rightward shift of the Spartacist League/International Communist League over the immigration issue. In the aftermath of 9/11, the SL/ICL outrageously accused the IG of "Playing the Counterfeit Card of Anti-Americanism" and of playing to "'Third World' nationalists for whom the 'only good American is a dead American'" because we called for defeat of U.S. imperialism in the Afghanistan war. Now the SL doesn't even mention Iraq or

Afghanistan in a joint statement with its Mexican affiliate on the immigration issue, with no more than a vague reference to an "obligation to oppose the wars and depredations of the U.S. capitalist class." Nor does their statement mention the flag-waving, or have a word of criticism of the Catholic church, thus making their ritual mentions of socialist revolution empty rhetoric.

Contrary to the thundering silence of the opportunist left, the Iraq war is central to the current attacks on immigrants. Every imperialist war has to have an "enemy within" (in WWII, it was Jews and Communists in Nazi Germany, Japanese Americans in the U.S.), and in this case xenophobic war hawks have focused on "illegal immigrants." Immigrants are being used as scapegoats as the U.S. sinks ever deeper into the quicksands of the Near East. "First they came for the immigrants" as the U.S. cracked down on democratic rights after 9/11. Then they extended warrantless phone-tapping and surveillance to antiwar activists and others. You can't fight the attacks on immigrants without fighting to defeat the war that generates them.

This means fighting capitalist exploitation and racism, which in the United States always focuses on the oppressed black population. The victimization of more than 100,000 overwhelmingly black and poor people, left to die amid the floodwaters in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, is a dramatic picture of what lies in store for immigrants. Now the bourgeoisie is refusing to rebuild poor black neighborhoods of New Orleans or to let their residents return to the city. This is "ethnic cleansing" on a mammoth scale. Moreover, contractors are bringing in undocumented workers from Mexico at sub-minimum wages while refusing to hire black New Orleans residents in reconstruction work. This naturally causes resentment among many blacks, as it is intended to.

Revolutionaries must strenuously oppose all expressions of nativist chauvinism against immigrants. We explain that the way to deal with such attempts by the ruling class to set one sector of the oppressed against another is to wage a campaign to raise conditions for all the exploited. The Interna-

tionalist Group has actively participated in campaigns to unionize immigrant workers in the New York area, and from our origins we have had an orientation to developing revolutionary cadres from this potentially militant sector. And the first thing that immigrant workers must know about the U.S. is that the black question is key to everything. In this country built on the heritage of chattel slavery, Latino and Asian immigrants as well as white workers and revolutionaries must vigorously fight every manifestation of anti-black racism.

Above all, it is vital to fight for revolution to sweep away the whole imperialist system. Racists and quite a few trade-union bureaucrats accuse immigrants of "stealing American jobs." It must be explained that workers are driven to emigrate to the U.S. by the effects of imperialism on their countries. Social services are closed down and state-owned industries sold off to pay debts to the imperialist banks that were foisted on them at a time when Wall Street was awash in petro-dollars it didn't know what to do with. Now with the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), millions of Mexican peasants have been driven off their land, unable to compete with cheap corn from Iowa being imported by the trainload. Some of those workers have ended up immigrating to Iowa and working in packing houses there.

Moreover, immigrant workers contribute enormously to the U.S. economy, up to tens of billions of dollars every year. Most pay Social Security taxes, from which they will never receive a dime so long as they are undocumented, and many pay income taxes. Economists have calculated that over time this subsidy by low-paid immigrant workers amounts to several trillion dollars. The fact is that undocumented immigrants, overwhelmingly workers, are vital to the U.S. economy. They are already 7 percent of all transportation workers, 9 percent of manufacturing, 14 percent of construction, 17 percent of maintenance and 24 percent of agricultural workers (*New York Times*, 2 April). Moreover, there is no way that the U.S. can jail or deport 12 million – they don't have enough jails, and it would cause an economic crisis.

Immigrants are now a key section of the U.S. workforce, as they were in the early years of the 20th century. In New York City, over 40 percent of the population is foreign-born and in Southern California, Latino immigrants are by far the largest population group. Demonstrators have chanted, "*¡Aquí estamos, y no nos vamos!*" (We're here and we're not leaving), and they're right. American chauvinists who don't like it better get used to it. But while the ruling class has internal divisions over immigration, all sectors of the capitalists want to keep the mass of immigrant workers confined to a low-wage existence. They want hamburger flippers, bathroom cleaners and maids, but as this vibrant work force becomes rooted in the U.S. the rulers will be confronted with a powerful working class.

The recent protests have dramatically shown immigrants' numerical strength. Walkouts by Los Angeles-area students in the week leading up to the million-strong march there demonstrated the militancy of young Latinos, often locked in by school authorities and sometimes beaten by police. Tragically, there has already been one casualty of this repression as eighth-

grader Anthony Soltero took his life after being threatened with three years of jail by the assistant principal. We must fight to avenge his death and those of the hundreds of immigrants who have died crossing deserts and frozen mountains, or been the victims of anti-immigrant racists. This requires a struggle for *international socialist revolution*.

In the U.S. it is necessary to wage a political battle against all the anti-immigrant parties of American capitalism. This means combating dangerous illusions in the Democratic Party. The welfare-slashing Democratic administration of Bill Clinton pushed through the 1996 "Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act" that was used to round up and deport thousands of immigrants after 9/11. The huge increase in deaths along the border is a direct result of Clinton's Operation Gatekeeper, which forced migrants into desert terrain where more than 1,200 have died in the last decade. Congressional Democrats overwhelmingly supported the U.S.A. PATRIOT Act and voted for the "Real ID" Act last year that marks a huge step toward a national identification card.

Not only the Democrats but minor bourgeois politicians and parties have joined in the attacks on immigrants. Populist Ralph Nader, who ran for president as the Green Party candidate in 2000 and as an independent in 2004, has been particularly virulent in attacking "illegal" immigrants. In an interview with the fascistic right-winger Pat Buchanan in the *American Conservative* (21 June 2004), Nader declared: "We have to control our immigration. We have to limit the number of people who come into this country illegally." And this immigrant basher is the candidate touted by the social democrats of the Internationalist Socialist Organization and Socialist Alternative as a "progressive" alternative to the Democrats!

In Mexico, our comrades of the Grupo Internacionalista not only oppose the government of Bush's rancher pal, President Vicente Fox Quesada, of the right-wing PAN (National Action Party), but also fight against illusions in the bourgeois nationalist PRD (Party of the Democratic Revolution) led by Andrés Manuel López Obrador. The Fox government sends its army to cooperate with the U.S. Border Patrol and military while arresting hundreds of thousands of Central Americans heading north. The GI fights to break the unions from their "popular front" alliance with the PRD, which does not oppose NAFTA, at most calling to "renegotiate" (as does Fox himself) parts of this "free trade" agreement that has impoverished millions of Mexicans.

The Internationalist Group and League for the Fourth International look to the heritage of the Russian October Revolution of 1917, which first established workers rule and, true to the internationalist politics of V.I. Lenin and Leon Trotsky, decreed that foreign workers in Russian territory had the same rights as all others. The French Revolution of 1789 similarly made Thomas Paine a citizen of France. We fight for the working class, blacks, immigrants and all the oppressed to break from the Democrats and forge the nucleus of a revolutionary workers party that fights for socialist revolution throughout the Americas and worldwide. ■

Form Committees of Working and Poor People to Expropriate the Bourgeoisie and Drive Out U.N. Mercenaries! No Confidence in Préval – Workers to Power!

Attempted Election Theft in Haiti

FEBRUARY 14 – A week after Haiti's presidential elections, no victor has been proclaimed and the Haitian masses are rising up in angry protest. Exit poll surveys conducted by international observers indicated that René Préval had won with 54 to 55 percent of the vote. Préval is a liberal who was endorsed by the bulk of the Fanmi Lavalas party of Jean-Bertrand Aristide, the populist ex-priest who was removed by the U.S. two years ago and forced into exile. However, after two days of vote counting, the electoral commission (dominated by right-wing forces) suddenly fell silent, while circulating figures that had the frontrunner slipping under 50 percent. If no candidate receives an absolute majority, a runoff election would be required. Although Préval's campaign was financed by leading industrialists, and he received more than four times as many votes as his nearest rival, the hostility of Haiti's rich toward Préval and Aristide, and the bourgeoisie's visceral hatred of the impoverished plebeian masses who follow Lavalas, is such that it is likely that the other 32 candidates would overcome their squabbles and use their control of the electoral machinery to block Préval.

So on Saturday and Sunday, February 11 and 12, hundreds of thousands of people poured out of the slums to march on the presidential palace demanding, "Give us results!" and "Préval forever!" In the vast shantytown of Cité Soleil, community activists called on the 300,000 inhabitants to mobilize, which they did. By Monday, barricades of burning tires and the hulks of wrecked cars had gone up in cities and on main roads around the country. More than 100 roadblocks were reported on the highway from Cap-Haïtien in the north to Port-au-Prince. A crowd of several thousand Lavalas supporters crashed through the gates of the luxurious Hotel Montana in the bourgeois suburb of Pétienville, where the election council was headquartered, demanding to see vote tallies. At roadblocks that virtually paralyzed the capital, Préval backers shouted, "We will burn the entire city unless they give us the results." United Nations occupation troops opened fire on a crowd, killing at least one demonstrator. Summoned by the U.N. to tell the masses to go home, Préval instead declared that there had been "massive fraud" and called on Haitians to "continue demonstrating," while saying barricades should be taken down.

There is no doubt whatsoever that the vote counting has been rigged. The Haitian masses immediately sensed this, and there is plenty of evidence to back them up. While the electoral commission stalled in releasing figures, dissident commissioners said that Préval had received 52 percent of the vote and there had been deliberate "manipulation" of vote totals. Two percent of the 2.2 million votes cast never even arrived at the tabulation centers. Another 7.5 percent of the votes were invalidated as improperly marked – pretty difficult since all voters had to do was put an "x"

over a candidate's picture. Tally sheets from 254 of the 9,000 polling stations were destroyed when right-wing parties attacked provincial polling centers. Votes from over 500 centers have not been tabulated, supposedly for lack of certain codes; 25,000 of these uncounted votes were from the slum districts of the capital where support for Préval was running over 90 percent. Now Haitian TV is showing boxes with thousands of ballots marked for Préval, many partially burned, in a garbage dump. Up to 15 percent of the ballots are missing or have been thrown out, and 128,000 blank ballots, an unusually high 4.5 percent of the total, were added to the total, making it much harder to obtain an absolute majority.

Spokesmen for Washington have made it clear that they can "work with" Préval. Indeed, U.S. and U.N. officials asked him to run in order to entice Lavalas supporters into the "political process." But the result may not be to their liking, with a veritable landslide (*lavalas* in Creole) for the stand-in for the president they hustled out of the palace in 2004. Dumarsais Simeus, a Haitian-American business tycoon who was prevented from running for president because of his dual citizenship, is planning to work with Préval. Yet the country's business elite is suggesting that they will stop at nothing to keep out Préval. They didn't mount a coup and invasion to overthrow Aristide only to see his former protégé come back. Sweatshop boss and presidential also-ran Charles Henri Baker declared, "I cannot let this guy get into power.... He is the worst thing that could happen to Haiti if he gets into power" (*Miami Herald*, 13 February). Meanwhile on the barricades, slum dwellers are vowing, "we'll bring the guns out," if Préval is blocked from taking office.

As a showdown looms, the U.S. imperialists are scrambling to find a way out of the impasse. With open confrontation in the streets over the attempt by right-wing reactionaries to steal the election, revolutionary Marxists stand on the side of the vast mass of poor black Haitians against the U.N. occupation forces and Haitian police on the other side of the barricades, while giving no political support to Préval and Aristide. We warn against illusions in these *bourgeois* liberal populists, who have been put in office by the U.S. Marines in the past and can be removed by Washington if they cause problems. What is needed is a *class* mobilization in the factories on both sides of the Haiti/Dominican border, to lead the urban and rural poor against their exploiters and oppressors. Trotskyists would have opposed voting for "Préval prezidan," or for any of the capitalist candidates, while calling today for the formation of committees of working and poor people to expropriate the bourgeoisie and drive out the U.N. mercenary occupation forces. No Confidence in Préval – Build a Haitian and Dominican Trotskyist group – Workers to Power! ■

FOR HAITIAN/DOMINICAN WORKERS REVOLUTION!

Imperialist Occupation: Massacres and Sham Elections

Kick the U.N. Out of Haiti!

Forge a Revolutionary Workers Party!



Tyler Hicks/New York Times

United Nations “peacekeepers” keep voters from slums of Haiti’s capital out of voting station, February 7. U.N. troops fired shots to “calm” the crowd. Drive the U.N. out of Haiti!

FEBRUARY 10 – On February 7, Haitians went massively to the polls in an election that the United Nations occupation forces hoped would bring stability to the turbulent country. People rose well before dawn, put on their best clothes, and at many voting stations in the capital more than half the voters were lined up by 6 a.m. The authorities had refused to set up ballot boxes in the huge slum neighborhood of Cité Soleil, with more than 60,000 registered voters, yet people poured out of the shantytown and walked for kilometers to cast their vote. The leading candidate in the presidential race, far ahead in early returns, is René Préval, formerly the protégé of ousted president Jean-Bertrand Aristide, the populist ex-priest who was seized by U.S. invaders two years ago and hustled into African exile. Préval, who was earlier president between 1996 and 2001, was endorsed by the majority of Aristide’s Fanmi Lavalas party and was the clear favorite of the poor. But despite all the hoopla about “democracy” and illusions in Préval, the president will only be a frontman for colonial occupation, beholden to the U.S. and the rapa-

cious Haitian bourgeoisie, and will not raise the Haitian masses out of desperate poverty.

In the run-up to the election there was widespread fear that the vote would be disrupted by violence. Haitians recall the 1987 election day massacre when dozens were gunned down by police. Placing polling stations far from Cité Soleil, a bastion of support for Aristide, raised suspicions of an attempt to curtail votes for Préval, and possibly to lure Lavalas militants into a trap where they could be arrested. The failure of those particular stations to open for almost four hours led to noisy turmoil and a protest march on the presidential palace. But the turnout was so huge that repression or openly preventing people from voting risked setting off a social explosion that would have consumed the capital of Port-au-Prince. Moreover, even in affluent suburbs such as Pétienville, some polling stations registered 70 percent for Préval, to the consternation of more right-wing candidates. When the frontrunner’s lead fell from 61 percent to just over 50 percent

a day later, raising the possibility of a run-off vote if he fails to get an absolute majority, there was widespread grumbling about possible fraud by the election commission.

Préval ran on the *Lespwa* (Hope) ticket, yet the Haitian masses' hopes in him will be in vain. In fact, as the *New York Times* (10 February) revealed, "Mr. Préval was sought out by the United States and governments leading the United Nations Stabilization Mission struggling to restore order." Far from calling for the removal of the U.N. occupation forces, he has called for them to stay for two years or more, and to increase the number of police. The virtual president-elect has adopted mildly populist language, saying "Reconciliation isn't the real problem for Haiti. The real problem is poverty." At the same time, he bragged that he was "the only candidate who promises nothing," and said that at best it would take a decade to raise living standards to the level they were in 1980. His U.S. patrons have made it clear

that they expect "reconciliation" with the bourgeois elite, and according to the same *Times* report, Préval "said that much of his campaign had been financed by the elite, and that he would appoint a prime minister from the political party that wins control of the parliament, which is highly unlikely to be his own."

No elections are going to provide "stability" for Haiti or resolve any fundamental issue, any more than did the election of Aristide in 1990, which quickly led to a military coup, or his reelection in 2000, which was boycotted by the right-wing opposition, ultimately leading to the 2004 coup/invasion. The political turmoil is a reflection of the explosive social conditions in a country with a tiny minority of "*gros mangeurs*" (big eaters) and a huge majority of "*ventres creux*" (empty bellies). The violence and gangs in Cité Soleil are the direct result of poverty, of a population condemned to live in squalor strewn with garbage and sinking in mud, where more than three-quarters of the adults have no job. The statistics for the nation as a whole are no better: a majority that survives on less than \$1 a day, life expectancy of 53 years, a quarter of all children suffering from chronic malnutrition, 80 percent lacking schooling. Foreign aid won't change that, nor will adding a few more jobs at starvation wages in "free trade zones." It will take nothing less than a thorough-going social revolution to overcome these inhuman conditions.

Bourgeois "democracy" will solve nothing in Haiti, and is impossible in a country with such a vast social chasm, where the weak local ruling class has for the last century depended on its U.S. godfathers for survival. Those leftists who talk of "two-stage" revolution are peddling deadly lies: the "democratic" first stage is invariably a fraud, and the second stage is usually a massacre of the toilers. A *permanent revolution* is required to secure real democratic rights and the rule of the oppressed majority, in which the working class, led by a revo-



Eduardo Muñoz/Reuters

Lavalas supporters set up flaming barricades in streets of Haitian capital, Port-au-Prince to protest election-rigging by rightist ex-coup plotters and U.N.

lutionary-internationalist workers party and backed by the peasantry and urban poor, takes power and proceeds to expropriate the Haitian bourgeoisie and break the stranglehold of imperialism. Such a revolution cannot take hold and secure lasting victory unless it is immediately extended, in the first instance to the Dominican Republic, with which Haiti shares the island of Hispaniola, and throughout the Antilles, and ultimately to the imperialist center. Haiti on its own cannot "pull itself up by its bootstraps," but as part of world socialist revolution this impoverished Caribbean island can flourish as never before.

Imperialist Occupiers Stage "Demonstration Election"

For the last 23 months, Haiti has once again been under imperialist occupation, for the third time in nine decades.¹ This time colonial rule of the Caribbean black republic has been sanctioned by that imperialist "den of thieves," the United Nations. The U.S. expeditionary force that kidnapped Haitian president Jean-Bertrand Aristide on 29 February 2004 and occupied the capital of Port-au-Prince was immediately joined by French and Canadian troops. It was an ostentatious show of imperialist "solidarity" with Washington despite dif-

¹ Haiti was occupied by the United States in 1915, under Democratic president Woodrow Wilson, and remained under U.S. occupation until 1934. The U.S. invaded again in 1994, under Democratic president Bill Clinton, to restore President Jean-Bertrand Aristide who had been overthrown in a 1991 coup d'état by CIA "assets" in the Haitian military under Republican president George Bush I. George Bush II invaded Haiti a third time in 2004, this time to remove Aristide from the presidency, and spirit him off to exile. See: "Haiti: U.S. Engineers Death Squad Coup," in *The Internationalist* No. 18, May-June 2004.

ferences over the 2003 invasion (but not the subsequent occupation) of Iraq. Yet the Pentagon needed its troops in the Near East, where it faces a tenacious Iraqi insurgency, and the French and Canadians were needed to patrol Afghanistan. So they brought in "United Nations" troops in blue helmets under the command of a Brazilian general. The 9,300 U.N. "peacekeepers" are a murderous imperialist occupation force, using troops and cops from semi-colonial countries as mercenaries, which should be run out of Haiti.

The U.S./"U.N." occupation of Haiti has been a horror show from the beginning, leading to the utter devastation of what was already the poorest country in the hemisphere. Under puppet president Gérard Latortue, the past two years have been filled with one massacre after another, carried out by right-wing paramilitaries (called "freedom fighters" by Latortue), the Haitian police and U.N. forces alike. This slaughter was punctuated by natural disasters such as Hurricane Jeanne (September 2004) that left thousands dead in the flood waters, while the occupying forces stood by and did nothing. The economy is a wreck, thousands of factory jobs have disappeared, schools, hospitals and other state services are barely functioning, with many institutions shut down completely. Kidnappings for ransom are rampant, often by slum gangs but in many cases by elements of the police, businessmen and politicians. Now right-wing businessmen are demanding of the U.N. mission (known as MINUSTAH), "When are you going to finish Cité Soleil? When are you going to destroy Cité Soleil?" (*Miami Herald*, 4 February).

Amid this chaos, misery and terror, the colonial occupiers staged a counterfeit election, after being postponed several times. For Haitian poor and working people, *all* of the candidates represent the interests of the insatiable Haitian bourgeoisie. Open Lavalas candidates were banned and prominent pro-Aristide spokesmen (including Prime Minister Yvon Neptune and Father Gerard Jean-Juste) imprisoned. Préval, the presumptive president-elect not only accepts and relies on the U.N. occupation, when he was president previously as Aristide's hand-picked successor he implemented the anti-worker policies of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund. So did Aristide after he was restored to office by U.S. troops in 1994, and again after his reelection in 2000. Loyally serving their imperialist masters, the former "priest of the slums" and his "twin brother" Préval ordered widespread privatizations, leading to layoffs of thousands of workers at state-owned companies, the gutting of vital social services and the ruin of Haitian farmers. In this election Lavalas split, with its right wing supporting *Marc Bazin*, a former official of the World Bank trounced by Aristide in the 2000 election. What all this shows is that despite the illusions of many leftists, Lavalas has been a bourgeois party from the outset.

The rest of the presidential line-up was a rogue's gallery of Haiti's brutal exploiters and mass murderers. Among them was *Leslie Manigat*, a conservative former supporter of the dictator François "Papa Doc" Duvalier, who was briefly president as a front for the military in 1988 until they dumped him. The favorite of the business elite was *Charles Henri Baker*, a U.S. resident and sweatshop owner. Another notable

candidate was *Guy Philippe*, a former police chief of Delmas (where his cops summarily executed slum dwellers) reputedly tied to drug traffickers and the CIA, who campaigned with Louis Jodel Chamblain, a death squad chief responsible for the 1994 Raboteau massacre. *Evans Paul*, Aristide's one-time campaign manager, became leader of the U.S.-funded Democratic Convergence and greeted Philippe when the military "rebel" leader arrived in the capital in March 2004. *Franck Romain*, another presidential hopeful, was a top army officer and leader of the dreaded Tontons Macoutes killers under Duvalier; as mayor of the capital, he carried out the 1988 massacre at St.-Jean-Bosco church where Aristide was preaching. *Himler Rebu* is a former army chief in the junta that ousted Aristide in 1991, whose troops and paramilitary "attachés" were responsible for thousands of killings.

The League for the Fourth International warns that every one of the candidates in this sham election is an enemy of the workers and the vast impoverished masses of Haiti's population, and that any "elected" president will only be a figurehead for the continued imperialist occupation. Organizing "demonstration elections" to mask colonial rule is a standard ploy of U.S. imperialism, from the Dominican Republic and Vietnam in the 1960s to Afghanistan, Iraq and Haiti today. Revolutionary Marxists in Haiti would have urged Haitian working people and opponents of imperialism not to vote for any of the capitalist candidates, and instead to organize mass worker-peasant resistance to defend areas under attack by the U.N. military/police forces and the Haitian puppet police and to kick the imperialist occupation forces out of Haiti.

U.N. Occupation: Massacres and Misery

As soon as the U.S. Marines landed on 29 February 2004, supposedly on a mission to "restore order" and a "sense of stability," the revenge slaughter began in earnest. During the three weeks leading up to the U.S. invasion, a band of 200 right-wing former members of the disbanded Haitian Army had crossed the border from the Dominican Republic, seized several northern towns and headed south. During their march on the capital, the "rebel" army left a trail of blood, slaughtering hundreds of supporters of Aristide's Fanmi Lavalas movement. After they arrived, the killing escalated. According to a National Lawyers Guild fact-finding mission, the director of the state morgue admitted that 800 bodies were dumped and buried in a mass grave on March 7, and another 200 bodies were dumped on March 28. Members of a second delegation organized by the Quixote Center reported that after a 10,000-strong March 5 demonstration against the occupation, the Marines went into the neighborhood of Bel Air firing, killing dozens (death toll estimates range from 60 to 78).

In the first days after the U.S. invasion, paramilitaries drove around the capital in pickup trucks kidnapping people considered to be enemies. Hit lists of Lavalas activists were read over the radio daily. Hundreds were thrown into jail, where they remain to this day. As the U.S. and later U.N. occupation forces established themselves, random terror was replaced by periodic raids on the poor neighborhoods. Although some MINUSTAH officers speak French, including CIVPOL (civilian police) com-

manders from Quebec, none speak Creole. Thus they cannot communicate either with local residents or with the Haitian police they are supposed to work with (and the troops and cops from 43 countries can barely communicate among themselves). In neighborhood operations, members of the U.N. forces say, their operational guidelines are "shoot before you get shot." A MINUSTAH official admitted, "Too often the military patrol in their armored vehicles, helmets on, fingers on the trigger, which reinforces the perception of an occupation army" (*Le Monde*, 8 February).

When Lavalas supporters from Cité Soleil tried to join a protest demonstration on 30 September 2004, they were met with a fusillade from local gangs bought off by the bourgeois right wing. The demonstration of 10,000 itself came under fire by the Haitian police, while MINUSTAH troops stood by observing. In the following days, there were repeated incursions into the Bel Air and Fort National districts by police and U.N. forces. Tens of residents were killed and dozens arrested. When a couple of cops turned up beheaded, the bourgeoisie claimed that a mythical "Operation Baghdad" had been launched by pro-Aristide gangs "linked to drug trafficking." This outcry was intended to cover the very real operation underway against Lavalas strongholds.

Meanwhile, the army has begun reorganizing as guard dogs for the bourgeoisie. Hundreds of heavily armed men in camouflage uniforms with FADH (Armed Forces of Haiti) insignias are quartered in Pétionville, where they are "advised" by English-speaking, U.S.-trained soldiers in civilian clothes. From there they periodically launch forays against slum areas. "FADH" bases are also reported in Cap-Haïtien, Ouanaminthe, Fort Liberté, Jérémie, Petit-Goâve and Jacmel.

A human rights mission sponsored by the University of Miami School of Law visited Haiti in November 2004. There they observed the regrouping of the FADH, a force known for coups and massacres, and its incursion into the slum of La Saline, as well as raids by the Haitian National Police, often masked, in poor neighborhoods:

"There are dead bodies in the street almost daily, including innocent bystanders, women and children.... The violent repression by police and former soldiers ... with the UN forces visibly acting as support for, rather than a check on the official violence, has generated desperate fear in a community that is quickly losing its young men to violent death or arbitrary arrest."

In Bel Air, community activists showed them a list of 100 residents killed in a month and a half, listing names, dates and places where they were killed. The mission reported



a massacre in broad daylight of 12 young men by uniformed police in the Fort National neighborhood; it published photographs of the police execution of five young men in Delmas. At the Port-au-Prince General Hospital, they observed doctors refusing to treat patients lying in pools of blood because they had no money. At the State Morgue, they showed

photos of dead bodies strewn about being consumed by swarms of maggots, their skin and even faces eaten away in the space of a few days ("Haiti: Human Rights Investigation: November 11-21, 2004"). The scenes are like a horror movie, making the torture photos from Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq seem antiseptic in comparison.

Despite numerous reports by human rights groups, the slaughter has continued. On **28 February 2005**, a mass protest march was held on the anniversary of the coup. Haitian police fired on unarmed demonstrators as U.N. forces stood by, taking photos of demonstration leaders. On **27 April 2005**, a demonstration of over 10,000 Lavalas supporters was again fired on by police. Several demonstrators were killed by shots in the back. Police planted a gun in the hand of one of the dead men, demanding that photographers take pictures. A Haitian police spokesman called the nine dead "bandits," while Canadian spokesman for the U.N. CIVPOL denounced the march as an "unauthorized, illegal demonstration."

On **6 July 2005**, some 350 "peacekeepers" launched a classic "search and destroy" assault on the slum district of Cité Soleil. The MINUSTAH surrounded the area with 18-20 armored personnel carriers before dawn, blocked off the entrances with shipping containers, and began combing through the neighborhoods. Their main target was Fanmi Lavalas community leader Emmanuel "Drèd" Wilmé, whom they called a "gang leader" and "outlaw." With a barrage of gunfire, including from a helicopter overhead, they managed to assassinate Wilmé and four other youth, while shooting into houses and gunning down people on the street, leaving another 19 civilian dead and two dozen wounded, mostly women and children. Brief accounts of this massacre dribbled out later in the bourgeois media, minimizing the number killed while emphasizing pervasive "street violence" and violent gangs in the slum districts.

U.N. officials said they were "unaware" of civilians killed, and called the dead "bandits." However, a delegation from the San Francisco Labor Council was in Port-au-Prince at the time and visited the area the next day. They talked with residents, viewed videotapes of the slaughter and concluded there "there was indeed a massacre conducted by UN military forces in Cité Soleil on the morning of July 6th." Brazilian general Augusto

Heleno Ribeiro Pereira called the operation a success, since Wilmé was killed. Two days after the Cité Soleil massacre, an additional dozen people were killed in the Bel Air slum by Haitian police firing randomly into homes. As a result of the outcry over the July 6-8 bloodbath, the U.N. promised an investigation. Five months later a summary was leaked admitting that some civilians were killed but claiming they were "caught in the crossfire," and that "UN troops fired only in self-defence" (*Independent* [London], 10 January).

On **21 August 2005** came the most brazen massacre of all. A soccer match had been sponsored by the U.S. in Gran Ravin/Martissant, a poor working-class district, to promote "peace." During a break in the game, in front of 5,000 spectators, a group of police and paramilitaries in red shirts armed with hatchets and machetes marched onto the field, fired a few shots, ordered men to lie on the ground and then hacked them to death. A videotape captured the scene of horror. Up to 50 victims were reported, with at least ten confirmed dead, as U.N. forces stood guard. Killings by police and U.N. forces continued throughout the fall, reaching a crescendo at the end of November, when the Jordanian battalion of 750 soldiers that patrols Cité Soleil day and night opened fire in the Pele neighborhood and machine-gunned the population, leaving 15 dead. This provoked fighting that continued for three days. In mid-December, at least three students were shot by police during demonstrations against the visit of Dominican president Leonel Fernandes over the persecution of Haitian immigrants in the neighboring country.

The MINUSTAH/police siege of slum districts reached a fever pitch around Christmas, after a Canadian policeman and Jordanian soldier were killed. U.N. troops went into Cité Soleil and the Drouillard district, and on **25 December 2005** they reportedly attacked celebrations (described as "gang feasts"), machine-gunning homes and even churches. Meanwhile, the wave of kidnappings kept mounting. Rightist businessmen of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry used this to call on the U.N. to occupy Cité Soleil in force. A private sector shutdown was called for January 9 to push this demand. It had the unmistakable odor of the bosses' "work stoppage" (lockout) in Venezuela in December 2002 aimed at toppling the Chávez government. U.N. envoy Valdes promised to "intervene in the coming days. I think there'll be collateral damage but we have to impose our force," according to Reuters. It was in this context that the Brazilian MINUSTAH commander, Gen. Urano Teixeira da Matta Bacellar, was found dead in his hotel, reportedly a suicide. Reuters cited U.N. sources saying that Bacellar "had opposed Valdes' plan." The U.N. and U.S. chiefs apparently decided: first the elections, then the crackdown.

For Worker-Peasant Resistance Against Imperialist Occupation!

This horrendous repression is carried out in the name of combating gangs, gang violence, drug-trafficking, gun-running, kidnapping and the like. Of course, the drug- and arms-trafficking kingpins are not living in impoverished slums in the sweltering, garbage-strewn flatlands near the sea but in

luxurious flower-bedecked villas in Pétienville nestled in the hills above the capital. The head of the national police declared that "25 percent" of his force were involved in the narcotics trade, gun-running and kidnapping for ransom. Scions of the bourgeois elite have been implicated in acts of kidnapping, and some of the kidnap victims have been Lavalas supporters. On the other hand, there are certainly plenty of gangs, violence, drugs and guns in places like Cité Soleil and Bel Air, as there are in all shantytowns of desperately poor people surrounding the major cities in semi-colonial capitalist countries. Permanent unemployment spawns whole layers of what Marx called the "lumpenproletariat," the proletariat in rags, from which criminal elements are easily recruited.

In Cité Soleil there were such gangs, such as the one led by Thomas Robinson ("Labanyè"), based in the Boston neighborhood, which terrorized the entire district. But his gang was protected and financed by Group of 184 leader Andy Apaid, the sweatshop owner, who bought their loyalty for \$30,000, and police were ordered not to arrest him. On the other hand, there were numerous "popular organizations" affiliated with Aristide's Lavalas. Pictures of their leaders were published by the police on "wanted" lists, with "Drèd" Wilmé on the top of the list. These were who the bourgeoisie referred to as "*chimères*" (variously translated as ghosts or monsters).

There are doubtless criminal gangs operating out of areas considered Aristide strongholds, and some may overlap with Lavalas organizations. But what the bourgeoisie and U.N. call "gangs" are frequently Lavalas-affiliated community groups, which hardly "intimidate" the population. When Labanyè was killed by U.N. forces last May, there was a celebration in Cité Soleil, as people were overjoyed to be freed from *his* terror. When Wilmé was assassinated by the MINUSTAH in July, hundreds came out to march in the funeral procession, mourning the death of a popular leader. And on February 7, tens of thousands of residents of Cité Soleil voted, 92 percent for the Lavalas-endorsed candidate.

The desperate conditions of Haiti pose difficult situations for those who fight for the interests of the working class. Politically, genuine communists give no support either to Lavalas or to their bourgeois opponents. In the period leading up to the 2004 invasion/coup, it was necessary to oppose *both* the populist Aristide government *and* the Group of 184. In the recent elections, fighting for the class independence of the proletariat meant opposing *all* the bourgeois parties and candidates.

Two years ago, we pointed out: "Aristide's *chimères*, recruited from the lumpenproletariat of the unemployed, would attack proletarian revolutionaries as quickly as they beat up students and 'civil society' marchers." But we added, "faced with the threat of the return of the death squads and the military/police mass murderers, Haitian workers and peasants should seek to organize their own class organs of self-defense, which would make a temporary military bloc with the pro-Aristide 'popular organizations' to halt the forward march of the ultra-rightist reaction." Today, revolutionary Marxists would seek to organize mass worker-peasant opposition to the U.N. occupation, that could draw in slum dwellers behind the working class.

Several labor organizations in Haiti have, on the contrary, lined up with the bourgeois erstwhile "opposition," including the FOS (Federation of Unionized Workers) and CATH (Autonomous Haitian Workers Confederation). These outfits are basically empty shells left over from the 1980s and '90s and financed by the U.S. government through the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) and the AFL-CIO Solidarity Center in order to provide a "labor" component to their "unpopular front." There is nothing more to be said about them: they are not workers organizations but cat's paws of U.S. imperialism, and should be smashed.

A labor grouping with leftist origins, Batay Ouvriye (B.O. – Workers Struggle), has had a different trajectory. During the decade of Lavalas rule under Aristide and Préval, B.O. sought to organize agricultural workers on plantations in northern Haiti, as well as workers in free trade zone garment plants. As a result, they were the objects of repression by Lavalas mayors. As we noted in our article on "The Struggle for Workers Revolution in the Caribbean" (*The Internationalist* No. 18, May-June 2004), at the end of 2003, as the anti-Aristide mobilization was escalating, Batay Ouvriye declared that "Lavalas and the bourgeois opposition are two rotten legs of the same torn pair of pants." However, while calling to "thwart the bourgeois orientation within the anti-Lavalas mobilization," B.O. urged workers, poor peasants, students, the unemployed and "consistent progressives" to "build their autonomy" as the "camp of the people" representing the popular masses "within the general movement of struggle." What this amounts to is that Batay Ouvriye tagged along behind the bourgeois opposition while claiming to be building "autonomy" within the "general movement of struggle" leading up to a U.S.-sponsored coup d'état.

At a November 25 forum in Brooklyn featuring a speaker from Batay Ouvriye, supporters of the Internationalist Group/League for the Fourth International raised these criticisms of B.O.. The latter responded that after December 2003, Batay Ouvriye distanced itself from protests run by the bourgeois opposition. But, at least from its internationally distributed statements, B.O. did not call during February 2004 for mobilization against the invasion and coup by ex-military and death squad leaders. Nor did it call in March 2004 for explicit resistance to the U.S. occupation, but simply for a continuation of the workers' struggles for democratic and labor rights. Yet the day after the Marines landed, strikers at the Ouanaminthe free trade zone led by the May 1 Workers Struggle Labor Federation affiliated with B.O. were the victims of repression by both the Dominican Army and remnants of the Haitian army (see "Stop Persecution of Haitian Workers in the Dominican Republic!").

Revolutionaries cannot be neutral in the face of an imperialist occupation, no matter how politically reactionary the forces opposing the occupiers. Thus we call today to defend the Iraqi peoples and hail blows against the U.S.-led colonial occupation, even when they come from Islamic fundamentalist and Iraqi nationalist organizations that communists po-



Tyler Hicks/The New York Times

U.N. troops encircling Cité Soleil slum have staged repeated massacres in the name of "fighting gang violence."

litically oppose tooth and nail (and who have killed thousands of Communists). The fact that Aristide was installed by the U.S. in 1994 and sought Washington's support against right-wing rebels in 2004 cannot be an excuse for evading the fight against actual U.S. intervention!

Similarly, in Panama in 1989, it was necessary to resist the U.S. invasion, even though Panamanian strongman Manuel Noriega was a former U.S. puppet and CIA "asset." In Ethiopia in the 1930s, it was necessary to defend the struggle led by Emperor Haile Selassie, a slave-owning autocrat who presided over a feudal society, against the invasion by Italian imperialism under the fascist Mussolini. As Leon Trotsky wrote, this was not "a conflict between two rival dictators," that the political form is not decisive but "rather, it is a question of the relationship of classes and the fight of an underdeveloped nation for independence against imperialism" ("The Italo-Ethiopian Conflict," July 1935).

Today, Batay Ouvriye says it calls on Haitian workers to "fight the occupation, the foreign troops' presence in the country, on the basis of their own interests" (B.O., "2005: A Year ending in Repression and Terror for the Popular Masses," 2 January). Yet until recently it hardly protested repression against Lavalas strongholds in the Port-au-Prince slums, nor have we seen any specific calls by B.O. for mobilization against the U.N. occupiers. Now another, vital issue has arisen. Last year, Lavalas supporters accused Batay Ouvriye of accepting funds from the AFL-CIO's American Center for International Solidarity (ACILS) which originally came from the U.S. government via the National Endowment for Democracy. Initially, what was reported was a \$3,500 contribution to support workers fired at Ouanaminthe. But it was subsequently charged that Batay Ouvriye was the intended recipient of US\$99,965 from the NED, which lists the grant in its summary of projects approved for FY (fiscal year) 2005 (Jeb Sprague, "Batay Ouvriye's Smoking Gun," *Haiti Progrès/This Week in Haiti*, 4-10 January).

In a January 9 response, Batay Ouvriye admits that it received \$20,000-plus from the ACILS, and would like to see

the rest. Furthermore, it says that “we are prepared to accept any amount, even if it were a million dollars (!) coming from wherever it may come.” B.O.’s defense is that all money is dirty; that it has no direct relation with the NED, State Department or USAID; that where the AFL-CIO Solidarity Center gets its money is “their problem, not ours”; that this is a partial payback of money looted by the imperialists, and that they haven’t changed their political positions in order to receive the funds. Leaving aside the fact that Batay Ouvriye’s supporters for several months argued (and believed) that B.O. had only received \$3,500, that the Lavalas supporters accusing B.O. are only upset that *they* aren’t receiving the largesse from Washington (as they once did, when Aristide was being financed by the U.S. government), and that Sprague fingers B.O. supporters by revealing names, the bottom line is that accepting funding from U.S. imperialism is a betrayal of the interests of Haiti’s working masses.

There should be no illusions about where this money comes from and what it represents. The ACILS is the continuation of the notorious American Institute for Free Labor Development (AIFLD), which was known throughout Latin America as the “AFL-CIA” for fomenting anti-Communist coups in Guyana, Chile, El Salvador and elsewhere. They finance death and destruction of the workers movement. Like the AIFLD, the ACILS is a front for, and is directly controlled by U.S. intelligence agencies. In the period before the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union, the “AFL-CIA” used to fund only right-wing and social-democratic anti-Communists. Today, via the NED, they bankroll a host of “non-governmental organizations” and a wide range of opponents of governments the U.S. opposes. No doubt the NED is interested in Batay Ouvriye for its opposition to Aristide and Lavalas, just as the ACILS finances right-wing “labor” outfits like FOS and CATH.

This money is poison. It is CIA money. The fact that it is sent via the AFL-CIO “Solidarity Center” makes no difference. This is what intelligence agencies call a “cut-out,” designed to disguise the origin of the funds. Some of B.O.’s supporters have recognized this. If others believe they can manipulate U.S. imperialism, this is a dangerous opportunist illusion. Without formally “changing its political line,” B.O. has already been compromised by accepting funds from the U.S. government, the very force behind the “United Nations” occupation that is terrorizing the poor people of Haiti. And ultimately, as the old saying goes, “he who pays the piper calls the tune.” The fact that B.O. was conspicuously silent for many months about the depredations by U.N. troops and police in the Port-au-Prince slums at the very least made it more attractive to the ACILS/NED. Bottom line: being on the payroll of U.S. imperialism is incompatible with fighting against imperialism. In El Alto, Bolivia, at the height of the uprising last June, the workers movement voted to run out out “NGOs” funded by USAID, another imperialist front.

For Haitian/Dominican Trotskyist Groups, to Fight for Permanent Revolution!

We must draw a sharp line between right-wing opposition to Aristide/Lavalas and revolutionary opposition to these

bourgeois populists. In the first place, it is necessary to mobilize working-class struggle against the imperialist occupation in U.N. blue helmets. Our comrades of the Liga Quarta-Internacionalista do Brasil have campaigned in the unions calling for the Brazilian workers movement to fight to throw the Brazilian contingent out of Haiti, where it oppresses the impoverished black population. At the initiative of the LQB, the Brazilian National Confederation of Educational Workers (CNTE) passed a motion at its January 2005 congress “authoriz[ing] the CNTE to call on the workers and their organizations to aid the Haitian working people in expelling the invading Brazilian troops. If there is any transport of military armament, we must issue a call on the Brazilian working class to boycott arms shipments” (see “Drive Brazilian Troops Out of Haiti!” *The Internationalist* No. 20, January-February 2005).

In Haiti, the struggle of the working class cannot focus simply on strict trade-union demands. Workers and peasants self-defense groups must be formed to resist attacks by the bosses, the Haitian police, U.N. forces and right-wing militias. Class-conscious workers must seek to provide proletarian leadership to the struggle against imperialist occupation, drawing the impoverished slum population and the peasantry behind them. Revolutionaries engaged in labor organizing should expose the role of U.S. agencies who infiltrate the workers movement and divert it from struggle against the Haitian bourgeoisie and its imperialist overlords. Facing plantation owners such as the manufacturers of Cointreau and other liqueurs, as well as local political bosses who brutally oppress the smallholding and landless peasants, communists call for agrarian revolution in the countryside in conjunction with workers revolution in the cities. Above all, the central fight must be to forge a revolutionary workers party to lead this struggle, starting from the immediate demands of the hard-pressed Haitian masses and leading to the fight for power.

Today we must begin by seeking to cohere a Leninist-Trotskyist nucleus, not only in Haiti but also next door in the Dominican Republic. Given the desperate conditions on the island, a key place where this work can be undertaken is at the centers of emigration, particularly in the United States and New York City, where hundreds of thousands of Haitians and Dominicans live in close proximity. Here it is easier to overcome a century and a half of nationalist animosities, and wage a fight against a common imperialist enemy. While thousands of Haitians are deported from the Dominican Republic, hundreds of Dominicans are deported from the U.S. And here Haitians and Dominicans are both subjected to racist abuse, as in one documented case last year, where an NYC elementary school official called Haitian children “animals” and ordered them to eat on the floor without utensils. By acting as a “tribune of the people” and champion of all the oppressed, demanding full citizenship rights for all immigrants, opposing imperialist intervention down the line, and fighting for joint Haitian/Dominican workers revolution, even small revolutionary forces can lay the basis for future struggles uniting working people throughout the Americas. ■

How the U.S. Orchestrated Haiti Death Squad Coup

When the former parish priest and Liberation Theology advocate Jean-Bertrand Aristide was first elected president of Haiti in 1990, he had the overwhelming support of Haiti's impoverished masses. The local bourgeoisie smarted over the few modest reforms he introduced. When he was overthrown by CIA-financed coup plotters in 1991, it unleashed a bloodbath of hundreds of his supporters carried out by military/police death squads. Aristide went off to a gilded exile in Washington, where he became a protégé of the liberal Democrats and in particular of the Congressional Black Caucus. As thousands of Haitian poor people fled the island hell on leaky boats heading for the United States (or the U.S.-occupied naval base of Guantánamo just across the Windward Passage), Democratic president Bill Clinton decided to restore Aristide to office, invading the island republic in 1994. Twenty thousand Marines remained in place to enforce U.S. interests, and to make sure that Aristide didn't go off on a populist binge and do something "irresponsible," like raise the minimum wage. The army was disbanded, but the former soldiers and officers kept their weapons while Aristide had a few thousand police armed with pistols.

Over the next decade, Aristide and his stand-in René Préval administered Haiti on behalf of their imperialist benefactors in Washington. Although this meant increasing impoverishment of the black poor, the populist ex-priest was able to win re-election in 2000, in an election boycotted by the right-wing opposition. But as soon as Aristide returned to office, George Bush II took over the White House and U.S. policy began to change. While a darling of the Democrats, the Haitian leader had always been a nemesis of the Republican hard right wing, which began to shape U.S. policy south of the border. Otto Reich, a Cuban *gusano* exile and Iran/contras conspirator, and Roger Noriega, formerly the Latin American policy advisor for segregationist senator Jesse Helms, ran the State Department's Latin America desk. They began fomenting a coup d'état against Venezuela's populist president, Hugo Chávez, whom they loathed for his friendship with Cuba's Fidel Castro. When that putsch backfired in April 2002, they turned to Haiti.

The Clinton administration had already blocked \$400 million in U.S. aid to Haiti over complaints about the 2000 election. The International Monetary Fund and World Bank quickly followed suit. Since the desperately poor country had little tax revenue, as the rich refused to pay taxes and its main exports were goods assembled in "free trade zones" where



Guy Philippe, center, key plotter of invasion/coup by former Haitian military and death-squad leaders, is reportedly linked to drug trafficking and the CIA. He met in Santo Domingo with the "civilian opposition" financed by the U.S.

they were exempt from export duties, this effectively bankrupted the Haitian government. By late 2003, Aristide's luster had worn off and his supporters had become demoralized. In addition, many early allies (including leaders of the former Haitian Communist Party who had become the organizers of the Lavalas Popular Organization [OPL], later rebaptized Organization of People in Struggle) had gone over to the "democratic" opposition. Posing as spokesmen for "civil society," this was led by sweatshop boss Andy Apaid, a U.S. citizen who headed the "Group of 184," financed by the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), a channel for "open" U.S. funding of opposition groups abroad in tandem with covert CIA destabilization activities. Alongside this "civilian" opposition was a parallel military conspiracy led by former Haitian army officers and death squad leaders.

Internationally, many liberals, rad-libs and opportunist leftists initially supported Aristide as a "democrat" in opposition to the military. Some openly backed the 1994 U.S. invasion that restored him to office, others tried to skirt the issue. Today, the reformist Workers World Party/International Action Center and its Haiti Support Network still backs Lavalas, just as they tail after black Democrat Jesse Jackson, a prominent supporter of Aristide. But as Haiti spiraled downward into a morass of deepening poverty and escalating gang attacks, many erstwhile *aristidistes* despaired. A few tacitly supported the "democratic opposition" (the Group of 184) while downplaying its U.S. funding and ties with anti-Aristide coup plotters. Jane Regan, in *NACLA Report on the Americas* (January/February 2005), wrote that Aristide was brought down by "a broad civic movement

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and an armed paramilitary uprising," that "tens of thousands from all walks of life regularly took to the streets to call for his resignation," that the "rebels" were "mostly cheered, not resisted," etc. Many sat on their hands as the military and death squad leaders invaded Haiti in February 2004 and U.S. forces removed Aristide.

The League for the Fourth International has never given any political support to Aristide. At the same time, we opposed the CIA-linked 1991 coup d'état that ousted him, we opposed the 1994 U.S. invasion that brought him back, and we opposed the 2004 U.S. invasion that once again toppled the Haitian president. While vigilantly maintaining political independence from the bourgeoisie, in the face of coups and invasions proletarian revolutionaries defend the Haitian masses against their oppressors, and fight to defeat imperialist domination of this semi-colonial country, the first black republic in the Americas. In a statement on the eve of the U.S. takeover, we called to "Combat the Coup Plotters – No Political Support to Aristide! Organize Worker-Led Resistance Against Death Squad Invaders!" (*The Internationalist* supplement, 28 February 2004). On March 1, we added a call: "U.S. and France Impose New Colonial Occupation – Throw the Imperialists Out of Haiti!" We sold hundreds of our supplements at Haitian protest demonstrations in Brooklyn, while having heated arguments with supporters of Aristide.

As the situation in Haiti degenerates, some sectors among U.S. rulers are increasingly concerned about the potential for a social explosion. The *New York Times* (29 January), has now published an extensive article by Walt Bogdanich and Jenny Nordberg, laying out in great detail how the Bush administration and right-wing Republicans prepared the coup/invasion that ousted Aristide. Much of the material they publish was already unearthed a year and a half before by a young reporter, Max Blumenthal, in an article in the liberal Internet magazine *Salon* (16 July 2004) but until now has not been deemed news "fit to print" by the leading organ of the "free but responsible" U.S. bourgeois media. A lot of the revelations originally come from former U.S. ambassador Dean Curran, bitter over the way his efforts at imperialist "democratization" were sabotaged by the Bush gang in Washington and its agents in Port-au-Prince. But it is useful that, two years after the fact, the U.S.' machinations to overthrow a "democratically elected" government have been laid bare. The main lines of the plotting include:

- While the U.S. embassy in Haiti was urging reconciliation after the disputed 2000 election, the delegate of the International Republican Institute (IRI), one Stanley Lucas, was telling the opposition to refuse to work with Aristide and instead try to topple him. Lucas is a scion of a landholding family in Jean Rabel, where his cousins led a 1987 massacre that hacked some 250 peasants to death. Lucas repeatedly traveled to Caracas, Venezuela while coup plotters were preparing their move against Chávez. Lucas reportedly threatened Ambassador Curran that he would be fired "as soon as the real U.S. policy is enacted." Curran was forced out in mid-2003.

- While the IRI (which is funded by the United States

government through the NED, the State Department and USAID, and by corporations like Halliburton and Chevron) was holding "democracy training" confabs in leading hotels in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, the coup-plotting former military men were present in the same hotel consulting with the leaders of the "civilian" opposition. "Rebel" leader Philippe met the IRI's man Lucas there, and also when the ex-police chief was being trained at a police academy in Quito, Ecuador. Philippe's political advisor participated directly in the IRI meetings.

- Flush with a \$1.2 million USAID grant for its Haiti "democracy" program, the IRI in mid-2003 invited 600 Haitian opposition leaders to Santo Domingo where they formed the Group of 184, whose representative in Washington was Lucas, described by Blumenthal as "the Haitian version of Ahmed Chalabi, the Iraqi exile who helped neoconservatives in Washington promote the war against Saddam Hussein." The "civilian" 184 were led by sweatshop boss (and U.S. citizen) Andy Apaid while a notorious hardliner, Wendell Claude, oversaw the military rebels camped out at the Dominican border town of Perenal, where they were supplied with M-16s by the Dominican army.

Although the right-wing Haitian politicians, Lavalas turncoats, sweatshop bosses, military officers, police chiefs and death squad leaders did their part in Washington's schemes, they were soon discarded by the imperialist occupiers. The Bush administration preferred flunkies with no political base like former U.N. official Latortue, a Miami business consultant and talk show host who came highly recommended by Florida governor Jeb Bush. Latortue's cabinet was made up of technocratic political nobodies. Real power is in the hands of the U.N. command, which controls the guns of the 7,500 Brazilian, Chilean, Argentine and Jordanian soldiers and 1,800 police from a score of countries, including Canada. Yet despite their firepower, the occupation forces have not been able to impose anything resembling order in Haiti. "There would be no reason to stay here if the only role that is assigned to the Latin American troops is the role of a policeman of a situation that continues to deteriorate," said U.N. special delegate to Haiti, Juan Gabriel Valdes. But the Haitian bourgeoisie is insistently demanding a bloodbath. And that is the U.N. occupiers are preparing to deliver, now with the cover of a "democratically elected" Haitian government. ■

Further Reading on Haiti

- "Haiti: U.S. Engineers Death Squad Coup," *The Internationalist* No. 18, May-June 2004
- "The Struggle for Workers Revolution in the Caribbean," *The Internationalist* No. 18
(*en français*)
- « Il faut chasser les impérialistes d'Haïti ! »
L'Internationale n° 4, mai 2004
- « Organiser la résistance sous direction ouvrière contre les envahisseurs des escadrons de la mort ! »
L'Internationale n° 4

FOR HAITIAN/DOMINICAN WORKERS REVOLUTION!

**Haitians Burned and Hacked to Death by Lynch Mobs,
More than 20,000 Expelled by Dominican Army**

Stop Persecution of Haitian Workers in the Dominican Republic!

JANUARY 31 – Since last May, a wave of racist and xenophobic (anti-foreigner) violence has swept over the Dominican Republic, instigated by the Dominican government, targeting Haitian immigrant workers as well as dark-skinned Dominicans of Haitian descent. (Haiti and the Dominican Republic share the Caribbean Island of Hispaniola, and anti-Haitian racism has long been a staple of Dominican bourgeois politics.) In five major sweeps, at least 20,000 men, women and children were rounded up by soldiers and summarily deported to Haiti without the least pretence of legality. In addition, at least a score of blacks have been murdered by lynch mobs, many of them hacked to death with machetes or burned to death by dousing them with gasoline and setting them afire.

Beginning January 1, the government of Dominican president Leonel Fernández escalated the anti-Haitian persecution, launching *Operación Vaquero* (Cowboy), which placed a cordon of troops along the border to hunt down immigrants. The first victims were 25 Haitians who died of asphyxiation January 10, trapped in a truck being pursued by the Dominican police. Twelve days later in the town of Guerra, after an incident in which an air force sergeant was killed by a cop, a lynch mob of heavily armed men laid waste to 27 homes of Haitian immigrants and black Dominicans and tried to burn a baby alive. A week later, Haitians' houses were burned to the ground in Moca. Now a high Dominican immigration official has declared that all Haitians without residency papers will be deported, and the government cut off the annual importation of thousands of Haitian workers for the sugar harvest, causing a crisis in this key sector.

Meanwhile, next door United Nations "peacekeeping" troops occupying Haiti have carried out a series of murderous attacks in the slums of the capital, targeting supporters of Jean-Bertrand Aristide, the Haitian president removed from office and kidnapped by a U.S. invasion in March 2004. As large numbers of Haitians flee from the chaos, misery and repression of their occupied country, U.S. authorities keep sending them back. On January 19, lawyers representing scores of Haitian refugees de-



Justo/EI Nacional

Watchman in the *batey* (shantytown) in Guerra, Dominican Republic after lynch mob burned homes of Haitians and black Dominicans January 22.

mandated that Washington halt all deportations to Haiti. And on February 7, Haitian presidential elections are scheduled to be held after being postponed several times. With public opinion polls showing the candidate favored by the followers of ousted president Aristide far ahead of all others, the Haitian capital is in a state of high tension, expecting some move by right-wing bourgeois sectors, their paramilitary forces or the U.N. occupation forces.

The League for the Fourth International and the Internationalist Group urge class-conscious workers, revolutionary-minded youth and all opponents of imperialism to *protest the persecution of the Haitian poor, immigrants and refugees*. From Santo Domingo to New York, we call for *full citizenship rights for all immigrants*, legal or "illegal." Against poisonous nationalist hatreds, we fight for the *unity of Haitian, Dominican and U.S. workers against capital*. In the Dominican Republic, Haiti and the United States, we fight to *build revolutionary workers parties against all the capitalist parties*. And we underline that this orgy of chauvinist repression and slaughter of Haitians is part of the U.S. "war on terror" aimed at terrorizing the world into submission to U.S. dictates. We say: *Drive the imperialists and their flunkies out of Afghanistan, Iraq and Haiti!*

Anti-Haitian Pogrom

The trigger for the extended anti-Haitian pogrom was the murder of a Dominican couple in mid-May in the Dominican town of Hatillo Palma in the province of Montecristi. After police arrested ten Haitians (no evidence linking them to the crime was ever presented), lynchers began torching the shacks of poor Haitian immigrants, mainly workers on banana farms. Before dawn the next day, Dominican soldiers began indiscriminately rounding up hundreds of blacks and trucking them to the Haitian border. Over three days, almost the entire black population of the town were deported. Soon anti-Haitian mob violence spread throughout the northwestern Dominican Republic, driving thousands over the border into Haiti. When some refugees returned a month later to Hatillo Palma, vigilantes fell upon them as they slept, beheading two.

This combination of government repression and lynch mob violence awakened fears of a repeat of the 1937 massacre staged by Dominican dictator Rafael Leónidas Trujillo, when an estimated 37,000 Haitians and black Dominicans were rounded up at gunpoint and executed, often by machetes (to give the impression that peasants had committed the murders). Many others were marched off the docks into the sea at Montecristi with their arms and feet bound. Río Matanzas (Massacre River) dividing Haiti from the Dominican Republic ran red with the blood of the victims. This horror was the subject of the novel, *The Farming of Bones* (1998), by Haitian American writer Edwidge Danticat.

With that horrific scene seared into their collective memory, last June Haitian and Dominican blacks poured into to Santiago de los Caballeros, the center of the Cibao region, for safety. Parents besieged government offices demanding birth certificates for their children and youth born in the Dominican Republic. The response of the authorities was to order more deportations, 200 from Santiago alone. In mid-August, the government deported another 3,000 to Haiti, particularly women and children. The reason for this selective round-up was clear: Dominican banana and coffee farms and sugar plantations could not function without the labor of Haitian men, who toil in back-breaking jobs for a few dollars a day. Up to a million Haitian immigrants live in the D.R. (out of a total population of 7 million), many residing there for decades.

Also in August, four young Haitian men in the Dominican capital of Santo Domingo were gagged, doused with flammable liquid and set on fire; three died. The bloody pattern repeated itself throughout the fall: in late September, two black men were accused of killing a Dominican worker in Guatapanal, not far from Puerto Plata. Mobs descended on the Haitian neighborhoods bent on wreaking vengeance: several blacks were beaten, another drowned in a river fleeing attackers. An article in the *New York Times* (20 November 2005) reported:

“‘Where there are two Haitians, kill one; where there are three Haitians, kill two,’ said leaders of the mobs that descended on the immigrants’ camps, the Haitians here recalled. ‘But always let one go so that he can run back to his country and tell them what happened’.”

And in early December, at least ten Haitians were murdered

by vigilantes while dozens of blacks were burned out of their homes in the northern Dominican town of Villa Trina, again supposedly in retaliation for the death of a Dominican man.

Amid this orgy of xenophobic and racist burning and killing, one thing must be remembered: the frenzied mobs of killers may be made up of impoverished Dominican peasants and slum dwellers, but they were set in motion by the bourgeois rulers.

History of “Anti-Haitianism” in the Dominican Republic

Throughout Dominican history, reactionary nationalist politicians have appealed to the racist ideology of “*antihaitianismo*” to shore up their hold on power in “their” two-thirds of the island. Following the Haitian Revolution of 1791-1804 – the first successful slave revolt in history, defeating the combined efforts of French, British and Spanish expeditionary forces – the Haitian revolutionary armies marched into Santo Domingo three times, finally driving out the Spanish colonialists and abolishing slavery in 1822. Even after Dominican independence from Haiti was declared in 1844, conservative landowners were so worried about a “Haitian threat” that they *reannexed the country to Spain*. It took the 1861-65 War of Restoration, under the leadership of black general Gregorio Luperón to regain Dominican independence.

The anti-Haitian racism of Trujillo, the U.S.-installed dictator who ruled the Dominican Republic with an iron hand from 1930 until he became no longer useful and the CIA had him assassinated 1961, is legendary. The same goes for his henchman Joaquín Balaguer, who following the 1965 U.S. invasion of Santo Domingo ran the country on behalf of American imperialism from 1966 to 1978, and again from 1986 to 1996. In justifying Trujillo’s 1937 slaughter of Haitians and Dominicans of Haitian ancestry, Balaguer declared: “The problem of race is, by consequence, the principal problem of the Dominican Republic.... On it depends, in a certain way, the very existence of the nationality that for more than a century has been struggling against a more prolific race” (quoted by Ernesto Sagás, “A Case of Mistaken Identity: Antihaitianismo in Dominican Culture,” *Latinamericanist* [1993]).

But the supposedly “democratic” rulers of the Dominican Revolutionary Party (PRD) and Dominican Liberation Party (PLD) have also played the card of anti-Haitian racism. There have been previous mass deportations of Haitians and black Dominicans in 1991 under Balaguer, in 1997 and 1999 under PLD president Leonel Fernández, and in 2000-2001 under PRD president Hipólito Mejía (National Coalition for Haitian Rights, “Haitians in the Dominican Republic: Mass Expulsions and Deportations,” November 2001). Mejía expelled 12,000 to Haiti in the single month of March 2001 (“Report of the Haiti Support Network’s Delegation to the Dominican Republic,” April 2001). Even in the absence of mass expulsions, deportations of Haitians from the D.R. have run about 20,000 a year over the last decade and a half.

These arbitrary round-ups are justified by top officials with undisguised racism. When Human Rights Watch questioned the head of Haitian affairs for the Dominican Department of Migration as to how they identified Haitians, he responded that

they can be spotted "by their way of living," that "they're poorer than we are," that "they have terrible homes," that they have "rougher skin," and "they're much blacker than we are." He denounced the "invasion" of young Haitian delinquents, who are "easy to recognize" because they're "the ones who act like they're in the Haitian capital, drinking and dancing" (HRW, "Dominican Republic, 'Illegal People': Haitians And Dominico-Haitians in The Dominican Republic," April 2002). Such blatant xenophobic and racist appeals from top-level officials whip up the lynchers in the streets.

Superexploitation and Virtual Slavery of Haitian Workers

Official sponsorship of anti-Haitian hysteria is not limited to the ideological sphere, it is deeply embedded in the legal structure and economic framework of Dominican capitalism. Legally, the descendants of Haitian immigrants are deprived of all rights by an impenetrable web of obstacles. Although Article 11 of the Dominican constitution recognizes "all persons born in the territory of the Dominican Republic" as citizens, there is a loophole. Undocumented Haitian immigrants are considered to be "in transit," and so their children born in the D.R. are denied citizenship. First, hospital personnel refuse to give mothers maternity papers saying when and where their babies were born. Then, when they seek to register the children in the civil registry, they are refused because the parents don't have a Dominican ID or residency. And when they try to go to school, children are often refused admission if they don't have proof of citizenship.

Thus there has grown up a whole layer of the population with no legal rights whatsoever, kept in enforced ignorance and poverty, and periodically subjected to state-sponsored terror. Demands by Dominicans of Haitian origin to have their children's citizenship confirmed have caused an international outcry and produced a ruling by the Inter-American Court of Human Rights last October ordering the government to grant citizenship (as well as reparations and a public apology) to two girls, Dilcia Yean (now 8 years old) and Violeta Bosico (now 20), and to reform its laws to make explicit the right of all children born there to Dominican citizenship. This led to howls of indignation from the government, and in December the Dominican Supreme Court declared that children of undocumented immigrants are *not* citizens.

The presence of a huge mass of people (well over 10 percent of the total population) living a semi-clandestine existence can only be the result of powerful economic forces. And in fact, the sugar industry, long the mainstay of the Dominican economy, was built on the forced labor of Haitian workers. This goes back to World War I, when the United States lost its supplies of beet sugar from Europe and undertook a vast expansion of sugar cane production in the Dominican Republic, which the U.S. occupied from 1916 to 1924 (ostensibly to collect defaulted debts to Wall Street banks), using laborers imported from Haiti (which the U.S. also occupied, from 1915 to 1934). The sugar companies had annual quotas for tens of thousands of Haitian workers, who received (at most) starvation wages and were confined to the

miserable *batayes* (shantytowns) on the edge of the plantations by patrols of militia, police and rural guards.

This plantation system of virtual slave labor was overseen by a National Police formed by the U.S. A few years after the Marines departed, General Trujillo came to power in Santo Domingo. He was one of a string of tin-pot dictators around the Caribbean and Central America who came out of the ranks of the colonial constabularies in other U.S.-occupied countries (Somoza in Nicaragua, Batista in Cuba) and the puppet armies of semi-colonial "banana republics" (Ubico in Guatemala). In the 1950s, Trujillo decided to take over the American-owned sugar mills and run them as his own personal fiefdom. After he was dumped in 1961, the plantations were nationalized and formed the CEA (State Sugar Council). Thus whether under the U.S., Trujillo or his pseudo-"democratic" successors, the system was based on the superexploitation of Haitian forced labor.

This amounted to virtual slavery. In fact, the 1937 massacre and the periodic mass round-ups/deportations in recent years concentrated on blacks found *outside* the *bateyes*, who were treated as runaway slaves. This system has been well-documented, notably in the reportage by Maurice Lemoine, *Bitter Sugar: Slaves Today in the Caribbean* (Zed Books, 1985). A series of reports by the National Coalition for Haitian Rights in 1989-92 showed how Haitian laborers were deceptively recruited, met at the border by the Dominican military, trucked to the different plantations and subjected to brutal mistreatment. After the CEA mills were privatized in 1999, conditions were as bad or worse. When several mills shut down after a crash of sugar prices, tens of thousands of black workers in the *bateyes* were left jobless. Some found work in the urban construction industry. But they run the risk of being picked up and deported, even though they were born in the D.R., and in some cases their families have lived there for several generations.

Haitian and Dominican Workers Unite Against Capitalist Exploitation/Repression

The brutal repression meted out by the Dominican military is not restricted to Haitian immigrants and their offspring. Under Trujillo and his henchman Balaguer, thousands of Dominican leftists were assassinated over the decades. In the post-Trujillo/Balaguer period, general strikes over the constant black-outs and fuel price hikes have been routinely crushed with a toll of several dead. In the most recent case, in October 2005, two protesters were killed by police in a protest in Santiago. Under the previous government of Hipólito Mejía, a general strike in November 2003 was crushed with seven strikers dead. But the best example of the role of these semi-colonial armies, whose job is to put down a restive population in order to ensure the continuation of imperialist domination, came in early 2004.

The elite Dominican "Plus Ultra" contingent of several hundred troops had just returned from Iraq, where they acted as mercenary troops for the U.S. occupation. On January 28 and 29, the police, presidential militias and the military suppressed a general strike, clashing with strikers in five cities and leaving a death toll of eight protesters killed. Meanwhile, the Dominican military had provided training camps for a force of several

hundred former Haitian soldiers who were preparing to invade Haiti and stage a coup d'état to overthrow the Aristide government. In mid-February, the coup plotters launched their attack. As they were approaching the Haitian capital of Port-au-Prince, on February 29, the United States sent in an expeditionary force of 2,000 Marines, Special Forces and "private" security agencies that bundled Aristide onto an unmarked plane and dropped him on a runway in the middle of Central Africa.

The very next day, a force of Dominican soldiers pulled up at the CODEVI sweatshop factory in a "free trade zone" at Ouanaminthe just inside Haiti to put down a walkout by the Haitian workers. The plant is owned by a Dominican garment manufacturer, Grupo M, and is financed by Wall Street via the World Bank. Two days later, a detachment of the former Haitian army "rebels" showed up to handcuff the union leaders and force the workers back to work at gunpoint. So here we have the armed forces of both capitalist states on the island working together as guard dogs for imperialist capital. As we wrote at the time, "*This cries out for joint revolutionary struggle by Dominican and Haitian workers against their common bosses, the neo-colonial regimes which repress them, and against their imperialist patrons!*" ("The Struggle for Workers Revolution in the Caribbean" in *The Internationalist* No. 18, May-June 2004).

For the last century and a half, racist persecution and xenophobic hysteria against Haitians and dark-skinned Dominicans of Haitian ancestry has been used by the white landowners, capitalist sweatshop and mill owners, and the murderous military and police to divide working people in the eastern two-thirds of Hispaniola. This bountiful island which was once the richest colony in the world remains mired in poverty, while the bourgeois rulers luxuriate in their villas and their imperialist overlords build Manhattan skyscrapers and Caribbean island estates with the superprofits extracted from the sweat of the Haitian and Dominican toilers.

The left, however, has been shackled by nationalism on both sides of the border, subordinating the working people to bourgeois politicians from Dominican nationalist caudillo Juan Bosch to Haitian populist Aristide. In the Dominican Republic, nationalist-reformist leftists have at most offered a tepid, legalistic defense of the right to citizenship of children born in the D.R., in the case of the PTD (Partido de los Trabajadores Dominicanos), while disgusting clowns like PACOREDO (Partido Comunista de la República Dominicana) actually whip up chauvinist frenzy against "the massive invasion by Haitians" and mythical plans by capitalist/ecclesiastical "Haitian lovers" to fuse Haiti and the D.R. In contrast, *a genuine communist party in the Dominican Republic would demand full citizenship rights for all, and take the lead in mobilizing united Dominican-Haitian workers defense of the bateyes against lynch mob violence.*

Today, would-be socialist organizations on the island are weaker than ever, yet the class struggle continues. What's urgently needed is an internationalist revolutionary leadership. From the first moment of the U.S./U.N. intervention in Haiti, the League for the Fourth International has fought to drive the occupiers out. We stand on the side of those resisting the Yankee imperialists, their "U.N." mercenaries and their murderous

colonial cops. At the same time, we give no political support to Aristide, the protégé of the liberal Democrats who was put in the Haitian presidential palace and then removed from it by Marine bayonets. Over the past eight months, the Internationalist Group has participated in numerous protests in New York denouncing U.N. repression in Haiti and the persecution of Haitian immigrants in the Dominican Republic.

For decades, the revolutionary energies of workers and oppressed peoples in Latin America and around the globe have been squandered in the service of class-collaborationist alliances with bourgeois forces. From Spain in the 1930s to Salvador Allende's Chile in the '70s, the "popular front" has always been a ticket for defeat, limiting the struggle to (bourgeois) democratic goals, which leaves the blood-drenched armies intact and their capitalist masters in power. This reflects the anti-Marxist dogma of building "socialism in one country" put forward by Stalin and his heirs to cover their abandonment of the program of world socialist revolution of V.I. Lenin and Leon Trotsky. The Stalinist-nationalist shibboleth is all the more criminal in the case of Haiti and the Dominican Republic, where it means confining the struggle to one-third or two-thirds of an impoverished island.

The Leninist-Trotskyists fight instead for the program of *permanent revolution*, insisting that the only way to root out entrenched reactionary forces is for the working class to overthrow capitalism, along with agrarian revolution in the countryside, and proceed to socialist tasks and international extension of the revolution. There is no basis for a democratic capitalist Haiti or Dominican Republic – the bourgeois rulers are too weak to remain in power without the aid of military juntas, death squads and imperialist troops (with a plane stashed at the hacienda for a quick getaway). The toilers are set at each others' throats by nationalist hatreds whipped up by the bosses – Dominican against Haitian, Spanish-speaking islands against English- and French-speakers – in a region carved up by seven colonial powers. But by fighting to overcome these divisions on the basis of proletarian internationalism, the basis can be laid for a *voluntary socialist federation of the Caribbean.*

From the time of the great Haitian revolutionary general Toussaint L'Ouverture, the struggle against the slave masters and capitalists in both parts of the island of Hispaniola has been inextricably intertwined. It is also intimately bound up with the fight for workers revolution in the U.S. imperialist heartland. Close to one million Haitian and Dominican immigrants are strategically situated in the financial capital of the capitalist world. In New York City the seeds of common Dominican-Haitian workers revolution can be sown, while also fighting for independence for Puerto Rican and to defend Cuba against Yankee imperialism. On the eve of the last century, Caribbean bourgeois revolutionaries – the Cubans José Martí and Antonio Maceo, the Dominican Máximo Gómez and the Puerto Rican Eugenio María de Hostos – joined in the Cuban Revolutionary Party, working in Santo Domingo and New York to fight against colonial rule. Today the League for the Fourth International seeks to forge the nuclei of future Trotskyist vanguard parties to lead the internationalist struggle which can finally turn the lush Pearl of the Antilles into a tropical paradise for all. ■

No to MAS' "Andean Capitalism" – Fight for Workers Revolution!

Bolivian Elections: Evo Morales Tries to Straddle an Abyss

DECEMBER 30 – The landslide victory of Indian peasant leader Evo Morales in the December 18 Bolivian elections was met with jubilation by most of the international left, and dire pronouncements from spokesmen for U.S. imperialism. Winning close to 54 percent of the vote, the leader of the Movimiento al Socialismo (MAS – Movement Towards Socialism) is the first candidate in recent Bolivian history elected with an absolute majority. Yet despite the hopes placed in him by his peasant and indigenous followers, we warn that the MAS is neither socialist nor part of the workers movement, and Morales' bourgeois nationalist government will administer Bolivia within the framework of capitalism, spelling more misery for the masses.

The vote for Morales was almost double that received by the rightist second-runner, ex-president Jorge "Tuto" Quiroga, a U.S. favorite and protégé of former dictator Hugo Banzer. Despite the National Electoral Court's purge of large numbers of voters in many MAS strongholds, Morales' party also won three governorships and a majority in the House of Representatives. The traditional parties of Bolivia's corrupt political operators were virtually wiped off the electoral map, but new right-wing formations made advances in a number of departmental (provincial) and local races. Morales is scheduled to enter the Palacio Quemado presidential palace on January 22.

The election of an Aymara Indian and former coca farmer, in the turbulent heart of South America, was major news in the world press. The *New York Times* (24 December) called the election the latest "lurch to the demagogic left" in Latin America. Noting Morales' friendship with Venezuelan president Hugo Chávez and Cuba's Fidel Castro, it complained that "denunciations of Yanqui imperialism" are now coming not only from the streets but from presidential palaces. Shortly before the elec-



Indymedia Bolivia

Thousands of supporters of Evo Morales' MAS (Movement Towards Socialism) arriving in La Paz in May 2005, carrying multicolor *wiphala* flags of the indigenous movement, after march from Caracollo. Protesters demanded nationalization of Bolivia's oil and gas fields. Morales called only for reasserting state property rights, while leaving control in the hands of the imperialist energy companies.

tion, the *Times* asked if Morales represents the "second coming" of Che Guevara. The question reflects the delirium besetting the Yankee imperialists, and their puppets in the Bolivian military (who with the CIA murdered Guevara).

Although Guevara's image is often displayed at MAS rallies, and vice president-elect Alvaro García Linera, the preeminent intellectual of Bolivia's *indigenista* left, was the theoretician of the former Tupac Katari Guerrilla Army (EGTK), today Morales and García Linera advocate an "Andean and Amazonian capitalism." In two worker-peasant uprisings (October 2003 and May-June 2005), Morales played the key role in blocking a workers revolution, instead helping install new bourgeois rulers to divert the struggle into a parliamentary dead-end. It should also be noted that despite the demonization of Morales by Washington, important sectors of the Bolivian workers movement did not sup-

port the MAS in the elections.

Morales' election certainly reflects the urgent hope of fundamental social change among the oppressed majority in Bolivia, the poorest country in South America, where turbulent mass struggles have toppled two U.S.-backed presidents in the last two years. The election of the first indigenous president in the country's history has generated great expectations among the masses excluded from power by the *k'ara* ("white") elite. Morales, who came to prominence as the leader of coca-growing peasants targeted by the U.S. "drug war," calls himself "Washington's nightmare." Yet even before the vote, the U.S. embassy went out of its way to say that "we will work with and collaborate with whoever you elect." If Quiroga was Washington's Option A, working through Morales to subvert mass struggles is its Option B ("U.S. Already Toying With the Evo President Option," *Econoticias Bolivia*, 14 December).

The MAS was key to the "constitutional solution" worked out to safeguard the fundamental interests of Bolivia's rulers and their Yanqui godfathers in the first and second *Guerras del Gas* (Gas Wars). When the mass murdering president Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada was driven out in October 2003, Morales engineered the installation of "Goni's" VP, Carlos Mesa, as president. And when Mesa was driven out by protests last June, Morales pushed for the head of the Supreme Court, Eduardo Rodríguez, to be made interim president, and early elections were called. Anxious to reassure domestic and foreign capital, the MAS removed "radical" planks from its program while assiduously courting "patriotic" entrepreneurs.

In his first declarations after winning the presidency, Morales promised that his government will respect private property and "will not confiscate or expropriate properties held by the multinationals" – the imperialist oil and gas conglomerates whose sweetheart deals with his predecessors set off the recent upheavals. Seeking to balance between social forces that came close to civil war over the past years, he vowed that his government will represent and incorporate Bolivia's "social movements." In fact, he seeks to subordinate those movements to the capitalists.

On December 23 Morales made a pact with leaders of El Alto, the working-class Aymara city near La Paz that was the epicenter of protests that toppled presidents Mesa and Sánchez de Lozada. Four days later, the president-elect traveled to the eastern city of Santa Cruz for a meeting with leaders of Bolivia's hard-right business elite. Chamber of Industry and Commerce head Gabriel Dabdoub declared: "Evo Morales was clear in assuring us that he will attract investments and that the nationalization he proposes does not mean expropriation but managing resources on the basis of the income" from taxes and royalties on oil and gas. At the meeting, Morales agreed to the demand of the Comité Pro Santa Cruz to privatize the fabulously rich iron and manganese deposits of Mutún.

Most strikingly, Morales *praised* the racist Santa Cruz



Noah Friedman-Rudovsky/New York Times

Bolivian president-elect Evo Morales (right) and vice president-elect Alvaro García Linera wearing wreaths of coca leaves while campaigning in the Chapare region of Bolivia last November.

elite for demanding "autonomy" – from the Indian *altiplano* – and promised to help them achieve it. "I don't want to expropriate or confiscate any property," Morales reiterated at the meeting. "I want to learn from the entrepreneurs" (*Página 12* [Buenos Aires], 28 December). The department of Santa Cruz is run as the private fiefdom of the agribusiness "entrepreneurs," who use fascistic goon squads to prevent unionization of their largely indigenous workforce. In June, Santa Cruz politician Hormando Vaca Diez, head of the Senate, brought the country to the brink of civil war with his drive to take over the presidency, calling Indian protesters "demons" and vowing to "impose order" through massive repression.

For his part, MAS theoretician García Linera stresses that the MAS will build a "center-left" government. Underlining his slogan of "Andean capitalism," he says it will be "linked to global markets" and "entrepreneurial sectors," which would last 40, 60 or even 100 years. The slogan is utopian/reactionary in its appeal to an imaginary "national" form of class exploitation. However, its actual content is to give a more "Andean" face to semi-colonial Bolivia's subordination to real, international capitalism (imperialism). Now the MAS is taking pains to show that the entrepreneurs it seeks to ally with include the business elite of Santa Cruz, whose drive to grab an even larger slice of oil and gas profits has enraged Bolivia's impoverished masses.

The bourgeois Morales regime does not merit the slightest confidence from the workers and peasants. Indigenous, peasant and labor leaders will be brought in, as the traditional politicians have proven incapable of taming the masses. They will be joined by figures from openly capitalist parties. The MAS itself is a petty-bourgeois nationalist party with a reformist vocabulary, whose parliamentary deputies include a number of bourgeois politicians who have migrated from

other parties. Already in the ante-chambers of the Palacio Quemado, it is in the process of becoming a bourgeois party enforcing capitalist class rule.

The principle of proletarian class independence is a matter of life and death in Bolivia, where nationalist leaders have set the masses up for slaughter time and again. Left organizations that called to vote for Morales have once again betrayed the interests of Bolivia's workers, heroes of some of the harshest class battles in the hemisphere's history.

Today, even the U.S. liberal press quotes some Bolivian activists' warnings that if Morales refuses to deliver, the result could be "civil war." The answer is not to demand "*que Evo cumpla*" (that Morales fulfill) his bourgeois program, but to build a revolutionary party that can lead the working people to victory in the class war. This requires a policy of intransigent proletarian opposition to his regime. It means forging a genuine Trotskyist party based on the program of permanent revolution from the heart of South America to the "belly of the beast," where New York's transit workers just provided a glimpse of the enormous power of the multiracial proletariat.

MAS' Populist Nationalism Will Resolve Nothing

A glance at Bolivia's history shows a long tradition of bourgeois "socialism": in the wake of the devastating Chaco War (1932-35), nationalist colonels David Toro and Germán Busch called their regimes socialist in order to co-opt labor and peasant sectors. Successive populist regimes, notably those of the MNR (Revolutionary Nationalist Movement) that came to power in the 1952 revolution, carried out nationalizations (tin, oil) more daring than anything proposed by Morales, who in a historical context is far from radical and only appears so from the vantage point of the U.S. "war on drugs." The popular-front UDP (People's Democratic Union) government of 1982-85 imposed International Monetary Fund austerity and paved the way for rightist regimes that closed the nationalized mines and privatized everything in sight. Each populist and popular-frontist cycle of class collaboration opens the way for a new cycle of rightist repression.

Today, Morales is attempting to balance above the abyss. Members of his transition team say he will change "neoliberal, free trade" policies, in particular the unlimited importation of goods from abroad and the anti-union "free hiring" laws that have been in force for the past twenty years. They also



Map: Economist

vow that the new government will reject U.S. military interference under the guise of the "war on drugs." While restating his opposition to Washington's policy of coca eradication, Morales stresses his willingness to work with the White House on what he calls a genuine effort against narcotics trafficking. (Underlining Bolivia's semi-colonial relation to the U.S., the Pentagon recently took 30 surface-to-air missiles away from the Bolivian army.) Morales has sought to cultivate approval from European governments astute enough to seek advantage from Washington's clumsiness in Latin America.

The issues that make Bolivian society so explosive are *class* issues. The country has the second largest natural gas reserves in Latin America. Who will control, own and benefit from this wealth? Workers, peasants and slum-dwellers are acutely aware that since the

Spanish conquest, the country has depended on one primary commodity after another: the Indian majority sank ever deeper into misery while the Spaniards siphoned off fabulous riches in silver, followed by the "tin barons" who were junior partners to British and American capital. The racist exclusion of indigenous peoples has gone hand in hand with their brutal exploitation in the mines and on the land.

Under pressure from mass protests, the MAS sometimes called vaguely for nationalization of gas, while clarifying that what it really meant was increasing tax and royalty levels. (Morales was not alone in giving his own spin to the word "nationalization" – in the face of mass anger against the energy conglomerates, almost all of the presidential candidates used it in their campaigns.) Morales worked closely with former president Mesa to design the phony referendum of June 2004 that provided a "democratic" rubber stamp to imperialist control of natural gas. Today, Morales promises to avoid even a bourgeois nationalist takeover of natural resources. Yet as the history of Bolivia (as well as Mexico, Argentina, Brazil and other countries) shows, even nationalization would at most limit the extent of imperialist looting of Bolivia's wealth, subject to the dictates of the international market and the laws of capitalist exploitation. Trotskyists insist that the only way Bolivia's poor will benefit from the gas reserves is if they are expropriated by the working people. This requires a social *revolution* putting power into the hands of a worker-peasant-indigenous government.

Bolivia's Indian peoples constitute 62 percent of the population. Over half (52 percent) of indigenous Bolivians

live in “extreme poverty” according to the World Bank; in rural areas, this figure rose to 72 percent between 1997 and 2002. The average income for employed Indians is 63 dollars a month, compared to non-Indians’ starvation wage of 140 dollars a month (*La Jornada* [Mexico City], 20 December). Figures for school attendance, health, child labor and other social indicators show the same pattern: gross inequality within an overall framework of unendurable poverty and grinding exploitation. Daily life is ever more difficult for triply subjugated indigenous women. This is what capitalism means for Bolivia’s oppressed majority! Timid reforms cannot make even a dent in it.

What about the land? The day after his election, Morales made a speech in his Cochabamba headquarters vowing: “The MAS will respect private property, except for unproductive lands. This has to be dealt with, because there are people without land, and so the peasant will have work.” Bolivia had one of Latin America’s most extensive land reforms after the 1952 revolution. Yet the capitalist framework meant that the peasantry remained impoverished, while agribusiness interests in Santa Cruz received huge government subsidies. Today, 100 families own 25 million hectares of land, while two million people work five million hectares. Sixty percent of productive lands are in Santa Cruz (*Clarín* [Buenos Aires], 20 December).

It will take an *agrarian revolution*, as part of a socialist revolution against the entire system of class exploitation, for the poor and landless to rise out of poverty by expropriating the capitalist farms and instituting modern, mechanized and scientific agriculture through encouraging collective production. Only through such a revolution will oppressed indigenous peoples be able to *take for themselves* the rights and power denied them for centuries. As for the “war on drugs,” it is a pretext for imperialist intervention in Latin America and racist repression in the ghettos and barrios inside the United States. Revolutionary Marxists oppose all laws criminalizing drugs and defend the right of Bolivian peasants to unlimited cultivation and sale of coca. Throw out all U.S. troops, spy agencies and “advisors”!

The right-wing elite of Santa Cruz, Tarija and other gas-rich regions in the east and south despises Morales’ plebeian base as “*indios revoltosos*” (uppity Indians). The MAS leader’s fawning before these racists can only embolden them. Meanwhile, the military high command expressed its disapproval of Morales’ request that outgoing president Eduardo Rodríguez freeze military transfers and promotions until after January 22, when Morales takes over the presidency. In a brazen act of insubordination, Army commander General Marcelo Antezana publicly objected to the president-elect’s request. The Bolivian army and police are notorious for their endless massacres, most recently the murder of more than 80 protesters in October 2003. Yet Morales – like Chile’s Salvador Allende in the 1970s and the Spanish Republic in the ’30s – pledges to respect the “institutionality” of the military, the brutal enforcers of capitalist power and privilege. MAS defense spokesman Juan Ramón Quintana stated that “Mo-

rales has committed himself to respect the institutionality of the armed forces, and guarantees the fulfillment of its regulations” (*Clarín* [Buenos Aires], 24 December).

Defense of the most basic interests, and lives, of Bolivia’s exploited and oppressed requires decisively defeating and expropriating the Santa Cruz oligarchs as well as the La Paz/Cochabamba industrialists and dismantling the officer corps and military structure that are covered with generations of workers’ blood. Like all the other burning issues of Bolivia’s class struggle, this cannot be accomplished through the MAS formula of “refounding” bourgeois democracy with a Constituent Assembly – in a country which has had almost as many constitutions as military coups. The workers and peasants need their own self-defense committees, leading to worker and peasant militias and councils (soviets), which can win over rank-and-file soldiers against the officer caste that serves the ruling class.

A socialist revolution in Bolivia, in the heart of Latin America, would have immediate consequences in this increasingly polarized continent. The powerhouse of the region’s proletariat is the working class of Brazil, where the popular front of Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva faces widespread worker discontent. Like Argentina’s President Néstor Kirchner, Lula recently announced that he will make early debt payment of billions of dollars to the IMF, while the army and cops attack landless peasants and slum dwellers. In Peru, President Toledo’s capitalism with a “*cholo*” (Indian) face has used naked repression against massive labor protests. In Ecuador, the left and indigenous organizations helped put into power the rightist military officer Lucio Gutiérrez, who brought Indian leaders into his cabinet only to dump them after they served his purpose of demobilizing worker-peasant-Indian unrest, and was then himself ousted by mass protests in April 2005.

To the north, Mexico’s popular-frontist mouthpiece *La Jornada* (19 December) expressed the hope that Morales’ victory would presage the voice of the “people” being “heard forcefully in the 2006 [Mexican] presidential elections.” What they mean is a victory for the candidate of the Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD), which governs Mexico City in the interests of Mexican and foreign capital, sending *granaderos* (riot police) to break the heads of striking teachers and students. The new walls Washington plans to build along the border with Mexico cannot seal the U.S. off from social upheavals in Latin America. Immigrant workers – a “human bridge” between the continents – are a dynamic sector of the multiethnic U.S. proletariat.

Washington’s disquiet over Morales’ close relations with Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez is mirrored by most of the left’s hopes in a Caracas-La Paz alliance. A bonanza of oil profits gives the Chávez regime a margin of maneuver qualitatively greater than what Morales will have in impoverished Bolivia. Meanwhile, efforts by Venezuela and other South American countries to form a regional energy cartel have disquieted MAS spokesmen eager to protect Bolivia’s particular interests as a gas provider. Most fundamentally, the nationalist government in Caracas rests on the armed



Bolivian mine workers federation marches in La Paz, June 2005. Miners are key sector of Bolivian proletariat. What's urgently required is to forge revolutionary leadership.

forces of the bourgeois state – its “Bolivarian” rhetoric cannot break imperialist domination of Latin America. Trotskyists defend Venezuela militarily against U.S. coup attempts and threats of aggression (as we would do in the event of U.S. moves against a Morales government in Bolivia), without giving any political support to this nationalist regime.

A month before the elections, an Andean Information Network analysis (18 November) noted that while the MAS “faces significant popular pressure to enact sweeping reforms,” it has “taken pains to appease international interests and allay fears of a radical socialist regime.” Thus “many within Bolivia’s social movements view Morales’ and MAS’s positions as not going far enough.” The electoral victory of Evo Morales highlights class contradictions that his bourgeois regime will be unable to conciliate or suppress.

Faced with the hard reality of capitalism under a MAS government, broad sectors of the Bolivian masses may undergo further rapid radicalization. Revolution is rarely far from people’s minds on the impoverished *altiplano*. But revolutionary victory requires a break from the tradition of national narrowness of even the “far left” in Bolivia, and a fight for a Federation of Andean Workers Republics as part of the Socialist United States of Latin America, extending revolution to the North American and world proletariat.

The Left and Evo Morales

Bolivia, with its history of violent class conflict and class-conscious labor movement, is a highly politicized country, where even market vendors’ associations display Che Guevara’s image on their banners. In the 1990s, the movement of coca producers led by Evo Morales arose in the Chapare region of

Cochabamba, and soon drew the attention of sectors of the Bolivian left. The followers of Argentine “Trotskyist” Nahuel Moreno boasted for several years that they were key advisors to Morales’ movement. Until a parliamentary spat divided them recently, Evo’s No. 2 was former long-time miners leader Filemón Escobar, who had, in previous decades, been the highest-placed labor leader of Guillermo Lora’s Partido Obrero Revolucionario (POR—Revolutionary Workers Party), the main Bolivian organization describing itself as Trotskyist.

Since running a feverish national election campaign in 1985, the POR has refused to vote in elections, claiming the revolution is just around the corner. It maintained this position in the December 2005 vote, writing: “The repudiation of elections which can be felt today reveals that the proletarian revolution is advancing rapidly” (*Masas*

No. 1966, 30 September 2005). At the same time, this party showed its centrist nature (revolutionary in words, opportunist in deeds) yet again in the May-June 2005 upsurge. The POR helped the bureaucracy of the COB (Bolivian Labor Federation) set up a short-lived “National and Indigenous People’s Assembly,” where labor, peasant and neighborhood association leaders made ringing speeches denouncing Morales’ sell-out of the mass protests, only to fall in line with the MAS as it helped transfer power to interim president Rodríguez (see “Myth and Reality: El Alto and the ‘People’s Assembly,’” *The Internationalist* No. 21, Summer 2005).

After the May-June 2005 upsurge, the COB leaders talked vaguely of establishing some kind of “Political Instrument of the Working People” while wheeling and dealing with various small nationalist groupings. More recently, a “First National Workers’ and People’s Summit,” held in El Alto in early December called by the COB, the Regional Labor Federation (COR) and the Bolivian Mine Workers Federation (FSTMB), declared that the elections “called in order to dismantle the tenacious struggle of the nation’s exploited masses will not resolve the problems that are strangling Bolivians nor will they defend the sovereignty and dignity of the nation” (*Econoticias Bolivia*, 12 December 2005). Its “answer” to the electoralism of the MAS was to call to resuscitate the stillborn “People’s Assembly” ... at a meeting in April. The nationalist bureaucrats seek to cover their impotence with bombastic names for non-existent organizations.

The abortive campaign for a “Political Instrument of the Working People” brought a new effort to pressure the COB leaders to the left by a small group called the LOR-CI (Revo-

lutionary Workers League – Fourth International), part of the tendency led by the Argentine PTS, a split from the Morenoite current. Serving as a left cover for the bureaucracy is standard procedure for this tendency. The LOR-CI was a junior partner of the POR in the May-June bloc for the People's Assembly. In the latest elections, the LOR-CI rightly refused to vote for Morales, but it continues to call on the COB, neighborhood associations and other groups to establish a "real" People's Assembly at the same time as it tails the MAS slogan of a Constituent Assembly.

Recent days have seen furious polemics by the Argentine Partido Obrero (PO) of Jorge Altamira, in defense of its gung-ho support to Morales. "We Call to Vote for Evo Morales and the MAS," headlined *El Obrero internacional* (December 2005), organ of Altamira's campaign to "refound the Fourth International." The day after the elections, Altamira issued a declaration titled "The Partido Obrero Hails the Victory of Evo Morales and the MAS." This was followed up by an article proclaiming the Bolivian election "A People's Tsunami" (*Prensa Obrera*, 22 December 2005). While criticizing Morales' program, PO claimed among other things that congressmen elected on the MAS slate "include genuine revolutionary militants whose candidacies were decided by vote in People's Assemblies." Challenged by the PTS for its open support to class collaboration, PO responded with the Stalinist-style smear that anyone who did not vote for Morales was supporting the right wing and "working for an 'overall defeat' of the masses" (*Prensa Obrera*, 22 December).

Another of the many left tendencies calling to vote for "Evo" is the international grouping around Ted Grant and Alan Woods, British Labourites who lately have cast themselves as "Marxist" advisors to Venezuela's Hugo Chávez. They write:

"The experience of a Morales government is a necessary step in the development of the consciousness of the masses in Bolivia. And the elementary duty of revolutionaries in Bolivia is to accompany them in this experience. They have no alternative but to call for a critical vote for the MAS...."

–"Bolivian elections: What position should the Marxists take?" (16 December)

Cloaked in objectivism, this is the same argument opportunists made to support Kerensky in 1917 Russia, the Spanish and French Popular Fronts in 1936, Allende in 1970, and innumerable nationalist regimes throughout Latin America: class collaboration, and all the defeats it brings the workers, are "a necessary step" for the masses, which "revolutionaries" must accompany.

This has *nothing* in common with the outlook and program of Leon Trotsky, whose Fourth International called to tell the truth to the masses and swim against the stream of class collaboration, fighting for proletarian opposition to all bourgeois governments, the only way to defend the masses against the class enemy and prepare real revolutionary victories.

While various pseudo-Trotskyists compete with each other in tailing after the MAS or the COB bureaucrats with their respective class-collaborationist calls for "constituent" or "people's" assemblies, the League for the Fourth International has insisted that what's posed in Bolivia today is to

begin to build an *authentic Trotskyist party* to lead the struggle for genuine *workers councils* as the organizing center for proletarian revolution (see the series of articles and on-the-spot reports from Bolivia in *The Internationalist* No. 22).

For its part, the now centrist Spartacist tendency has reached a new low as its Mexican comrades now denounce us for calling for soviets in the May-June Bolivian events, claiming this is impossible since according to them there is "no working class in Bolivia today" (never mind the thousands of factories in the city of El Alto alone). In other words, these fake-Trotskyists believe socialist revolution is impossible in Bolivia. This is strikingly similar to arguments made by García Linera, including at a talk at the University of Mexico City, where the MAS theorist sought to defend this line against comrades of the Grupo Internacionalista (Mexican section of the LFI) speaking from the floor.

The program of genuine Trotskyism is more relevant than ever to Bolivia today. Washington spokesmen have expressed an acute fear of revolution in the Andean country: despite their distaste for Morales, they see that he may prove unable to contain the masses for long. Last summer, a senior advisor to U.S. war secretary Rumsfeld warned in a public talk: "You have a revolution going on in Bolivia, a revolution that potentially could have consequences as far-reaching as the Cuban revolution of 1959"; the events "could have repercussions in Latin America and elsewhere that you could be dealing with for the rest of your lives" (quoted in the article by David Rieff, "Che's Second Coming?" *New York Times Magazine*, 20 November 2005). With their military bogged down in the dirty colonial occupation of Iraq, the U.S. rulers are increasingly nervous about securing their Latin American "backyard."

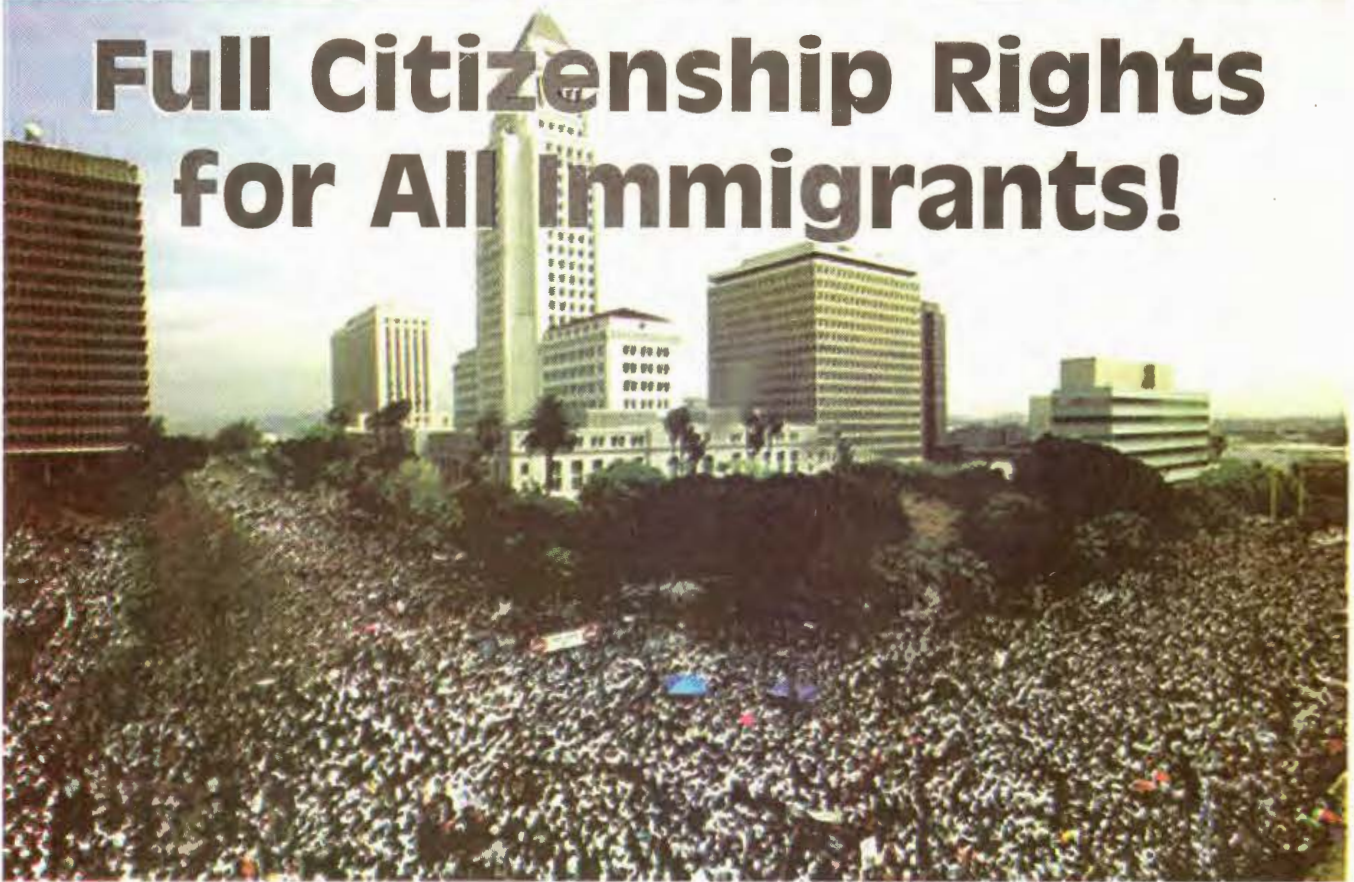
On the day of the Bolivian elections, *New York Times* correspondent Juan Forero quoted a middle-aged indigenous community leader who said, "What we really need is to transform this country. We have to do away with the capitalist system." Quite correct! Bolivia is indeed fertile soil for the program of permanent revolution. The task of the hour is to forge the nucleus of a real Trotskyist party in intransigent struggle against the new bourgeois regime, the traditional parties of right and "center," the reformist/nationalist bureaucrats and the opportunists who tail after them. Realizing the hopes of the indigenous and working masses means fulfilling the imperialists' worst fears: a socialist revolution that ignites revolutionary struggle throughout the hemisphere and beyond. ■

Further Reading on Bolivia

- "Bolivia Explodes in Sharp Class Battle" *The Internationalist* No. 21, Summer 2005
- Six on-the-spot reports from Bolivia in June 2005 in *The Internationalist* No. 21
- "Bolivia Aflame: 'Gas War' on the Altiplano" *The Internationalist* No. 17, October-November 2003
- "Bolivia: Workers Uprising Knifed, Workers Still on Battle Footing," *The Internationalist* No. 17

Workers' Struggle Has No Borders

**Full Citizenship Rights
for All Immigrants!**



Above: Up to 1 million marched for immigrants' rights in Los Angeles March 25. Right: Internationalist Group banner calling for full citizenship rights for all immigrants and to build a revolutionary workers party, at demonstration against Iraq war, New York City, March 18.

We reprint below an Internationalist Group leaflet distributed along with an 8-page tabloid special issue of The Internationalist at an April 10 immigrants' rights march in New York.

The United States is bogged down in a losing war and colonial occupation of Iraq. Meanwhile, immigrants in the U.S. are facing mounting racist attack. These two facts are intimately connected. From the beginning of the 20th century and the U.S. conquest of the Philippines, Cuba and Puerto Rico, through World Wars I and

continued on page 55



**Defeat U.S. Imperialist War on Iraq!
Build a Revolutionary Workers Party!**