

WTO Entry Extends Imperialist Penetration



Workers protesting mass layoffs and lost pensions in city of Liaoyang carry portrait of Mao Zedong. Banner at March 21 rally calls for freeing arrested workers leaders.

AFP photos

Workers Protests Shake China

Defend the Gains of the 1949 Revolution!

In March of this year, workers in China's industrial heartland unleashed the country's largest protests since 1989. Thirteen years ago, the working class, angered by the inflation and rampant corruption engendered by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) regime's "market reforms," entered en masse into the student-initiated protests centered on Tiananmen Square, posing the possibility of a political revolution to sweep away the Stalinist bureaucracy. In recent years, masses of workers have been thrust into battle as "market reforms" take aim at state-owned industries, the core of the collectivized foundations of the Chinese deformed workers state. Extending into the capitalist "Special Economic Zones" (SEZs) and the peasant hinterland, these struggles are bound to intensify as China's entry into the World Trade Organization (WTO) opens the door to wider imperialist penetration, threatening the livelihoods of millions of workers and peasants.

The current wave of mass protests is a spontaneous resistance by the Chinese working class to the hardships caused by the accelerating drive toward capitalist restoration in the name of "market reforms." What is posed is the defense of the social gains of the 1949 Chinese Revolution, which overthrew the Chinese bourgeoisie, liberated the country from imperialist bondage and established a workers state based on a planned, collectivized economy.

Protests exploded on March 1 in the Daqing oil fields in northeastern Heilongjiang province. For more than two weeks, workers staged daily demonstrations to fight cuts in pensions, medical care and heating oil subsidies. When the oil fields were developed in the early 1960s, the Daqing workers were held up as heroes in China's drive to industrialize. Workers in such state industries were provided with the "iron rice bowl" of guaranteed hous-

ing, education, medical and retirement benefits. But with the fields nearly dry, more than 80,000 workers have been laid off over the last three years. When officials demanded that the workers hand back the bulk of their severance packages as an insurance premium for health and pension benefits, the lid blew, and protests soon spread to oil fields as far away as Xinjiang province on China's Central Asian border.

"The managers are getting huge packages and we are getting nothing," said one worker. Authorities tried to smear the workers by claiming that protests had been infiltrated by the reactionary Falun Gong movement. Finally, riot police and units of the People's Armed Police—a force formed in the mid 1980s to put down growing social unrest—were mustered from nearby cities to quell the protests.

An official report released by Beijing on April 29 titled "Labor and Social Security in China" states that more than 25 million workers were laid off from state enterprises between 1998 and 2001 (the World Bank puts the figure at 36 million). The layoffs resulted from the regime's moves to "reform," close or privatize plants deemed "inefficient" by the standards of the world capitalist market. Reporting on the Daqing protests, the *Far Eastern Economic Review* (4 April) noted that "sackings have provoked tens of thousands of similar, but smaller, disputes since 1998. Terrified that these could mushroom into a nationwide movement, the government has concentrated on suppressing dissent and preventing protesting groups in different cities and provinces from linking up with each other."

What is behind the regime's fears was

on display in the city of Liaoyang, where demonstrations coincided with those in Daqing a few hundred miles to the north. Workers from the closed Ferro Alloy metalworking plant staged daily marches demanding pensions and back wages owed them. They also demanded the arrest of the company's managers, who have been selling off the plant's equipment and pocketing the proceeds. As in most of the recent protests, those who marched in Liaoyang were mainly laid-off workers and retirees. But the protests swelled to include 30,000 workers from 20 different plants in the area. A worker from Liaoyang Chemical Factory remarked, "This action is not organized; a lot of workers from other factories have only joined in because they have the same problems as the ferro-alloy factory."

Fearing they could no longer contain the protests, police arrested four workers' leaders and on March 20 removed hundreds of protesters from the city government compound, where they had gathered

to deliver a petition. Officials also tried to defuse the situation by reportedly giving workers half of their back wages and announcing that they will soon pay some unemployment benefits and pensions. But workers say that this is only a fraction of what they are owed.

Protests reached into the capital on March 27, when some 200 retired auto workers staged a dramatic demonstration outside the Beijing Automobile and Motorcycle Works, shutting down traffic on a major thoroughfare for hours. The retirees demanded overdue pension payments and protested against the theft of state assets by managers. Similar actions have spread the length and width of China. In April, coal miners in Liaoning province repeatedly blockaded railway lines to protest layoffs. In southwest China, 1,000 retired steel workers, mostly women, blockaded two highways in front of the state-owned Guiyang Steel Factory to protest meager pensions. And in early May, protests resumed in Liaoyang demanding the release of the four detained labor leaders, while posters have appeared in workers' dormitories there calling for investigating corrupt factory officials.

Defend China Against Capitalist Counterrevolution!

The 1949 Revolution was, despite profound bureaucratic deformations, a social revolution of world-historic significance.

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**New York Times Smears
Courageous
Harlem Communist**

**In Memory of
Bill Epton**

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Mexican Trotskyists Denounce Fox Government Provocations

Defend the Cuban Revolution!

U.S. Out of Guantánamo!

We print below a translation of an article which appeared in *Espartaco* No. 18 (Spring-Summer 2002), newspaper of the Grupo Espartaquista de México, section of the International Communist League. In Mexico, the reactionary Party of National Action (PAN) government of Vicente Fox has stepped up its provocations against Cuba, the hemisphere's only workers state.

Prior to the United Nations meeting in Monterrey this March, Fox secretly called Fidel Castro to pressure him to cut short his appearance so as not to cross paths with U.S. president Bush. Castro complied, but in April, after Mexico for the first time voted for a UN "human rights" resolution condemning Cuba, Castro denounced Fox's servile toadying to the U.S. in Monterrey. When Fox claimed he had never asked Castro to leave, Castro on April 22 aired the tape of Fox's call for 100 invited journalists, exposing the Mexican government's lies.

The U.S. imperialists have been unremittently hostile to the Cuban deformed workers state since its inception, maintaining a punitive economic embargo to this day and funding counterrevolu-

tionary terror by Miami-based *gusanos* (worms). Now the Bush administration has provocatively used the U.S. military base at Guantánamo Bay to imprison captives from the U.S. war on Afghanistan. Last week, the Bush administration accused Cuba of planning biological warfare, and of providing "biotechnology to other rogue states," an ominous threat against Cuba, which is also one of seven countries listed by the Pentagon as potential nuclear first-strike targets. The U.S. government's "proof"? Cuba's world-renowned public health and medical research programs! Obviously, to the nuclear-armed U.S. predators, the fact that the Cuban Revolution greatly reduced the country's infant mortality rates, eliminated many diseases and raised life expectancy poses a "threat to world security." Defend Cuba! U.S. Out of Guantánamo Bay!

ESPARTACO

The recent diplomatic scandal in which Vicente Fox's government, in the service of the U.S. government, pressured Fidel Castro to leave the Monterrey summit has been one of the high points of the escalation in provocations that the Mexican bourgeois government has carried out

against the Cuban workers state. This escalation began when Fox himself, during an official visit to Cuba, met with Cuban counterrevolutionary organizations. Days later, foreign affairs secretary Jorge Castañeda declared in Miami that the Mexican embassy would open its doors to anyone—a statement that was broadcast by *gusano* Radio Martí—provoking a mob of potential *gusanos* to break into the Mexican embassy in Cuba. The provocative attitude of the current right-wing PAN government toward Cuba reflects the total dependency of the Mexican bourgeoisie on its imperialist masters and its fundamental hostility to the Cuban Revolution, as an obstacle to its own investments and as an example for the Mexican masses. We say: ***Down with the Fox government's provocations! Defend the Cuban Revolution!***

The current increase in belligerence by the Mexican government against Cuba takes place in the context of a world marked by the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union a decade ago. The USSR was a real counterweight to imperialism that gave the PRI regimes a certain maneuvering and negotiating space, which allowed even these U.S. lapdogs to pose occasionally as "friends of Cuba." Now the hypocritical "Third World" verbiage is gone and the open hostility is revealed.

Many of the big media and even bourgeois parties, such as the nationalist Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD) and the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI—the former ruling party) itself, have called on Fox's government to cease its servile attitude toward the American government and demand the resignation of Castañeda. Of course, these *capitalist* parties do not defend the Cuban Revolution but simply long to go back to the times of greater independence of Mexican capitalism in the "golden epoch" of the PRI. The PRD head of Mexico City's government, López Obrador, raised the example of the good relations Mexico had with Cuba under the government of bloodthirsty Díaz Ordaz, notorious for the murder of hundreds of students in Tlatelolco in 1968 (*La Jornada*, 28 March). Those who exploit and

oppress Mexican workers, peasants, students and indigenous peoples know that the downtrodden throughout Latin America look to Cuba favorably, and they want simply to prevent any revolutions elsewhere.

Our defense of the Cuban workers state stems from our proletarian internationalism. As a result of the revolution, the bourgeoisie as a class was expropriated and private property in the means of production was eliminated. Capitalist economic relations were replaced by a collectivized, planned economy. The revolution greatly benefited the most oppressed sectors of the population: the poor peasants, the workers, blacks and women. Cuba was transformed from an immensely poor and backward country, besieged by hunger, exploitation and ignorance, to a country in which illiteracy has been virtually eradicated, where everyone has access to medical care, and where everyone has guaranteed food and housing. This constitutes the basis for our ***unconditional military defense*** of the Cuban deformed workers state, as well as the other deformed workers states that still exist: China, North Korea and Vietnam. This defense is even more urgent now as the brutal economic isolation of the island since the collapse of the USSR and the criminal blockade maintained by the U.S. put the very existence of the workers state in great danger, with the American imperialists no longer held back by the Soviet military shield and with scarcity in Cuba growing.

Cuba has been from the start a bureaucratically deformed workers state. As the product of a revolution led by petty-bourgeois guerrilla forces and not the revolutionary proletariat, *political* power is not in the hands of the working class, but rather in the hands of a parasitic bureaucratic caste that pursues the maintenance of its own privileges. In diverting revolutions elsewhere, the Castroite bureaucracy criminally isolates the Cuban Revolution as it looks toward conciliation of the capitalist regimes outside Cuba. Fidel Castro decades ago told the Nicaraguan Sandinistas not to take the Cuban road, i.e., not to overthrow the bourgeoisie. In the Museum of the Revolution in Havana, one can look in vain for monuments dedicated to proletarian revolutionists like Marx or Lenin, but instead there is one to bourgeois Mexican president Lázaro Cárdenas. Fidel Castro was in 1998 the most charming host of the reactionary pope Wojtyla, and has been one of the most amiable and frequent guests at

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TROTSKY

The Fraud of Bourgeois "Democracy"

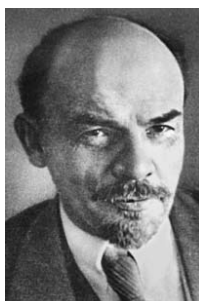
In theses drafted for the First Congress of the Communist International in 1919, Bolshevik leader V.I. Lenin emphasized the need to combat illusions in bourgeois "democracy," which is in reality a mask for the class dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. To end the oppression and exploitation that is endemic to the capitalist profit system, the working class must sweep away the bourgeois order through socialist revolution and

establish its own class rule, the dictatorship of the proletariat, based on workers councils (soviets).

The substance of Soviet government is that the permanent and only foundation of state power, the entire machinery of state, is the mass-scale organisation of the classes oppressed by capitalism, i.e., the workers and the semi-proletarians (peasants who do not exploit the labour of others and regularly resort to the sale of at least a part of their own labour-power). It is the people, who even in the most democratic bourgeois republics, while possessing equal rights by law, have in fact been debarred by thousands of devices and subterfuges from participation in political life and enjoyment of democratic rights and liberties, that are now drawn into constant and unfailing, moreover, decisive, participation in the democratic administration of the state.

The equality of citizens, irrespective of sex, religion, race, or nationality, which bourgeois democracy everywhere has always promised but never effected, and never could effect because of the domination of capital, is given immediate and full effect by the Soviet system, or dictatorship of the proletariat. The fact is that this can only be done by a government of the workers, who are not interested in the means of production being privately owned and in the fight for their division and redivision.

—V.I. Lenin, "Theses and Report on Bourgeois Democracy and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat" (4 March 1919)



LENIN

WORKERS VANGUARD

Marxist Working-Class Biweekly of the Spartacist League of the U.S.



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CIRCULATION MANAGER: Irene Gardner

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The Spartacist League is the U.S. Section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist).

Workers Vanguard (ISSN 0276-0746) published biweekly, except skipping three alternate issues in June, July and August (beginning with omitting the second issue in June) and with a 3-week interval in December, by the Spartacist Publishing Co., 299 Broadway, Suite 318, New York, NY 10007. Telephone: (212) 732-7862 (Editorial), (212) 732-7861 (Business). Address all correspondence to: Box 1377, GPO, New York, NY 10116. E-mail address: vanguard@tiac.net. Domestic subscriptions: \$10.00/22 issues. Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *Workers Vanguard*, Box 1377, GPO, New York, NY 10116.

Opinions expressed in signed articles or letters do not necessarily express the editorial viewpoint.

The closing date for news in this issue is 14 May.

No. 781

17 May 2002

Letter

The Fight for Geronimo's Freedom

13 March 2002
Los Angeles

Dear *Workers Vanguard*,

With other members and supporters of the Spartacist League's L.A. branch, I participated in the Oakland February 9 mobilization in defense of immigrants, blacks and labor. I appreciated the excellent coverage of the rally in WV. However, in explaining that Geronimo ji Jaga (Pratt), the former Black Panther who spent 27 years in prison on a government frame-up, endorsed our protest, we incorrectly wrote that "mass protest brought about his release" ("Defend Immigrants! Defend the Unions!" WV No. 775, 22 February).

The Partisan Defense Committee campaigned long and hard for more than a decade for Geronimo's freedom. As we wrote in WV following his release in 1997: "Geronimo's longtime support from significant layers of the California labor movement, black organizations, and civil libertarians has made it difficult for the ruling class to bury him in

prison and hide the facts of his frame-up" ("Geronimo Out After 27 Years in Prison Hell," WV No. 670, 13 June 1997). However, as we noted, although hundreds of union officials, representing hundreds of thousands of workers, went on record in support of Geronimo, masses of workers were never mobilized in action.

This is the fault of the trade-union tops who rarely mobilize their ranks to protect their own economic interests, much less struggle in defense of blacks, immigrants and women. Rather, the main mobilizations by the union bureaucrats are to get out the vote for the Democrats, demonstrating their fundamental role as the labor lieutenants of the capitalist class. As we wrote in "Mobilize Labor/ Black Power to Free Geronimo!" (WV No. 645, 10 May 1996): "It's time to build a working-class party which mobilizes its forces independent of the capitalist state and takes up the battles of the poor and oppressed in this country."

Comradely greetings,
Valerie W.

WORKERS VANGUARD

New York Times Smears Courageous Harlem Communist In Memory of Bill Epton

Bill Epton, a longtime leftist active at various points of his life in the Progressive Labor Party (PL), the Negro American Labor Council and the Black Radical Congress, died of gastric cancer in New York City on January 23. He was 70 years old.

As an avowed communist in Harlem in the 1960s, Epton embodied the combination of black and red so feared by the American ruling class. When the country's largest ghetto was subjected to a police occupation and reign of terror in the summer of 1964, Epton sought to provide leadership and organization to the besieged black masses. For his courageous efforts, he became the first person convicted of "criminal anarchy" in New York State since the 1919 "red scare."

The *New York Times*, which acted as a mouthpiece and apologist for the New York Police Department (NYPD) in 1964, continued its vendetta against Epton even after his death. In a 3 February obituary, the bourgeoisie's "newspaper of record" indicted Epton for "preaching violence" in the midst of a "bloody race riot," claiming that he urged the killing of cops and judges. The only riot in Harlem in the summer of 1964 was the NYPD rampage, and it stopped when the cops withdrew. Epton was a levelheaded, lucid man interested in jazz, a skilled printer and an eloquent orator and writer. He *did* play a key role in the events of 1964, but of a rather different nature than the *Times* insinuated. We were there, and we remember Epton's courage and militancy in that tumultuous time.

Bill Epton, a founding member of the Progressive Labor Movement (later the Progressive Labor Party), was at the time vice chairman of PL and the head of its Harlem branch. PL came out of the Communist Party (CP) in 1962, based primarily on trade unionists repelled by the CP's



Harlem, July 1964: Bill Epton (left), arms linked with Conrad Lynn, at assembly point for banned march, just before arrest by cops.

nized opposition to the racist policies of the New York school board. The second boycott pulled 90 percent of children out of ghetto schools, despite lack of support by "respectable" black leaders and social democrats like Bayard Rustin, who used their influential role in the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) to try to sabotage the boycott. Self-proclaimed communists were getting a hearing in Harlem, prominent among them Bill Epton.

In early April 1964, the Brooklyn branch of CORE planned an action in which cars would run out of gas in order to disrupt traffic heading toward the World's Fair site in Queens at which Democratic president Lyndon B. Johnson was planning to speak. The city rulers turned the threatened "stall-in" into a showdown, mobilizing tens of thousands of cops and tow trucks, passing new laws with heavy penalties in one day and unleashing a withering scare campaign in the mass media. Although the CORE "stall-in" was rather haphazard, it was yet another indication that black people in New York were becoming increasingly politicized and militant.

Democratic Party mayor Robert Wagner and Police Commissioner Michael J. Murray were intent on confronting and smashing this wave of black protest. The city administration beefed up the police presence in Harlem, including generous detachments of Tactical Patrol Force heavies. In April, one of these squads provoked what was called the "Little Fruit Stand Riot," using clubs and blackjacks against a group of youngsters who had simply been playing with some fruit from a street stand. When a black hosiery salesman, Frank Stafford, tried to intervene, the cops beat him with clubs at gunpoint, gouging out one of his eyes. By the time Stafford was taken to a hospital 19 hours later, after a further beating in the station house, it was too late to save his eye. A Puerto Rican seaman, Fecundo Acion, had his nose shattered for attempting to pull the cops off Stafford. Eventually Acion, Stafford and Wallace Baker, a member of a karate club who tried to intervene, were arrested.

Soon thereafter, when two Jewish shopkeepers were brutally attacked, one fatally, the cops simply rounded up Baker and several fellow karate club

members who had been seen at the fruit stand and framed them up for the attack. This became the case of the Harlem Six, which was taken up by radical civil rights attorney Conrad Lynn and is recounted in his autobiography, *There Is a Fountain* (1979).

In an article headlined "Negro Struggle in the North" (*Spartacist* No. 2, July-August 1964), written just before the cop occupation of Harlem, we warned: "Over the past few months New York has witnessed an unprecedented campaign of press terror against the Negro people.... This press terror campaign has as its purpose the psychological preparation and justification for the smashing, through police terror, of the coming stage of the Negro rights struggle." Leading the way, the *New York Times* ran a lengthy front-page article claiming that the Black Muslims were directing a dope-selling, karate-trained gang of 400 "Blood Brothers" bent on maiming and killing whites.

When an off-duty police lieutenant, Thomas Gilligan, shot and killed James Powell, a 15-year-old black youth,

on July 16, the cops used the resulting protest as an excuse to launch a pre-emptive strike against unrest in the ghetto. A demonstration at Harlem's 28th precinct two days later was repeatedly pressed back by the cops, who hurled racist slurs at the demonstrators and eventually charged into the main body of the protest. In the ensuing days, as we reported in *Spartacist* No. 3 (January-February 1965), "wave after wave" of the tactical cops "swept through Harlem indiscriminately beating and terrorizing all who crossed their paths."

In the face of the police occupation, most Harlem organizations joined together to form a "Unity Council," whose members ranged from the Nation of Islam to the NAACP, Malcolm X's Organization of African American Unity, businessmen and local Democratic Party hacks. The Unity Council pledged itself to "restore peace in the community." But the only *action* pursued by this alliance of "leaders," as we noted in our article, "was directed *against* the one serious attempt that was made to give effective organization and direction to the people in the streets," that of the Harlem Defense Council (HDC) led by Epton. The HDC issued a leaflet urging:

"ORGANIZE YOUR BLOCKS. The events of the last two days have shown that if we are not organized we are just a mob and not in a position to properly deal with the enemy. ORGANIZE APARTMENT BY APARTMENT, HOUSE BY HOUSE! The Harlem Defense Council calls on all black people of Harlem to set up Block Committees with the purpose of defending each and every block in Harlem from the cops."

The HDC called for a march and mass demonstration on July 29 and, though a small group, did what it could to concretize this call.

The cops banned the march; the position of the Unity Council was that while the police ban was bad, the march was even worse. The Unity Council tried to get Epton to call off the march and circulated leaflets along the proposed route urging people not to participate. James Lawson, a member of the Unity Council and the head of the United African Nationalist Movement, went so far as to offer up his membership *to aid the police* in suppressing the march! When Epton refused to call off the march, **27,000 cops** were mobilized to make sure no one dared protest in Harlem that day. In a

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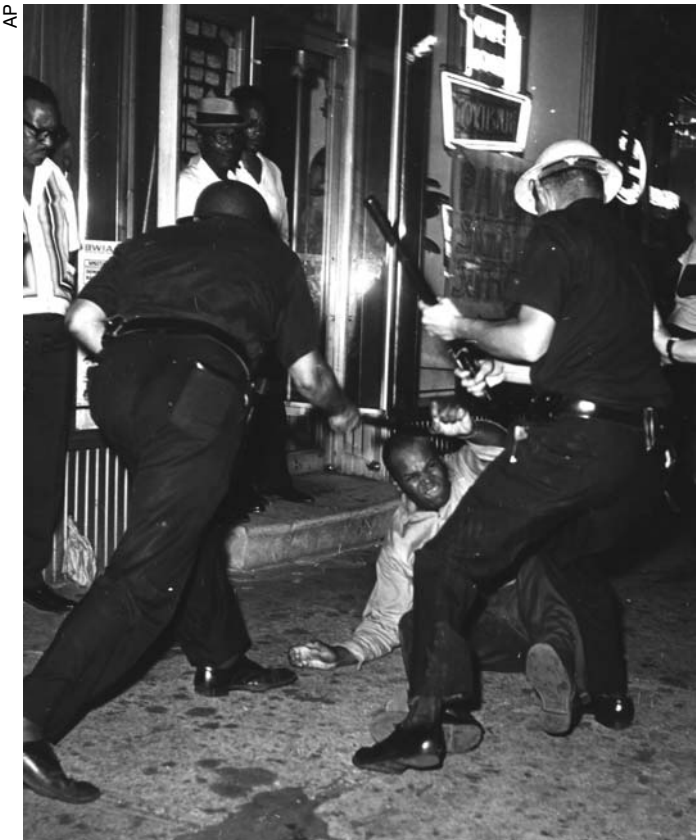


Report on arrest of Epton and Lynn in *New York Times*, which acted as mouthpiece for NYPD before and during Harlem cop riot.

abject reformism and support to the Democratic Party. Rejecting the staid pro-Moscow Stalinism upheld by the CP, PL instead looked to the seemingly more militant Chinese Stalinists under Mao (eventually breaking with Beijing as well). Though PL was always limited by its continued adherence to Stalinism, it was a *left* split from the CP and at that time a very serious group.

The Harlem Police Riot

The years 1963-64 saw the Southern civil rights movement move North into the center of American capitalism. Rent strikes exploded throughout Harlem and by 1964 had spread into Brooklyn. Two effective school boycotts against segregated and run-down conditions galva-



Harlem cop riot and occupation were aimed at smashing wave of black protest.

Down With Vigipirate Repression!

Racist War Against North Africans in France

The following article is translated from *Le Bolchévik* (Winter 2001-2002), newspaper of the *Ligue Trotskyste de France*, section of the *International Communist League*.

LE BOLCHEVIK

In recent months the French state has bombarded us with excuses for its murderous crimes during the Algerian War. A mountain of articles has been written about torture by the French army in Algeria; the Socialist Party (SP) mayor of Paris has even dedicated a plaque in memory of the Algerians drowned in the Seine by the cops on 17 October 1961. The state talks about its past crimes to better cover up its daily pursuit of ever-intensifying racist repression against North Africans in France today, above all against youth in the working-class suburbs. As Paulette Péju wrote in her book *The Harkis in Paris* (banned by the state for decades) about 17 October 1961, “The safety commission doesn’t prevent torture; it hides it, it envelops it, it adorns it with the suave flowers of Western and Christian civilization. All that it safeguards is the prestige of the cops and the army.”

Forty years later, the same day that the SP mayor of Paris put up a plaque “in memory” of the Algerians killed in 1961 (a plaque which says neither how many people were killed nor by whom), a North African family was beaten and arrested by the police of the capitalist SP-CP-Green government in the city of St. Denis, which is run by the Communist Party (CP). The family was trying to help some neighborhood youth who were unjustly suspected of a theft. A young woman from this family told how she was treated by a cop: “I told him I was pregnant. He replied, ‘I don’t care, fat bitch.’ Then he put his knee in my stomach to handcuff me.” She and the other women found themselves “stuffed like pigs” into a paddy wagon. “My mother protested because they threw us inside with kicks to get the door closed. One cop struck her right in the face” (*Libération*, 26 October 2001). The only unusual and surprising thing in this scenario is that this courageous North African family lodged a complaint against the cops’ brutality. Racism, brutality and deportation of immigrants are an integral part of capitalism.

Postwar Immigration and the Algerian War

Around the 40th anniversary of October 17, a moving account of the life of North African workers in the shantytowns was published: *Shantytown Chronicles—Nanterre in the Algerian War*, by Monique Hervo. The book lucidly recounts the hell and barbarism inflicted on North African workers in France.

The book recounts a period in the history of La Folie, a Nanterre shantytown. After World War II, tens of thousands of workers from the French colonies lived in shantytowns surrounding all the big cities of France: Paris, Lyon, Marseille. A decline in population growth as well as the reconstruction of the economy after World War II had led French industry to recruit workers especially from the colonies of North Africa as manpower. Illiterate peasants had been consciously sought out in the colonies to avoid using Spanish



Jean Pottier

Shantytown Chronicles portrays lives of desperately poor North African migrant workers in Nanterre slum (above) at time of Algerian War.

and Portuguese workers, who were often militant union members. Moreover it was easier to recruit Algerians because they didn’t need visas and could move “freely” on French soil with their second-class status as “French Muslims” without rights. Between 1947 and 1973 several hundred thousand immigrants entered France with “provisional work permits” but with no provision for housing. The workers lived in the most deplorable conditions, without running water, electricity or toilets, in makeshift shacks of tarpaper and bits of wood, with the rain and mud coming in.

These workers were systematically ghettoized, marginalized by the French state. The treatment of North Africans in France is the internal reflection of colonization: the French bourgeoisie has always considered the colonial people as subhumans needing to be “civilized” with the

gun, the Bible and the “Marseillaise.”

The massacre of tens of thousands of people at Sétif in Algeria on 8 May 1945 by the French army and the defeat of the French bourgeoisie at Dien Bien Phu in Vietnam in 1954 inspired the Algerians to rise up for their independence. Systematic terror against the Algerian peasants and workers began. Eight hundred thousand Algerians arrived in the shantytowns, fleeing torture, death and famine in Algeria. More than one and a half million people were locked up in “relocation

camps” in Algeria. Hervo describes with compassion the condition of those arriving from Algeria:

“Muhammad from the Biban Mountains and his wife, exhausted elderly people, ran through the mountains of Hodna and through the Mansoura plain to escape the bombs and the burning of villages and *mechtas*.... They ran down steep hills, chased by airplanes. They had run away from the relocation camps and, in spite of their age, reached the shantytown....”

The visions and experiences in Algeria broke some people for life:

“One day in Algeria, the eldest son, nine years old, went as usual to his grandmother’s house in a neighboring village. In the dusk, his feet stumbled over bodies. They were the dead bodies of men who were horribly tortured before being killed by French soldiers. Blood was still running all over the place. Afterwards the boy, now an adolescent, exhibited troubling behavior. He never told anyone what he had seen. His Arab comrades were afraid of him.”

There are also stories like “Ahmad the grass-eater,” who survived in Algeria by eating “acorns, grass and roots that he dug up from the poor, infertile soil.”

In La Folie, the police and the *harkis* systematically burned shacks, stole money from the workers and destroyed their ID papers. The *harkis*—Algerian collaborators of the French cops and army—had been recruited to do the dirtiest jobs (like torture and murder in Paris itself); French president Jacques Chirac and Prime Minister Lionel Jospin honored them this year on 25 November 2001 for their services to the French state. Hervo testifies to scenes in the shantytowns which were becoming more and more frequent toward the end of the war as it became clear that France had lost.

“An Algerian is brought out on a stretcher, handcuffed and attached to the stretcher. Two *harkis* demanded his papers. One of them accused him of having winked at some cousins who were bound hand and foot and punched him right in the face. Ahmad defended himself. Then, other *harkis* ran up, rushed at him and beat him up.”

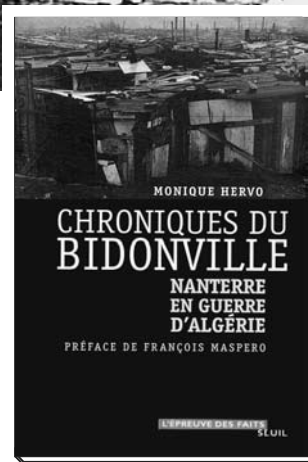
Sometimes, cops and special brigades invaded La Folie to destroy the shacks. Hervo recounts one scene:

“The cops attacked a fragile shanty made of old pieces of wood covered with tarpaper, inhabited for many months. They did their best to destroy everything. Alongside the demolition-man cops charged with this task, everybody jumped in. For this purpose, cops and inspectors rolled up their sleeves. They pulled up the poles. They broke up the fragile crossbeams. They broke the boards.... Gathered all around the scene, hundreds of residents of the shantytown looked on, without uttering a word.”

Hervo comments: “In Algeria, houses were bombed and burned by the French army. Here, shacks were destroyed by the Paris cops.”

While the armed struggle for independence took place in Algeria, the money to wage that war came largely from contributions of Algerian workers in France; they were also sending a lot of money to their families who were dying of hunger in Algeria. Their wages were systematically stolen by the *harki* traitors.

In 1956, under the popular front led by the “Socialist” Guy Mollet, torture in Algeria became an institutionalized practice and was carried out on a large scale during the battle of Algiers (and this was in part thanks to the CP’s vote in favor of “special powers” in Algeria for the government). The same methods were imported into France, using the *harkis* to do part of the dirty work, like in the



Cambio 16

French cops round up minority, immigrant youth. Racist terror has escalated under both right-wing and popular-front governments.

North Africans...

(continued from page 5)

immigrant question is fundamentally a question of democratic rights, of equality of rights. But these rights can only be won and maintained by the working class struggling to take state power out of the hands of the bourgeoisie and to establish a planned centralized economy. Groups claiming to be Trotskyist, communist or socialist but who are indifferent to racial oppression, or justify it, do so because their perspective is to maintain the capitalist system and obtain a few crumbs for the upper layer of privileged workers through class collaboration.

The French bourgeoisie and social democracy consider it a real problem that hundreds of thousands of youth of North African or African origin are French citizens. In the midst of the reaction against the “beur” movement in the ’80s, and after a series of strikes in the private sector, especially automobile, involving immigrant workers, Mitterrand remarked in 1988 that France had “reached the threshold of tolerance” with immigration. In leading militant strikes and in the working class, the CP pushed French chauvinism to reinforce class collaboration. As “proof” of their loyalty to join the Mitterrand government in 1981, the CP destroyed an immigrant dormitory in Vitry. The SP and CP above all have fed and paved the way for reaction against dark-skinned populations in France.

As long as the Soviet Union existed, a workers state which was a beacon for the workers of the world in spite of its Stalinist degeneration, the West European bourgeoisies had to concede a series of gains to the workers. With the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, the West European bourgeoisies started to systematically destroy all these gains. They haven’t totally managed to do it because the workers have resisted strongly, with strikes and plant occupations, seeking to defend their interests against the capitalists’ attacks. With chronic unemployment, the attempt to co-opt French youth of immigrant origin onto the parliamentary path has stopped. Today only *two* members of the National Assembly are of foreign origin. The bourgeoisie has opted for “zero tolerance”: zero immigration, zero subsidies for youth of immigrant origin in working-class neighborhoods, zero petty crime going unpunished. “Tolerance” has been replaced by hardcore repression, put into effect by the reformist lackeys in the workers movement.

In 1993, the Nationality Code which automatically gave the children of foreigners born in France the right to become French citizens was abolished. But the new law, named the “Pasqua-Méhaignerie” law, was in fact the result



French colonial troops systematically tortured and assassinated Algerians during war of independence (top). Hundreds of Algerian protesters were killed by Paris police in October 1961.



of racist campaigns waged for a decade under Mitterrand’s popular front. A whole generation of youth of immigrant origin, speaking only French and hardly knowing the country their parents or grandparents came from, were declared “non-French”—which is pretty perverse for a country claiming to be the homeland of “human rights.” A layer of thousands of “undocumented” French youth was thus created.

Furthermore, their parents—whose legal situation sometimes depends on the French citizenship of their children—were put in a very insecure situation. This hits women in particular. The French state created “stateless” people. Single mothers are doubly punished:

“Those who have not acquired French citizenship and have children born in France are raising children who are not recognized by any country. Thanks to the Pasqua laws, they are not French (and will not be until they are 16 or 18 years old), and they are not Moroccan, Algerian or Tunisian either since the Family Code in North Africa recognizes neither

single mothers nor illegitimate children. From birth on, these children will live under the statute of exclusion.”
—S. Banani, “The Veil and Citizenship” (1995)

The current capitalist government of the SP-CP-Greens arrived at the head of the bourgeois state by using mobilizations of tens of thousands of people who were demonstrating for papers for immigrants at St. Bernard church in 1996. When they came to power, far from abrogating the Pasqua law of 1993, they passed the “Chevènement” laws of 1998; the status of the immigrants was made worse although they had hoped for an improvement from a “left” government. These laws [named after ultra-chauvinist Chevènement] systematically opened files on all undocumented immigrants: deportation of immigrants has increased (around 8,000 in 1999, in other words the equivalent of more than one “Pasqua charter flight” every week—not counting those who are turned back at the airport!); it is harder to get married to a foreigner. City governments refuse to issue housing certification for visitors, and this also has increased since September 11.

In the ghettos of France, the children and grandchildren of immigrants confront growing unemployment and job insecurity of a different order of magnitude compared with the total French population. For male immigrant youth (25-29 years old), the *official* unemployment rate in March 1998 was above 30 percent, and it was 44 percent for female immigrant youth between 15-24 years old. Since the “secular” French state hides the extreme *inequalities* in French society by claiming that the French Republic is the country of “human rights,” it is impossible to know how many French youth of immigrant origin are unemployed. The only study ever done in France of immigrants and their children, the survey “Geographical Mobility and Social Integration” (GMSI), was conducted by Michèle Tribalat. To

conduct the study she had to fight against “the weight of French ideology which says that it would be against republican tradition to make distinctions between French people according to their origins, because of the supposedly discriminatory nature of such distinctions.” Tribalat also notes that “we hope to have contributed to breaking a taboo on using data on ethnic origin in social science. Knowledge is not a tool of discrimination. Obscurantism is” (Tribalat, *From Immigration to Assimilation*). The GMSI indicates that 40 percent of men between the ages of 20 and 29 with an Algerian father are unemployed.

Immigrants and their children are a population that is used as a reserve army of labor to be utilized in times of economic expansion and to be thrown in the garbage in periods of economic crisis. Such a reserve army of labor is also used to intimidate workers and lower everyone’s wages. Today more and more, the youth of immigrant origin are considered a “surplus” population which can be deported, jailed or killed with impunity. The number of foreign detainees *more than doubled* (more than 110 percent) between 1975 and 2001. The unemployment rates for immigrant men went from 9 percent in 1981 to 18 percent in 2000 (and 24 percent for those who don’t come from countries of the European Union). In the Transitional Program (1938), Trotsky explained that the right to employment is the only serious right workers have in a society of exploitation. The capitalists, not the workers, must pay for the chronic crises of their system. We fight for a sliding scale of wages and sliding scale of hours so that all the work on hand is divided among all existing workers, so the average workers’ wage remains the same and is pegged to the cost of living. Trotsky adds:

“Property owners and their lawyers will prove the ‘unrealizability’ of these demands.... The workers categorically denounce such conclusions and references. The question is not one of a ‘normal’ collision between opposing material interests. The question is one of guarding the proletariat from decay, demoralization, and ruin. The question is one of life or death of the only creative and progressive class, and by that token of the future of mankind. If capitalism is incapable of satisfying the demands inevitably arising from the calamities generated by itself, then let it perish.”

For Socialist Revolution to Overthrow This Rotten System!

Recently there has been massive racist hysteria because youth who are the descendants of Algerian immigrants booed the “Marseillaise” when a chorus of cops was singing it during a soccer game between France and Algeria. Youth who then went out onto the field were the object of a real witchhunt: they are said to be incapable of being integrated into French society. Some of them were given heavy sentences. *Down with these racist prosecutions!* It’s impossible to integrate yourself into a society which offers you neither work nor housing nor papers—even now, not to mention in the future.

The number of immigrant workers and their children was reduced along with the reduction of their weight in industry in the French economy. However, immigrant workers and their children occupy a central position in French production right up to today. Far from being merely “victims,” immigrant workers have key social power in making a revolution. Of male immigrant workers, 45 percent are concentrated in construction and industry; they represent 13 percent of the workforce in automobile (one out of every eight workers is an immigrant) and almost 17 percent in construction (one out of every six workers). The GMSI study shows that 60 percent of the children of workers are themselves workers. But since the introduction of temporary work in 1973, the structure of manpower in industry has changed, becoming concentrated largely in temporary work and short-term contracts (CDD): 25 percent of employed young immigrant workers work under CDD and more than 18 percent of African employees do temporary work.

SPARTACIST LEAGUE/U.S. Local Directory and Public Offices

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Box 1377 GPO,
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1634 Telegraph, 3rd Floor

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San Francisco, CA 94107
(415) 395-9520

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Tues. 6-8 p.m.
564 Market Street
Suite 718

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NYC NOTICE

Exceptions to regular New York City
Public Office hours:
Saturday, May 18 from 1-4 p.m.
Saturday, June 1, closed

Bill Epton...

(continued from page 3)

singular act of personal courage and defiance of New York’s arrogant racist rulers, Epton, surrounded by supporters, went to the march assembly point at 116th Street and Lenox Avenue. At his side, arms linked with Epton’s, was Conrad Lynn. Epton and Lynn were arrested as they stepped off the curb. Leaderless, the demonstration did not materialize.

Our organization, then still in its infancy, played an active role in the events. Two Spartacist comrades, Paul Gaillard and Shirley Stoute, were in the HDC. In an attempt to take the pressure off the ghettos, we initiated the Harlem Solidarity Committee (HSC), which organized a mass rally in the downtown garment district around the slogans: “Remove the rioting cops from Harlem” and “Support the right of the citizens of the ghetto to defend themselves.” Despite the cops’ denial of a sound permit for the rally, nearly a thousand workers came out and responded enthusiastically to the speakers. Among the speakers at this united-front rally were Lynn, PL leader Milt Rosen and *Workers World* editor Vince Copeland. In his speech, *Spartacist* editor James Robertson described the role of the cops in creating the riots and responded to frenzied redbaiting by the bourgeois press, which sought to blame the Harlem protest on a communist conspiracy. Robertson remarked, “Unfortunately there aren’t many Reds in Harlem now—but *there will be!*”

Epton: “Guilty” of Being a Black Communist

While anti-Communist black nationalists were granted audiences with the mayor and allowed to stage their own rallies in Harlem, Epton and those who supported him were subjected to fierce repression and a wide-ranging witchhunt. Sweeping injunctions were issued against all those who were even remotely associated with either Epton’s march or the HSC, including Robertson, preventing them from “assembling, gathering together, convening, parading, marching, demonstrating or acting in concert” anywhere between 110th and 155th Streets and the Harlem and Hudson Rivers. In early 1965, more than 20 PLers, including Milt Rosen, were subpoenaed to appear before a grand jury “investigation” and subsequently arrested for contempt of court for refusing to testify. The investigation was then widened to also go after Robertson and the Spartacist group.

Epton was framed up on charges of “criminal anarchy” based on three claims: that he and PL put out a pamphlet describing how to make Molotov cocktails, that he led the “riot” and that he was actively involved in arming Harlem residents. When these charges didn’t wash, Epton was charged with advocating killing police officers and judges—on the



New York Times

Spartacist-initiated Harlem Solidarity Committee rally in NYC garment district, July 1964.

basis, as we noted in our article in *Spartacist* No. 3, “of a paraphrase of Lenin’s *State and Revolution*.” According to a contemporary account in the *New York Times* (26 July 1964), the cops claimed that Epton had declared that in order to achieve freedom it would be necessary to “set up a new state of our own choosing and liking. And in the process of smashing this state, we’re going to have to kill a lot of these cops, a lot of these judges, and we’ll have to go up against their army.”

The recent obituary in the *Times* maliciously distorted even its own 1964 version of the statement attributed to Epton, “quoting” only the last bit to make it sound as though his sober description was an immediate call to action. Piling one falsification atop another, the *Times* obituary portrayed Epton’s “criminal anarchy” case as raising the question of whether there was “a constitutional right to say, ‘Burn, baby, burn.’” In fact, that phrase wasn’t even heard until the time of the Watts upheaval in 1965 and only became famous when it was used by H. Rap Brown in 1967.

In a powerful statement to the court at the time of his conviction, published by PL as a pamphlet titled *We Accuse: Bill Epton Speaks to the Court* (1966), Epton explained the real reason for the capitalist state’s vendetta against him:

“I have been found ‘guilty’ of agitating against the conditions that my people are forced to live under in New York and all over the country.

“I have been found ‘guilty’ of protesting the murder—yes, murder—or legal lynching, whatever you choose, of James Powell by Thomas Gilligan, a New York policeman.

“I have been found ‘guilty’ of organizing the Harlem community against police brutality that has been occurring in the

Black ghettos for hundreds of years.

“I have been found ‘guilty’ of standing up for the right of all men to be free—to be free from the system of exploitation of man by man.

“I have been found ‘guilty’ of proclaiming that capitalism is an oppressive system and that socialism is the only solution for mankind to live in peace and humanity....

“And finally—I have been found ‘guilty’ of being a communist—and a Black one at that!”

We were actively involved in Epton’s defense from the start. In February 1965, at a protest against the witchhunting grand jury, Robertson was himself served with a subpoena to testify. Lynn agreed to serve as Robertson’s legal counsel, and assisted in preparing his testimony. A *Spartacist* Special Supplement (March 1965) issued as a “Report to Our Readers” summarized several key points from Robertson’s appearance before the grand jury, including that “Robertson has never heard Bill Epton advocate acts of violence and terrorism; moreover, since Comrade Epton is a declared Marxist such advocacy would be in fundamental contradiction to his beliefs.” Robertson also testified that “the New York City cops, not communists, provoked the riots last summer.”

Explaining why the Spartacist group was cited by the state along with PL, the supplement noted:

“The SPARTACIST editor has been dragged into the witchhunt because of our detailed exposure of the police over the riots last summer; our determined defense of Bill Epton and Progressive Labor against legal intimidation and persecution; and our initiation last summer of the militant Harlem Solidarity Committee which rallied working class support in New York’s garment center for the people of Harlem during the police riots.”

The supplement also explained why we chose to have Robertson appear before the grand jury: “The Spartacist group has no reason or desire to conceal either its political views or its actions. Quite the contrary; should its officers be sent to jail for refusal to testify, we want it crystal clear that such punishment is exclusively for refusal to drag in the names of innocent people or to render false testimony.”

In defense of Epton and others targeted in the witchhunt, we collected signatures, distributed literature and organized meetings and Epton defense committees in various cities, including Chicago, the San Francisco Bay Area and Ithaca, New York. Our defense of Epton was not always welcomed by PL, however, which in sectarian fashion declared their Committee to Defend Resistance to Ghetto Life (CERGE) off-limits to “Trotskyites.” In a letter to one of our Chicago comrades, PL leader Bill McAdoo fulminated that “in general” Trotskyists were “counterrevolutionaries.” In February 1965, PL expelled Spartacists Paul Gaillard and Shirley Stoute from the HDC on the basis of their Trotskyist politics. Nonetheless, we forthrightly continued to defend Epton. That month, a Spartacist supporter proposed a motion which was passed unanimously in CORE’s Harlem branch that read: “N.Y. CORE condemns the attempt to make Bill Epton the scapegoat for the brutal action of the police last summer against the people of Harlem. It supports Epton’s right to speak, and calls upon the City to drop its indictment against him.”

Epton’s case drew support from around the globe, ranging from philosophers Bertrand Russell and Jean-Paul Sartre to Amnesty International. In a statement of support, the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam stated:

“We strongly protest against the unjustifiable arrest and trial of Bill Epton on the ground of trumped up charges and demand his immediate release by the U.S. authorities. We call upon all justice loving people in the U.S.A. and in the world to raise their voice of opposition to this effect as they have raised their voice to protest against the aggressive war waged by the U.S. imperialists in Vietnam.”

In later years, Epton moved to the right, bitterly exiting PL in 1970 in the midst of internal turmoil. Unable and unwilling to transcend its Stalinist framework, PL itself soon began moving rightward, promoting one “single issue” reformist campaign after another. Epton spent many of his later years working with the Malcolm X Museum. He was also involved in the Black Radical Congress and the Citywide Coalition to Stop Giuliani, both “left” skills for the Democratic Party and both a far cry from Epton’s politics in the 1960s. Nonetheless, we remember Epton as a committed and courageous working-class militant who in a volatile time did not bow before the onslaught of the bourgeois state or bend to the pressures of liberalism. ■

The catastrophic level of youth unemployment has become a classic means of “divide and rule” for the French state, which uses underpaid temporary workers as a weapon against the unions. Where this acquires a supplementary social dimension is in the working-class suburbs with the youth of immigrant origin. Unemployment there takes on astronomical proportions and the ghettos live under the constant threat of brutal repression and police violence. The French left and the workers movement, which are capable of mobilizing in the streets tens of millions of workers, have done virtually nothing to protest the cop terror which has become practically routine in the ghettos and working-class suburbs or to demonstrate the link between this terror and the super-exploitation of youth through “youth jobs” and temporary work.

The tasks posed for the workers if they are to have the maximum of class unity are to fight against the daily racist terror

in the working-class suburbs and to fight against job insecurity for youth and immigrant youth. Working-class militancy is seen in the strikes at McDonald’s by young French and immigrant-derived youth, in the recent longshore strike which blocked the port of Marseille and in the struggles at Moulinex.

Algerians and their families are not only an oppressed minority in France; they are part of the working class and that’s what gives them their social power. In the early Mitterrand years, in 1982-83 for instance, they were the spearhead of the most important strikes against popular-front austerity, in particular at Renault-Flins, Citroën-Aulnay and Talbot-Poissy, where they led their “French” class brothers. In December 1995, strikes paralyzed transit and the public sector for three weeks. These strikes went beyond the trade-union framework and posed the question of power. The LTF fought to extend these

strikes to the private sector by putting forward in particular the question of immigrant oppression and unity of the working class. Only a few months earlier, in March 1995, there had been a big strike in the Flins plant, where immigrant workers were in the forefront. But the union leaders, including the pseudo-Trotskyists, did everything they could to prevent the strike from extending to the private sector. For them the strike was a way to apply pressure to get rid of the Gaullist Juppé government, but we communists fought to extend this defensive strike and lead the working class on the road to power.

As we wrote in our balance sheet of December 1995 (*Le Bolchévik*, January-February 1996):

“The strike movement had to go beyond simple trade unionism, on a program to unite the entire working class and draw along the pensioners, the youth, the immigrants, against whom the ominous militarization of French society is being aimed. These immediate tasks cry out for revolu-

tionary leadership and a Leninist party: to push the proletariat’s struggles forward instead of subordinating them to the constraints of the capitalist system; to expose the pro-capitalist misleaders in their deeds; to reach out to struggling working people in other lands as the bourgeoisies drum up racism and trade war.”

It is necessary to break with the politics of the reformists who lead the workers parties and unions in France, to build powerful industrial unions including all the workers of one industry in one union. But above all it is the question of building a genuine revolutionary party, a party like the revolutionary Bolshevik Party, a true tribune of the people. Immigrant workers are also a living link with the workers of Africa and Asia. The struggle for a revolution in France is linked to the struggle for the liberation of all the countries under the French imperialist jackboot. We work to build such a party as the French section of the International Communist League. ■

China...

(continued from page 1)

Hundreds of millions of peasants rose up and seized the land on which their forebears had been cruelly exploited from time immemorial. The rule of the murderous warlords and bloodsucking moneylenders, the rapacious landlords and wretched bourgeoisie was destroyed. The revolution enabled women to advance by magnitudes over their previous miserable status, symbolized by the barbaric practice of footbinding. A nation which had been ravaged and divided by foreign powers for a century was unified and freed from imperialist subjugation.

In the 1950s, the People's Republic of China established a centrally planned, socialized economy—modeled on and aided by the Soviet Union—and agriculture was collectivized. A state monopoly of foreign trade protected the socialized economy from being undermined by cheap imports from the far more developed capitalist-imperialist countries. Par-

PART ONE

ticularly for women, getting a job in state industry was such a huge advance over the old way of life that families often threw large parties to celebrate the hiring of one of their members.

However, the 1949 Revolution was deformed from its inception under the rule of Mao Zedong's CCP regime, which represented a nationalist bureaucratic caste resting atop the collectivized economy. Patterned after the Stalinist bureaucracy in the USSR, Mao's regime preached the profoundly anti-Marxist notion that socialism—a classless, egalitarian society based on material abundance—could be



U.S. troops deployed in Philippines amid Pentagon buildup in Pacific aimed at Chinese deformed workers state.

built in a single country. In practice, “socialism in one country” meant opposition to the perspective of workers revolution internationally and accommodation to world imperialism.

The Beijing bureaucracy essentially acts as a transmission belt for the pressures of the imperialist-dominated world market on the workers state. The brittle and contradictory character of this bureaucratic caste can be seen in the fact that in the face of working-class unrest, the current regime has often reversed some of its economic “reforms” and occasionally put some of its own on trial for corruption, sometimes with a penalty of execution.

The recent outpouring of protests has jolted not only the Beijing regime but also American ruling circles, which have entertained the notion of a cold restoration of capitalism “from above.” Thus an article in the influential American journal *Business Week* (8 April) titled “China's Angry Workers” stated: “Time is not on Beijing's side. The government can't afford perpetual welfare payments for the Rust Belt's unemployed and disaffected workers, many of whom are only in their 40s and see no prospect of new employment in their home provinces. And the pattern of factory shutdowns and layoffs



Left: November 1999 ceremony to seal trade agreement between U.S. and China, preparing way for WTO entry. Chinese vice president Hu Jintao visits Wall Street, April 29.

will only accelerate now that China is a member of the World Trade Organization and its decrepit industrial sector must go head-to-head with foreign competition.” The article rues that even as tourism, telecommunications and other sectors of the economy are opened to foreign investment, “protests are forcing Beijing to slow industrial restructuring” in an attempt to maintain social stability.

In its own way, *Business Week* recognizes certain fundamental truths about the People's Republic of China today. One, the drive to restore capitalism is encountering powerful resistance from the working class. Two, fear of social unrest restrains the restorationist tendencies within the ruling bureaucracy.

American imperialism is bent on overturning the 1949 Revolution, one way or another, and once again reducing China to semicolonial subjugation. To this end, the U.S. ruling class combines pursuit of the economic openings offered by Beijing with escalating military pressure. The Pentagon has recently increased military aid to capitalist Taiwan, which has been

lion by 20,000 miners and their families in northeast China:

“The bureaucracy which is paving the way for capitalist counterrevolution is simultaneously preparing the ground for a new revolutionary proletarian explosion—not a *social* revolution which would overturn the economic foundations of society as in 1949 but a *political* revolution to oust the parasitic ruling oligarchy and to place political power in the hands of workers, soldiers and peasants councils (soviets). The urgent task facing the Chinese proletariat is to build a Leninist-Trotskyist party as part of a reformed Trotskyist Fourth International, to prepare and lead this political revolution, standing at the head of the masses and directing the spontaneous and localized workers' struggles toward the seizure of political power.”

Bolshevism vs. Stalinism

In a perceptive article in the *Nation* magazine (4 March), Jiang Xueqin, who had spent months traveling across China, remarked, “Contrary to Western perceptions that the common people are benefiting from the free market, the Chinese see their government and the nation's elite as conspiring to sell them out to imperialists, *aka* the Americans. Frustration with the government's economic policies is now entwined with rapidly expanding anti-Western sentiment.” Jiang also noted that the late Mao Zedong is an “increasingly popular” figure. Indeed, protesters in Liaoyang last month carried portraits of Mao, just as workers did in Tiananmen Square in 1989.

Mao's era can certainly seem egalitarian compared to today, when officials spend the equivalent of a retired worker's annual income on a banquet with Hong Kong or American business partners. The 1949 Revolution is a living memory for Chinese families, almost all of whom have parents or grandparents who lived through the murderous Japanese occupation and the civil war against the hated Guomindang regime of Chiang Kai-shek, which was backed by American imperialism.

But it is crucial to understand the *anti*-proletarian character of Mao's CCP regime. The Chinese Revolution was fundamentally different from the October Revolution of 1917 in Russia, which was carried out by a class-conscious proletar-

iat under the leadership of the Bolshevik Party of Lenin and Trotsky. The October Revolution established a government based upon *proletarian democracy*—the rule of workers, peasants and soldiers soviets (councils). The Bolsheviks saw the revolution in backward Russia as the first step in a worldwide socialist revolution, particularly in the advanced capitalist countries.

However, the defeat of the anticipated German workers revolution in 1923 demoralized the Soviet working class, which had been decimated by the destruction of industry and infrastructure wrought by World War I and the bloody Civil War of 1918-20. With the end of the Civil War, bureaucratic tendencies in the party and state administration began to coalesce into a bureaucratic layer. By 1923, Lenin was increasingly incapacitated. The burgeoning party bureaucracy, controlled by J. V. Stalin, was beginning to rise to self-consciousness. That fall, a loose Left Opposition led by Trotsky opened fire against the growing bureaucratism and called for a program of planned industrialization. The ensuing debate in the party press was soon shut down. The party conference called for January 1924 was so rigged that the Opposition was allowed only three delegates despite having won 25 to 30 percent of the vote in the Moscow and Petrograd party organizations.

Though it only became clear in hindsight, that conference marked the beginning of the Soviet Thermidor, the decisive point at which the bureaucratic caste seized political power from the Soviet working class (see “Trotsky and the Russian Left Opposition: A Critical Balance Sheet,” *Spartacist* [English-language edition] No. 56, Spring 2001). From this point on, the people who ruled the USSR, the way the USSR was ruled and the purposes for which it was ruled all changed. The nationalist outlook of the bureaucracy was given expression by Stalin's proclamation of the anti-Marxist “theory” of “socialism in one country” in the fall of 1924.

In contrast to the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution, the 1949 Revolution in China was the result of a successful peasant guerrilla war led by the CCP and People's

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Liberation Army (PLA), which excluded the proletariat from political power *from the beginning*. Unlike the Russian bourgeoisie, which was effectively destroyed as a property-owning class, the Chinese bourgeoisie was able to survive as a coherent class by moving to Taiwan, Hong Kong and elsewhere in the Pacific Rim under the protection of U.S. and British imperialism. Nevertheless, the Chinese Revolution was a huge defeat for the imperialists, as was brought home by the intervention of the PLA in the Korean War of 1950-53, which saved North Korea from being overrun by the American imperialists and their South Korean puppet regime.

The Bankruptcy of Maoism

Marked by extreme voluntarism and economic adventurism, Maoist rule sought to transform impoverished China into a “socialist” world power through economic autarky within the framework of a bureaucratically centralized economy. Contained in this nationalist perspective were the seeds of the bureaucracy’s implementation of “market reforms” under Deng Xiaoping, who also sought “great power” status for China. Today, the core of the bureaucracy retains no subjective commitment to a socialist order; it preserves collectivized property only insofar as it dreads the proletariat.

Mao’s era was far from egalitarian and far from socialist. The “Great Leap Forward” was an attempt at forced-march industrialization using the unaided labor



Peter Turnley

Contingent from Beijing Workers Autonomous Federation arriving in Tiananmen Square, May 1989. Entry of working class into mass student demonstrations posed proletarian political revolution.

of the peasant masses. It was exemplified by the construction of thousands of small “backyard” steel furnaces in rural villages. This economic adventure ended in total collapse and led to a devastating famine. Mao’s “Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution” of 1966-76—a convulsive factional struggle within the bureaucracy launched by Mao to regain the authority he had lost following the “Great Leap” fiasco—disrupted the economy and brought education to a halt. The anti-proletarian character of the Cultural Revolution was exemplified by the use of student “Red Guards” to break a 1967 Shanghai general strike led by rail workers. Faced with the destruction wreaked by the “lost ten years,” two years after Mao’s death in 1976 the bureaucracy turned to Deng Xiaoping, who initiated “market reforms” in the name of modernizing the economy.

While Mao and Deng are commonly portrayed as opposites, they are in fact two sides of the same coin, as was seen with China’s anti-Soviet alliance with U.S. imperialism. After several years of nationalist feuding between the Moscow and Beijing bureaucracies, Mao declared in the late 1960s that “Soviet social-imperialism” was an even greater danger than the United States. In 1972, Mao embraced U.S. president Richard Nixon in Beijing at the very moment that American warplanes were bombing Vietnam. Deepening this alliance, Deng’s regime worked in tandem with the CIA to aid the Afghan *mujahedin* cutthroats who fought against the Soviet Army presence



Perri/Figaro Magazine

“Market reforms” foster thin layer of yuppie millionaires, while up to 200 million migrant workers look for jobs.

in Afghanistan in the 1980s (see “China and the U.S. ‘War on Terror,’” WV No. 776, 8 March). China’s anti-Soviet alliance with the U.S. was a crucial service to imperialism in its drive to destroy the Soviet degenerated workers state, which had been the military counterweight to U.S. imperialism. The anti-Soviet alliance also laid the basis for imperialist economic penetration of the Chinese deformed workers state.

The current regime in Beijing preaches that China will become a strong, modern power through greater integration into the



shore or they hold foreign passports. One can only speculate on what they will do with their wealth and power when the older generation leaves the scene but it is possible that they may lead China in the political direction pioneered by Taiwan or Hong Kong.”

“Market Socialism” and Counterrevolution

The changing economic course from bureaucratic centralization under Mao to “market socialism” under Deng & Co. reflects a general tendency under Stalinist rule to “rationalize” the economy through decentralization. Centralized planning as practiced by a parasitic and uncontrolled bureaucracy invariably squanders economic resources and generates obvious inefficiencies. Plant managers often willfully understate actual capacity so as to be given easily fulfillable production targets. Plan targets are met in quantitative terms but at the cost of poor quality and lack of assortment. Economic administrators and managers are reluctant to use new technologies lest they be penalized if these don’t work.

In his classic analysis of the Soviet bureaucracy, *The Revolution Betrayed* (1937), Trotsky pointed to the inherent limits of bureaucratic centralism:

“The farther you go, the more the economy runs into the problem of quality, which slips out of the hands of the bureaucracy like a shadow. The Soviet products are as though branded with the gray label of indifference. Under a nationalized economy, *quality* demands a democracy of producers and consumers, freedom of criticism and initiative—conditions incompatible with a totalitarian regime of fear, lies and flattery.”

In China under Deng, the bureaucracy moved toward “market socialism” following the examples of Yugoslavia and Hungary. Economic administrators and managers were now rewarded or penalized on the basis of market profitability. The threat of plant closures and layoffs also served as a means of enforcing labor discipline among the workers. At the same time, agriculture was decollectivized and replaced by the “household responsibility system,” i.e., peasant smallholding. The pressures of market competition have inevitably resulted in the growth of a small class of wealthy farmers alongside tens of millions of poor peasants. This is the origin of the massive

migrant labor force, estimated as high as **200 million**, which has flooded into the cities looking for work.

“Market socialism” invariably weakens the collectivized economy and strengthens the forces of capitalist counterrevolution. In Yugoslavia, decentralization greatly aggravated the inequalities and economic conflicts (e.g., over access to foreign exchange) between Serbia, Croatia and the other national republics, setting the stage for the bloody fratricidal wars of the early 1990s that destroyed the Yugoslav deformed workers state. In the Soviet Union, Gorbachev’s assault on centralized planning in the mid 1980s under the rubric of *perestroika* (restructuring) resulted in economic chaos and sharply falling living standards. This conditioned the capitalist counterrevolution that destroyed the USSR in 1991-92—under the leadership of Boris Yeltsin (formerly Gorbachev’s lieutenant) and actively supported by Washington.

Nonetheless, many Chinese intellectuals and student youth buy the bureaucracy’s line that the “discipline” provided by market measures and the recent WTO trade agreement is necessary for China to develop into a modern, industrial powerhouse and for its people to reap the material benefits of a growing economy. Anyone who thinks that the “free market” will bring abundance to China should look at the former Soviet Union, where capitalist restoration has brought desperate poverty and ethnic bloodletting. And intellectuals and trained technical personnel did not fare well: after the society’s scientific-technical structure and medical system collapsed, Soviet physicists and doctors ended up driving cabs in New York City, if they were lucky.

If this happened to the USSR, which was a global industrial and military power, a capitalist China would subject its masses to far greater impoverishment, and its intellectuals would be thrust back to their degraded status in prerevolutionary society. Capitalist restoration would bring not only economic collapse and immiseration but the danger of the breakup of the country and bloody political chaos. Whatever the nationalist illusions of some Chinese students, the few big imperialist powers that dominate

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China...

(continued from page 9)

the world economy have no intention of allowing China to become a “great power.” One can look at South Korea. As long as the Soviet Union existed, U.S. imperialism acted to shore up the Seoul regime as an anti-Communist bulwark, allowing it to develop its own shipbuilding and auto manufacturing industries. But when the Asian financial crisis hit in 1997, several years after the destruction of the USSR, the American and Japanese rulers pulled the plug on the South Korean economy.

Beijing’s “market reforms” have already given the working class a taste of what capitalist restoration would mean, and it has responded with wave after wave of strikes and protests. The fight must be for a political revolution to establish a regime of workers democracy committed to reviving the planned economy, restoring a strict state monopoly of foreign trade and expropriating capitalist holdings that have made their way onto the mainland.

A revolutionary China of workers and peasants councils would face virulently hostile imperialist reaction. But proletarian political revolution would also electrify the working class internationally and demolish the “death of communism” lie peddled by the bourgeois ruling classes since the collapse of the USSR.

A political revolution in China, waged under the banner of proletarian internationalism, would truly shake the world. It would radicalize the proletariat of Japan, the industrial powerhouse of East Asia, and inspire revolutionary struggles by workers and peasants throughout Asia. It would spark a fight for the revolutionary reunification of Korea—through political revolution in the beleaguered North and socialist revolution in the South. Only through the overthrow of capitalist class rule internationally, particularly in the imperialist centers of North America, West Europe and Japan, can the foundations be laid for the all-around modernization and development of China, as part of a socialist Asia. It is to provide the necessary leadership for the proletariat in these struggles that the ICL seeks to reforge Trotsky’s Fourth International—world party of socialist revolution.

The Deadly Fruit of “Market Reforms”

A key factor in the outbreak of labor protest over the last three years was the decision of the CCP’s 15th National Congress in 1997 to privatize a number of small and medium-sized concerns and to subject many larger state-owned enterprises to market measures. It is these enterprises themselves and not the central government that have historically been responsible for providing workers with social benefits. When enterprises are declared “bankrupt” or even face significant cuts in subsidies, it is not only

the workers’ jobs that are at risk but also benefits like medical insurance. The centralized pension system established in 1995 is so underfunded that it is often unable to pay workers’ pensions, provoking much of the current labor protest.

Official corruption greatly aggravates the workers’ plight. Many of the aging industrial plants are declared bankrupt only to have the former managers steal the assets or sell off the property to private investors. Under huge pressure to show profits, managers often direct loans from state banks not into upgrading production methods or augmenting social benefit funds but into real estate and stock market speculation.

The Beijing auto workers launched their protests after the closing of their plant, which had once been part of a state-owned company. After it merged with American Motors in 1983 to form China’s first joint venture, Beijing Jeep, the new company seized much of the

workers, whose benefits have been stolen from them in the interests of PetroChina’s bottom line. Rather, the protests were part of the pro-imperialist labor tops’ protectionist campaign against the entry of “Communist China” into the WTO.

The fight to defend nationalized industry against privatization and closure is a matter of life and death for the Chinese proletariat. This is literally true in the coal mining industry—the world’s largest—where death rates have reached as high as 10,000 per year and new mine collapses are reported almost every week. The horrific death rate is a direct result of cutbacks in state-owned mining operations and the proliferation of mines owned by private entrepreneurs and by township and village enterprises (TVEs). As the Los Angeles Times (23 January) reports, “The miners of yesterday were state employees, relatively well-paid and well-respected pillars of the socialist motherland. Today, more and more are

industry and to extend these benefits to workers in the TVEs.

Reports of labor struggle in the TVEs, which are isolated and dispersed throughout the hinterland, are rare. Not so in the Special Economic Zones, which have concentrations of modern factories and are often located near major cities like Hong Kong and Guangzhou (Canton). In April, more than a thousand workers occupied a toy factory in Guangdong province owned by a Hong Kong company that supplies Wal-Mart and other Western firms. The workers had been fired without pay, a not uncommon practice by SEZ bosses, who act in cahoots with local officials.

The capitalists must be driven out of the SEZs and off the land. This poses the question of forming workers and peasants councils to oust the parasitic bureaucracy. Defend and extend the planned, collectivized economy! Expropriate without compensation the holdings of the bloodsucking imperialists and offshore Chinese capitalists!

A regime based on workers and peasants councils would reverse the current regime’s policy of encouraging private property in the countryside, which has spawned a layer of rural exploiters. It would prohibit or restrict the hiring of labor and the leasing of additional land by rich peasants and would promote the recollectivization of agriculture. This is not a matter of reverting to Mao’s agricultural communes, which were essentially an aggregate of backward peasant holdings. For the mass of Chinese peasants to give up their private holdings in favor of collective farms, they must be convinced that this will result in a higher standard of living for themselves and their families. Thus a workers government in China would offer reduced taxes and cheaper credits to peasants who joined collectives. But as Trotsky wrote in a February 1930 article titled “The New Course in the Soviet Economy”:

“The collectivization of agriculture presupposes a certain technical base. A collective farm is above all large. The rational size for the farm is determined, however, by the character of the means and methods of production being applied. With the aid of peasant plows and peasant nags, even all of them put together, it is not possible to create large agricultural collectives, even as it is not possible to build a ship out of a flock of fishing boats. The collectivization of agriculture can be achieved only through its mechanization. From this it follows that the general level of industrialization of a country determines the possible speed of the collectivization of its agriculture.”

Trotsky was writing here in response to the policy of forced collectivization being carried out by the Soviet Stalinist bureaucracy, which had for years conciliated the wealthy peasants (kulaks) to the point that they posed an immediate counterrevolutionary threat to the workers state. The problems of collectivization addressed by Trotsky are all the more acute in China today. The vast majority of the population lives in the countryside, where production methods are still primitive and there is little modern infrastructure.

A rational collectivization and modernization of Chinese agriculture would signify a profound transformation of the society. The introduction of modern technology in the countryside—from combines to chemical fertilizers to the whole complex of scientific farming—would require a qualitatively higher industrial base than currently exists. In turn, an increase in productivity in agriculture would raise the need for a massive expansion of industrial jobs in urban areas to absorb the vast surplus of labor no longer needed in the countryside. Clearly, this would involve a lengthy process, particularly given the limited size and relatively low level of productivity of China’s existing industrial base. Both the tempo and, in the final analysis, the very realizability of this perspective hinges on the aid China would receive from a socialist Japan or a socialist America, underlining again the need for international proletarian revolution.

[TO BE CONTINUED]

WORKERS VANGUARD



WV Photo

Oakland, February 9: Labor-centered mobilization against anti-immigrant witchhunt. Trotskyists stand for defense of deformed workers states against U.S. imperialism.

plant’s assets. This caused production to dwindle until it halted entirely, forcing 5,000 workers into layoffs or early retirement. Now, Japanese auto makers are increasingly shifting production to joint ventures in China, where wages are far lower than at home.

The Daqing protests were the result of Beijing’s decision in 1998 to place many of the oil fields under the ownership of PetroChina Ltd., a subsidiary of the state oil company which subsequently issued stock to raise investment funds. Protesting PetroChina’s Wall Street stock offering in the U.S. was an anti-Communist cabal led by the AFL-CIO bureaucracy and including liberal environmentalists and the CIA-sponsored “Free Tibet” movement. This had nothing to do with defending the welfare of the Daqing oil

working for private mines with minimal or no safety standards, subsisting on the dark side of the new economy, lucky to have jobs at all.”

Workers in state mines, which use relatively sophisticated equipment and have stringent safety regulations, typically receive at least three months of training. But as the Times article points out, privately run mines rely largely on untrained workers, mainly migrant laborers. With no regard for workers’ lives, private mine operators carve out as many shafts as possible, put in fewer exits and run fewer of the ventilation fans needed to remove natural gas fumes—the cause, according to one report, of half of the mine explosions. A retired miner described what usually happens when the rare inspection is scheduled: “When the inspectors do come, they are often whisked straight away to a banquet and stuffed with red envelopes of money. Deng Xiaoping said, ‘Let some people get rich first.’ They got rich all right, by breaking the law.”

The bureaucracy encouraged the growth of the township/village enterprises as part of economic decentralization. Descended from rural industries that accompanied collectivized agriculture, TVEs are in many cases “collective” in name only. Employing low-wage labor to make shoes, textiles and the like, they do not have to provide the benefits accorded workers in state industry. For years, TVEs steadily undercut state-owned plants producing the same kind of products, and in recent years have come close to equaling state industry’s share of national output. Beijing has recently moved to rein in these enterprises, shutting down tens of thousands of unsafe mines. Many unprofitable TVEs have closed down; others have been bought outright by private investors. A Leninist-Trotskyist party would call to restore guaranteed benefits for workers in state

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France...

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opportunistic appetites. The IG is no less cynical. For the working class to *boycott* bourgeois elections presupposes a level of class consciousness one would expect in a pre-revolutionary situation posing the question of state power. But the IG's call came as over one and a half million people, including large numbers of workers, were demonstrating in the streets in support of the bourgeois "Republic"—and the rightist Chirac!

The IG's macho phrasemongering is simply a smokescreen for its fundamentally opportunistic politics, posturing as the militant in-the-streets wing of the anti-fascist electoral "unity" pushed by the French left in the tow of the popular front. While admitting in passing (in a 4 May statement) that "Le Pen is not about to take power," the IG's articles on the French elections are full of the same "fascism is around the corner" rhetoric that the PS, PCF, LCR et al. used to justify "unity" behind Chirac. In its 4 May statement, the IG draws an analogy with the 1932 election of Hindenburg as German chancellor, who handed over power to Hitler a year later. But by the early

1930s, Hitler had 100,000 stormtroopers on the street terrorizing Jews and attacking trade-union and leftist meetings. Since the French proletariat does not currently pose an immediate threat to the bourgeois order, the capitalists are not about to resort to fascist dictatorship. While Le Pen's gains at the polls will certainly embolden his fascist thugs, the FN's success is an electoral phenomenon.

This same question came up two years ago when Jörg Haider's openly racist Freedom Party (FPÖ) entered a coalition with the right-wing People's Party (ÖVP) in Austria. Social democrats across Europe, screaming that Austria was on the verge of a fascist takeover, mobilized to pressure the ÖVP to kick out Haider and reinstate its longstanding coalition with the Austrian Socialist Party (SPÖ). While noting that Haider's political outlook is indeed fascistic, we wrote at the time: "In a situation in which there are no fascist mobilizations in the streets and the main question is the participation of the FPÖ in the government, the slogans 'Stop Haider,' 'Strike Now' can only be a call for extraparlimentary action for a new parliamentary coalition, that is, a 'more militant' call to replace the FPÖ with the SPÖ" (WV No. 730, 25 February 2000).

Then, too, the IG posed as the militant voice of anti-fascist unity. Denouncing us for "lulling the masses," the IG devoted 20 pages of its *Internationalist* (June 2000) to "proving" that Haider's FPÖ is fascist. So does the IG think Austria is fascist today? Have the unions been crushed, political parties driven underground, concentration camps set up? The complete annihilation of the organized workers movement—that is what fascism means, not the election of an ultra-rightist within a bourgeois-democratic framework.

In weaving its pseudo-revolutionary fantasies, the IG seeks to deny the very real obstacles that stand in the way of forging a revolutionary party. Thus it simply equates LO and the LCR, falsely claiming that both are "organizing extra-parliamentary support for the 'Republican front' for Chirac" (26 April) and "openly or tacitly, encouraged a vote for Chirac in the second round" (4 May). In an earlier posting on its Web site (14 April), the IG lyingly denounced our open letter for supposedly granting "conditional critical support" to LO, and instead simply dismissed LO because it has "applauded bonapartist and racist police demonstrations." We seek to win militants who are drawn to LO on the

basis of its stated opposition to the popular front by *exposing* how that is contradicted by its tacit support to Vigipirate. Where the IG aims only to be the "militant" tail of whatever's in motion, we engage in clear and honest programmatic struggle because our aim is to build a conscious proletarian vanguard party on the basis of the Trotskyist program.

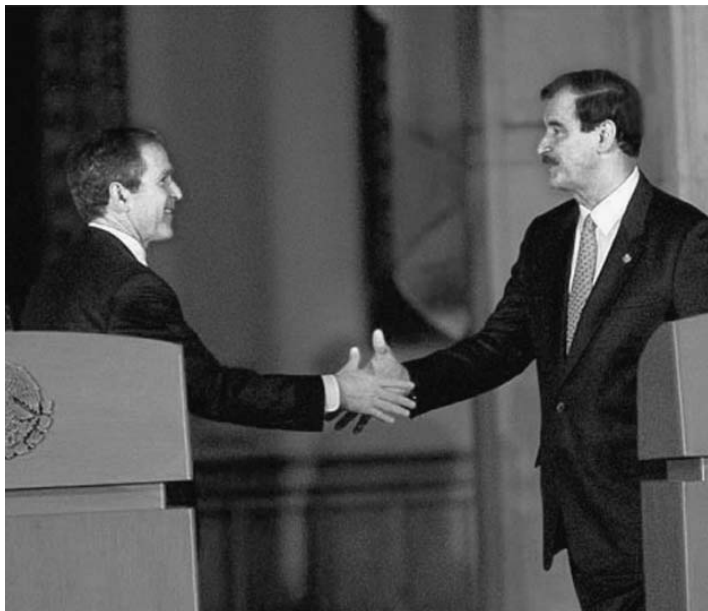
For the French bourgeoisie, Le Pen's score in the elections—and the popular rallying around the tricolor orchestrated by the reformist parties—was a godsend. Faced with a significant level of labor struggle in response to unemployment and attacks on social benefits, the ruling classes of Europe seek to portray themselves as the democratic representatives of the whole people. The more they can submerge class consciousness under a barrage of "national unity," the easier it will be for them to launch imperialist military adventures abroad and attacks on the working class and minorities at home. Against the reformist misleaders who chain the workers to the capitalist order, we Trotskyists fight for the class independence the proletariat needs to resist the attacks of the bourgeoisie. And we will not let the working class forget the miserable leftists who rallied to the defense of the imperialist "French republic." ■

Cuba...

(continued from page 2)

inauguration celebrations for Mexican bourgeois presidents, including Carlos Salinas and Vicente Fox, presenting this grotesque friendliness as proximity to "the people of Mexico." We Trotskyists understand that the nationalist bureaucracy must be overthrown by a *political revolution* that maintains the proletarian basis of the economy and transfers political power to the workers, led by a Leninist-Trotskyist vanguard party around a profoundly *internationalist* program.

The Mexican pseudo-left reflects the politics of the bourgeoisie in regard to Cuba. The reformist Partido Obrero Socialista (POS) openly regurgitates counterrevolutionary propaganda, hailing a pro-capitalist riot in Havana and counterrevolutionary *gusano* mobilizations in Miami in 1994, and referring to the *gusanos* as "the Cuban proletariat in the U.S." (*El Socialista*, October 1994). On the other hand, in this country Cuba is admired by wide sectors of workers, students and even the petty bourgeoisie, who see it as a symbol of defiance to the hated American imperialists. A reflection of this are the campaigns of voluntary labor and aid organized by groups like the "Va por Cuba" [Go for Cuba] committee and the tendency En Lucha [In Struggle]. However, without a revolutionary, internationalist, proletarian program, what these groups end up doing is supporting every maneuver of the Castroite bureaucracy, while adapting to



Drapear/White House

Bush greeted by Mexican president Fox at Monterrey UN summit, March 22.

capitalism in their own countries, thus keeping the impulses of those who want to defend the Cuban Revolution within the framework of Third World nationalism. Castro explicitly represented this outlook in his brief speech at the Monterrey summit. While pointing out that "the current world economic order constitutes a system of plunder," he said not one word about class struggle and instead appealed to the imperialists and the United Nations to "provide direct help to development with the democratic participation of all" in the underdeveloped world. These appeals for imperialism to become somehow more responsible and humanitarian are not only absurd but reactionary, because they create deadly

illusions that the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie in its "democratic" ornaments may somehow be the agent of social change in favor of the workers and oppressed. This lie ties the exploited to their exploiters and leads social struggle to a dead end. Imperialism is not a policy based on "bad ideas," but something integral to the functioning of the system based upon private property, extraction of profits and the need of capitalism to conquer new markets.

In the U.S., the pseudo-Trotskyist organization Socialist Action (followers of the late Ernest Mandel, like the Mexican Liga de Unidad Socialista and Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores [PRT]) recently published an article

cheering Castro's speech at the summit. They write that "Castro spelled the only way out for semi-colonial countries like Afghanistan, Mexico, and Argentina" when he said during his speech that "Rich countries should condone foreign debt and concede new loans to finance development" (*Socialist Action*, April 2002).

What all these groups have in common—from the POS to En Lucha, Socialist Action and the PRT—is their illusions in reforming capitalism and their hatred of the USSR, the economic and military powerhouse of the deformed workers states, which represented a real counterweight to imperialism. They all sided precisely with imperialism in celebrating the capitalist counterrevolution that destroyed the USSR ten years ago.

More urgently than ever, the Cuban Revolution needs international extension to survive. To defend the Cuban Revolution also means to fight for proletarian revolution at home in Mexico and across the border in the belly of the American imperialist beast, with its powerful, multiracial working class. The defense of the gains of the Cuban Revolution necessarily means fighting to break the Mexican working class from nationalism, and building an independent, class-struggle opposition to all the bourgeois parties, whether PAN, PRI or PRD. To build parties around a program capable of leading the working class in this task is the fight of the sections of the International Communist League. *Imperialism cannot be combatted with nationalism! Defend, extend the Cuban Revolution! For socialist revolution throughout the Americas!* ■

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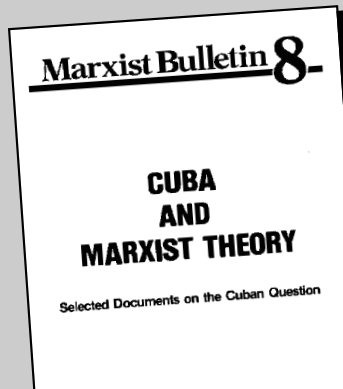
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WORKERS VANGUARD

France: Fake Left Backs Chirac

MAY 13—Conservative French president Jacques Chirac celebrated his re-election last Sunday by declaring that his first order of business would be stepped up “security,” a code word for racist cop terror against minorities. The election offered voters a pernicious “choice” between the racist Chirac and the outright fascist Jean-Marie Le Pen, leader of the National Front (FN). It was like being asked to choose between smallpox and cholera! Yet virtually the entire left rallied behind Chirac as a supposed champion of “Republican values,” forming a reactionary national front that extended from the Gaullist right to the “far left.”

Far from being a bulwark against the extreme right, this broad spectrum of support for Chirac—and his 82 percent of the vote—will only lead to even more severe state repression against workers and all the oppressed. Chirac’s “thank you” for the support he got from the “left” was to immediately intensify the Vigipirate campaign of cop terror, dramatically expanding subway “identity checks” of blacks and North Africans (Maghrebins) and moving to reinforce police squads by 40 percent in the Paris subway system. He is also shutting down the Sangatte camp for asylum-seekers near the English Channel. During the campaign, Le Pen vowed to load the Sangatte immigrants on a special train—evoking the Nazi deportations of Jews to the death camps during World War II—and ship them to Blair’s Britain. Now Chirac is moving to get rid of them and ship them anywhere. This is what the “left” voted for in its hysterical campaign to stop Le Pen!

The election was preceded by almost daily mass demonstrations throughout the country in which hundreds of thousands of mainly young protesters expressed their outrage that a fascist had made it to the second round of the presidential ballot. Practically the entire left, from the Socialist Party (PS) and Communist Party (PCF) to the fake-Trotskyist Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire (LCR), pitched in to help channel that explosion of anger into getting out the vote for the rightist Chirac. It was the popular-front government—led by the PS and including the PCF and the bourgeois Greens—that prepared the way for Le Pen’s electoral gains. From the mass expulsion of immigrants to Vigipirate, the popular front’s racist attacks helped make Le Pen’s venomous rantings “respectable.”

The first round of the elections represented a stinging repudiation of the popular-front government. Socialist prime minister Lionel Jospin promptly announced his resignation. Now, with parliamentary elections scheduled for next month, the “choice” being offered voters is whether it will be the right or the “left” that carries out more racist attacks and anti-working-class austerity. The electoral campaign is already centered on the same racist themes of “crime” and “security” that dominated the presidential elections.

Meanwhile, the opportunist LCR is riding high, as the bourgeois press touts them as responsible far leftists who rallied support to vote Chirac and save the Republic. Voting Chirac was the LCR’s hoped-for entry card into the “United Left,” the new name of the PS-led class-collaborationist coalition for the parliamentary elections. The LCR was report-



AP

Break with Class Collaboration! For a Multiethnic Revolutionary Workers Party!



Le Bolchévique

Paris, May Day: Hundreds of thousands protest electoral gains of fascist Le Pen. While fake left pushed support for rightist Chirac, LTF banner called for class struggle against capitalism, proclaiming, “Down With Unity with Chirac!”

edly granted a seat in the back-room horse trading aimed at cobbling together this new coalition—a process that LCR leader Alain Krivine calls “the reconstruction on the left” (*Libération*, 4 May).

Having helped make Chirac master of the house, as soon as the polls closed the LCR staged a rally at Place de la Bastille, joined by the PS, to begin organizing against Chirac! LCR presidential candidate Olivier Besancenot put on a militant face, declaring: “As in Italy, we need to prepare a general strike.” Such prattle is nothing but a cynical attempt to maneuver workers into electing a new popular-front coalition. Meanwhile, the anarchist CNT and the Anarchist Federa-

tion (FA) were also very much part of the “stop Le Pen” (read: vote Chirac) swamp—despite all their talk, this time in the small print, against elections. The FA carried a banner in the Paris May Day demonstration that was at best ambiguous and at worst social-chauvinist, which read: “French/Immigrants: Our Country Is Liberty and Equality!” “Our country”?!

The LCR likewise prettifies imperialist France as a bastion of liberty and equality, appealing for French military intervention in the Near East and the Balkans. Besancenot refused even to defend soccer players from Corsica, long oppressed and persecuted by France,

against a chauvinist tirade by Chirac because they jeered the French national anthem at a May 11 match. “I don’t know if one can jeer *La Marseillaise* in the French Stadium,” Besancenot told *Le Monde* (15 May), “but in any case one has the right to boo Jacques Chirac.”

As the immediate “vote Chirac” frenzy subsides, a lot of workers and minorities will rightly blame those who stampeded them into voting for Chirac. Lutte Ouvrière (LO), an ostensibly Trotskyist organization which resisted the pressure to call for a vote to this rightist—for which it was reviled, hissed and booed—could be well positioned to make gains.

In the lead-up to the first round, our comrades of the Ligue Trotskyiste de France issued a 10 March open letter to LO (WV No. 778, 5 April), which recognized that its presidential campaign sought to draw a crude class line against the Jospin popular front. At the same time, we explained why LO did not warrant even the most critical electoral support:

“LO does not oppose the government because they are opposed to class collaboration: they empty their correct opposition of all its content by their tacit support to Vigipirate and their explicit support to the reactionary mobilizations of cops in November.... LO’s refusal to fight against Vigipirate represents a loyalty oath to the racist bourgeois order and to the anti-working-class austerity of the Jospin government. But if, in its campaign, LO came out clearly against Vigipirate and the cop terror, we would envision calling for voting for LO, without muting our criticisms of their program.”

Only after the election has LO “discovered” that the policies of the Jospin government—which LO helped put in office—were racist and paved the way for Le Pen.

LO’s main emphasis going into the second round was to appeal to workers who had voted for Le Pen on the first round not to do so again. But in capitulating to the Jospin government’s Vigipirate/“security” campaign, LO aided the popular front in driving backward workers into the arms of reaction. This election was a clear demonstration of how, in the absence of a credible left opposition to popular-front austerity and racist attacks, more backward sections of the working class can be attracted to “radical” right-wing demagogues. That underlines why the fight against racist oppression is so central to anti-capitalist struggle. Yet LO’s timeworn practice is to capitulate to the existing level of consciousness of the working class rather than struggle against racist, sexist and anti-gay bigotry.

The centrist Internationalist Group (IG), a small clot of defectors from the revolutionary Trotskyism of the International Communist League, struck an ultra-militant posture over the French elections, thundering (in bold print) in a 26 April leaflet that it was “*necessary to mobilize the power of the working class to boycott the electoral circus of the bourgeoisie*” through “*demonstrations and workers strikes*” on the day of the vote. Interestingly, the “boycott” line was also promoted by the cyberspace political bandits of David North’s World Socialist Web Site (29 April), who are past masters at cynical posturing to camouflage their

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