

Carter/Bush: Two Faces of Counterrevolution

Defend Cuba Against U.S. Imperialism!

U.S. Out of Guantánamo!

Each in its own way, Jimmy Carter's visit to Cuba earlier this month and President Bush's anti-Cuba tirade in Miami underline the determination of all wings of the U.S. ruling class to overthrow the Cuban Revolution. Speaking for a growing wing of the American bourgeoisie which looks to increased imperialist economic penetration to strengthen the forces of counterrevolution within Cuba, Carter called for an end to the 43-year-old embargo. Only days after Carter embraced Castro in Havana, Bush played to a crowd of rabidly anti-Communist Cuban *gusanos* (worms) in Miami, vowing to maintain the blockade with the purpose of strangling the Cuban Revolution.

Bush's speech was not simply aimed at helping his brother ride to re-election as Florida governor on the basis of the *gusano* vote. The Bush administration itself is riddled with *gusanos*, including assistant secretary of state Otto Reich. Other prominent members of the Bush team include John Negroponte and Elliott Abrams, who in the 1980s directed the CIA-backed contra terrorists in Nicaragua and the death squad regime in El Salvador. The Bush administration has provocatively used the U.S. military base at Guantánamo Bay to imprison captives from the U.S. war on Afghanistan. On the eve of Carter's visit, the White House ranted that Cuba was developing biological weapons, a charge reiterated two weeks later by an administration spokesman who ominously warned, "We're thinking about the next steps" (*Business Day*, 22 May). This is no idle threat. Cuba is one of seven countries listed by the Pentagon as potential first-strike nuclear targets.

Ever since the government of Fidel Castro expropriated the capitalist class in Cuba in 1960-61, establishing a bureaucratically deformed workers state, the U.S. ruling class has worked relentlessly to undermine the Cuban Revolution and re-establish the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie—from the 1961 Playa Girón (Bay of Pigs) invasion to repeated attempts to assassinate Castro; from funding counter-revolutionary terrorists in Miami to the ongoing economic embargo. For more than three decades, the biggest obstacle to Washington's drive for capitalist counter-revolution in Cuba was the existence of the Soviet Union, which supported Cuba with some \$4 billion a year in aid and



Spartacist Canada

World Youth Festival in Havana, 1997. U.S. imperialists seek to overturn Cuban Revolution, which has brought enormous gains to working people there.

provided a crucial military shield against imperialism. In the wake of the capitalist counterrevolution that destroyed the Soviet degenerated workers state in 1991-92, the imperialist rulers see their big chance to bury the Cuban Revolution once and for all.

The collapse of the USSR also enabled the American bourgeoisie to pursue different means of promoting counterrevolution in Cuba. After the Democratic Clinton administration twice tightened the embargo in the mid 1990s in an attempt to squeeze Cuba into submission, growing sections of the ruling class have concluded that such moves only serve to rally the population around the Castro regime. Moreover, American corporations have found themselves cut off from access to the markets which the Cuban government has opened up to foreign capital over the past decade. Divisions in the ruling class over Cuba were evident two years ago when Clinton agreed to return six-year-old Elián Gonzalez to his father in Cuba (see "The Elián Case and the U.S. Imperialist Drive for Counterrevolution—Defend the Gains of the Cuban Revolution!" WV No. 734, 21 April 2000).

Carter is simply the most recent and most prominent of a string of American politicians, both Democrats and Republicans, to visit Cuba in recent years. His visit was engineered to coincide with the Varela petition campaign by pro-imperialist dissidents demanding, as

the *Washington Post* (28 April) reported, "a national referendum to guarantee freedom of expression and association, amnesty for political prisoners, free elections and the right to private enterprise." This amounts to a program for "democratic" counterrevolution. The Varela project, named after a 19th-century Cuban Catholic priest, was launched around the time of the 1998 visit by Pope John Paul II to Cuba and is led by the head of the "Christian Liberation Movement."

In welcoming Carter at the airport in Havana, Castro proclaimed: "It is no secret that for almost a century there have

not been optimal relations between the two states. However, I wish to state that in the four years of your tenure as president, you had the courage to make efforts to change the course of those relations" (*Los Angeles Times*, 12 May). In fact, Carter ushered in a renewed imperialist anti-Soviet war drive during his presidency in the late 1970s, wielding the same "human rights" rhetoric he used in Cuba. In Angola, this Cold War drive took the form of a hot war, as the U.S. backed the racist South African army fighting Cuban troops who had been sent in to defend the left-nationalist MPLA regime.

Carter and Bush are simply two faces of the drive for imperialist-backed counterrevolution in Cuba. As the *Wall Street Journal* noted in a 21 May editorial: "Let's remember this is a family spat, between people who disagree on the best strategy for achieving their ultimate goal: bringing down the Castro regime." Upon his return to the U.S., Carter affirmed that "the ultimate goals of the White House and The Carter Center are the same" (*Washington Post*, 24 May).

As proletarian revolutionaries in the belly of the imperialist beast, we fight for the **unconditional military defense** of the Cuban deformed workers state against imperialist attack and internal counterrevolution. We call for an end to U.S. imperialism's embargo against Cuba, a blatant act of war, and demand the immediate withdrawal of American forces from Guantánamo Bay.

Defend the Gains of the Cuban Revolution!

In a White House speech just before his meeting with the *gusanos* in Miami, Bush ranted that Castro was a "tyrant" who has debased the "legacy of courage" dating back to Cuba's fight for independence a century ago and "has turned a beautiful island into a prison." The "independence" and "freedom" the American imperialists seek to restore was 60 years of brutal exploitation and racist brutality—first under direct American rule

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Former U.S. president Jimmy Carter greeted by Fidel Castro, May 12. Carter's "human rights" message is aimed at fomenting capitalist counter-revolution in Cuba.



On the Hebrew-Speaking Nation

29 April 2002

To the Editor:

Let me say at the outset that I think your line on Palestine, as expressed in “Zionist Bloodbath in Jenin” (WV No. 779), is largely correct. However I am concerned about your continual description of the Jewish population of Israel as “Hebrew-speaking people” (and the working class component as “Hebrew-speaking workers”). This formulation is quite misleading.

Modern Hebrew has about as much social roots as Esperanto. Based on the dead language of Ancient Hebrew, it was largely invented by Eliezer ben Yehuda (1858-1922) as part of the Zionist project to manufacture a “Jewish nation.” Unlike the socialist movement, the Zionists were contemptuous towards Yiddish and other languages the world’s Jews actually spoke. If not for the founding of the State of Israel in 1948, where it became the official language, Modern Hebrew would be a mere curiosity. As it is, Hebrew is the mother tongue of only about half of Israel’s Jewish population. There are a lot of recent immigrants who speak Russian, for example. Of course almost all Israeli Jews speak Hebrew as a lingua franca, but so do



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Yemeni Jews arrive in Israel in 1950s. Sephardic and other Jewish immigrants have been assimilated into Hebrew-speaking nation.

many so-called “Arab Israelis” (i.e. Palestinians who still live within Israel’s official borders).

The bourgeois media largely calls this group, “Israelis.” I gather you avoid this because you want to distinguish the ethnic group from the current political structure of the State of Israel. In this case

you should just call them “Jews.” The only reason I can see for you to avoid this is because of the religious connotation. However religion *is* the only common denominator (apart from a distant and dilute “Semitic” ancestry), whether it is personally held or a matter of family tradition.

This opens up a can of worms. I feel that your use of this formulation, “Hebrew-speaking people,” concedes to the Zionists in regards to the all-important “facts on the ground.” They have not yet created the homogenous “nation state” this implies. In this current article, you oversimplify the Israel-Palestinian question as a classic case of interpenetrated peoples with both deserving the right of national self-determination. You criticise the PLO for treating Jews as a religious minority instead of a nationality, yet (as I have said) religion *is* the common denominator. (The PLO has, in fact, occasionally used the slogan of a “binational state”—see Edward Said, *The Politics of Dispossession*.) What makes this different from the classic case of interpenetrated peoples (like the Balkans) is that the Zionists have deliberately kept on interposing their “Jewish nation” and forcing out the Arabs, up to the present day with mass immigration and the settlements in the Occupied Territories. What makes them

different from the Afrikaners in South Africa or the French *pied-noirs* in Algeria? Well, at least these groups could claim ethnic cohesion and roots in the land. This does not of course justify “ethnic cleansing,” however bloodless. But there is also no justification to worship the *fait accompli* of a Jewish nation—especially when this has not fully been accomplished. Unfortunately I have to conclude without providing a solution. I don’t support the Arab nationalism promoted by the PLO, but your critique glosses over this complex issue. All this might seem overly theoretical when there is blood on the streets, but when the only “practical” alternatives on offer are suicide bombings on one hand and mechanised murder on the other, a little rationality is not misplaced.

Niall C.

WV replies:

As Niall C.’s concluding paragraph makes clear, his difference is not simply terminological. He denies that the existence of a Hebrew-speaking nation is an accomplished fact or that Israel/Palestine is a “classic case of interpenetrated peoples.” On this basis, he would obviously also disagree with our insistence that both the Hebrew-speaking and Palestinian Arab peoples have the right to self-determination and that these conflicting national rights can only be equitably realized through Arab/Hebrew workers revolution and the creation of a socialist federation of the Near East.

To begin with basic considerations, a common language is one of the defining characteristics of a nation, though not the sole one. Indeed, in places like Serbia, Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina in the former Yugoslavia, distinctive religions, cultures and histories within the context of a more or less common language constitute defining differences. In the case of Israel—an exclusivist, semi-theocratic state—religion and language overlap. But to speak of a “Jewish nation” tacitly accepts the claim of the Zionists (and anti-Semites) that Israel is the “Jewish state,” which speaks for and has (or should have) the loyalty of Jews everywhere.

The existence of a Hebrew-speaking nation in Israel—as distinct from the Jewish people in the U.S., Russia or elsewhere—is an accomplished fact. As we detailed in some depth in our two-part

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Political Revolution and Defense of the Workers State

In the 1938 Transitional Program, the founding document of the Fourth International, Leon Trotsky motivated the need for the Soviet proletariat to sweep away the Stalinist bureaucracy. The Stalinists’ betrayals of proletarian revolution internationally and attempts to appease world imperialism in the name of “socialism in one country” ultimately led to the counterrevolutionary destruction of the USSR in 1991-92. Today



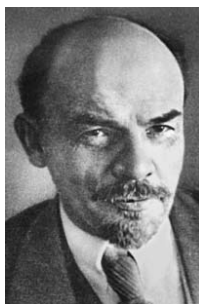
TROTSKY

in China, the Stalinist bureaucracy’s “market reforms” increasingly embolden the imperialists and strengthen the forces of domestic counterrevolution. This poses point-blank the need to forge a Leninist-Trotskyist party that can lead the combative proletariat in a political revolution to oust the Beijing bureaucracy and defend and extend the gains of the 1949 Revolution.

The Soviet Union emerged from the October revolution as a workers’ state. State ownership of the means of production, a necessary prerequisite to socialist development, opened up the possibility of rapid growth of the productive forces. But the apparatus of the workers’ state underwent a complete degeneration at the same time: it was transformed from a weapon of the working class into a weapon of bureaucratic violence against the working class, and more and more a weapon for the sabotage of the country’s economy. The bureaucratization of a backward and isolated workers’ state and the transformation of the bureaucracy into an all-powerful privileged caste constitute the most convincing refutation—not only theoretically but this time practically—of the theory of socialism in one country.

The USSR thus embodies terrific contradictions. But it still remains *a degenerated workers’ state*. Such is the social diagnosis. The political prognosis has an alternative character: either the bureaucracy, becoming ever more the organ of the world bourgeoisie in the workers’ state, will overthrow the new forms of property and plunge the country back into capitalism; or the working class will crush the bureaucracy and open the way to socialism.

—Leon Trotsky, “The Death Agony of Capitalism and the Tasks of the Fourth International” (1938)



LENIN

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31 May 2002

Public Meeting: Mumia’s Lawyer Speaks

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French Trotskyists on Legislative Elections:

Why We Still Don't Call for a Vote to Lutte Ouvrière

May 27—Jacques Chirac was re-elected president of France earlier this month with the support of virtually the entire left, who rallied behind this open rightist as a supposed champion of “Republican values” against fascist National Front candidate Jean-Marie Le Pen. Taking a page from Le Pen’s book, Chirac’s first order of business was to declare that his top priority will be fighting “crime,” ratcheting up racist cop terror in largely

LE BOLCHEVIK

black and North African ghettos. His new interior minister, Nicolas Sarkozy, underlined the point by accompanying a contingent of riot cops on a nighttime show of force in minority and working-class neighborhoods outside Paris. Meanwhile, the popular-front coalition of the Socialist Party (PS), the Communist Party (PCF) and the bourgeois Greens, which until a few weeks ago was the government, complains that Chirac is taking credit for “security” measures, such as the “Vigipirate” campaign of racist cop terror, that they introduced when they were in power.

France today offers a striking demonstration of the reality of bourgeois “democracy,” an electoral shell game in which the oppressed simply get to choose which overseer will wield the whip. In the first round of the presidential elections, voters so decisively repudiated the PS-led coalition government that the Socialist prime minister Lionel Jospin did not even make it to the second round and promptly retired from politics. Now voters are being asked in next month’s legislative elections to “choose” whether it will be the right or the “left” that carries out racist attacks and anti-working-class austerity.

The absolute independence of the working class from the capitalist class and its parties is the necessary starting point for unleashing class struggle against the bourgeois order. We give no electoral support to the parties of the popular front, a class-collaborationist alliance that ties the workers to their class enemy, derails their struggles and poisons their class consciousness. For years, the capitalist popular-front government used terror against immigrants and other minorities to deflect anger over high unemployment and attacks on social programs. Mass deportations and Vigipirate put wind in the sails of the fascists.

The prize for being the most lying cynics on the French left must be awarded to the Pabloites of the Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire (LCR). After mobilizing their forces to get out the vote *for Chirac*, the LCR and its youth group, the Jeunesse Communiste Révolutionnaire, now pretend to be the best builders of a “social third round” against Chirac and even deny they voted for him. The audacity of their lies is in direct proportion to their craven capitulation to the reactionary national unity with Chirac, whom George Bush himself calls his “best friend” in the “war against terrorism.” We will not let anyone forget the LCR’s class treason. Disgust with the LCR’s line has evidently caused enough turmoil that even its newspaper *Rouge* (23 May) felt compelled to print an outraged letter from a reader who decries the “serious political error which raises doubts about the LCR’s capacities to evaluate a situation and make historic

Down With Racist Vigipirate!

decisions.... I expect that the LCR will soon re-examine this episode and draw the lessons.” The LCR is positively oozing with goo about building “a new force” with a ten-point program which doesn’t even mention the working class, much less the need for a socialist revolution. Their “new force” is the old garbage of social democrats who deceive the workers with the lie that “democracy” can be achieved through reforms. Yet as plant closings and police repression in the *banlieues* [working-class and minority suburbs] reveal, *their* “democracy” is a dictatorship of the capitalist ruling class.



Le Bolchévik

LTF banner at Paris May Day march reads: “For Class Struggle Against the Capitalist System! Down With Unity with Chirac! For a Revolutionary Multiethnic Workers Party!”

Lutte Ouvrière (LO), a group claiming to be Trotskyist, sought during the presidential elections to draw a crude class line against the popular front by refusing to call for a vote to Jospin. However, LO’s stated opposition to the government was belied by its refusal to oppose Vigipirate and by its explicit support to reactionary cop mobilizations last fall. Our comrades of the Ligue Trotskyiste de France (LTF) refused to give LO even the most critical support, while declaring in an open letter to LO: “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” (WV No. 778, 5 April).

Under the pressure of events, LO has zigzagged sharply. With mass protests sweeping France following Le Pen’s first-round electoral success, LO stood up to considerable pressure—even vilification—for its refusal to join the chorus calling for a vote to Chirac in the second round. After Chirac’s re-election, LO continued briefly to strike a left posture, stating that the policies of the Jospin government had been racist and had paved the way for Le Pen—something they never deigned to admit when the popular front was in power. But LO quickly lurched back to the right, continuing—and deepening—its embrace of the campaign for “security,” a code word for cop terror. When Sarkozy announced that cops in minority housing projects would be armed with guns that fire golf-ball-sized rubber bullets (“flash-balls”), even the thoroughly reformist PCF denounced the move. But not LO, which called it “an electoral trick in order to

continue doing nothing serious against insecurity” (*Lutte Ouvrière*, 24 May)!

By making common cause with the government’s “security” campaign, LO swears fealty to bourgeois “law and order” and demonstrates how its perennial economism and contempt for the fight against all forms of special oppression pander to backward consciousness within the working class. In her keynote speech at the annual LO Fête on May 19, LO presidential candidate Arlette Laguiller never so much as uttered the words “racism,” “war” or “imperialism.” She went out of her way to solidarize with

later, in a 4 May statement, the IG idiotically asserted that LO “encouraged a vote for Chirac in the second round.” Then at a May 17 demonstration in New York, IG founder-leader Jan Norden taunted our comrades, “LO, LO,” while one of his acolytes ranted: “It’s the LO supporters!”

Such absurdly flagrant lies have all the hallmarks of political desperation. The IG has been trying to posture 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—beating the drums for mass mobilizations, even for “demonstrations and workers strikes” to “boycott” the second round of voting. While admitting in passing (in its 4 May statement) that “Le Pen is not about to take power,” the IG’s articles are full of the same “fascism is around the corner” rhetoric—with analogies to Adolf Hitler in Germany, Marshal Pétain in France, etc.—that the French “left” used to justify lining up behind Chirac.

As we remarked in “France: Fake Left Backs Chirac” (WV No. 781, 17 May), the IG pushed the same line in the case of Austria two years ago, when Jörg Haider’s openly racist Freedom Party (FPÖ) entered a coalition with the right-wing People’s Party (ÖVP). Social democrats across Europe screamed that Austria was on the verge of a fascist takeover and mobilized to pressure the ÖVP to kick out Haider and reinstate its longstanding coalition with the Austrian Socialist Party (SPÖ). Then, too, the IG posed as the militant voice of anti-fascist unity, devoting 20 pages of its *Internationalist* (June 2000) to “proving” that Haider’s FPÖ is fascist. “So does the IG think Austria is fascist today?” we challenged them in our last article. Unable to answer this question, these liars and charlatans instead sputter and fume.

Haider’s political outlook is indeed fascistic. But the FPÖ’s rise is essentially an electoral phenomenon. Likewise, while Le Pen’s gains at the polls have triggered a sharp shift to the right in the bourgeois political spectrum and are sure to further embolden his fascist thugs, the National Front’s current success is mainly an electoral phenomenon. Indeed, if fascist terror against immigrants is not now rampant in France, it is largely because the popular-front government was already carrying out the kind of program of cop terror and deportations that is the fascists’ rallying cry.

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LE BOLCHEVIK
LE TROTSKYISTE DE FRANCE
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Troupes US, françaises, de l'ONU, hors d'Afghanistan!
Pour une lutte de classe ici contre les capitalistes et leur gouvernement
A bas Vigipirate!

Troupes françaises en route pour l'Afghanistan. Ici, une bandière dessinée de soutien défilait sur les manifestations anti-militaristes.
Après deux mois de bombardements aériens continués contre l'Afghanistan, qui ont fait des milliers de victimes, les capitalistes ont envoyé des troupes en Afghanistan pour faire le travail que les bombes n'ont pas fait. Les capitalistes ont lancé le slogan de l'ONU: Les combattants doivent se retirer de l'Afghanistan. Ce gouvernement de leur parti a dit: Non. Les capitalistes ont lancé le slogan: Les combattants doivent se retirer de l'Afghanistan. Ce gouvernement de leur parti a dit: Non. Les capitalistes ont lancé le slogan: Les combattants doivent se retirer de l'Afghanistan. Ce gouvernement de leur parti a dit: Non.

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WTO Entry Extends Imperialist Penetration

Workers Protests Shake China

Part One of this article, which we conclude here, appeared in WV No. 781 (17 May).

PART TWO

In refuting the Stalinist doctrine of “building socialism in one country,” Bolshevik leader Leon Trotsky emphasized that the threat to the Soviet Union posed by the forces of imperialism was not just military but even more fundamentally economic:

“The capitalist world shows us by its export and import figures that it has other instruments of persuasion than those of military intervention. To the extent that productivity of labor and the productivity of a social system as a whole are measured on the market by the correlation of prices, it is not so much military intervention as the intervention of cheaper capitalist commodities that constitutes perhaps the greatest immediate menace to Soviet economy.”

—*The Third International After Lenin* (1928)

Indeed, the unrelenting military and economic pressure of world imperialism brought about the demise of the Soviet degenerated workers state, which was destroyed by capitalist counter-revolution in 1991-92.

The main weapon available to a nationally isolated and relatively economically backward workers state against the intervention of cheaper goods is the state monopoly of foreign trade—i.e., the strict control of imports and exports by the government. However, the moves toward decentralization of China’s planned, collectivized economy by Deng Xiaoping and his successors have led to a breaking down of the state monopoly of foreign trade. Thousands of large state-owned enterprises (as well as foreign firms and joint ventures) have been given a wide latitude to import raw materials and equipment. The Beijing regime has sought to protect state-owned industry and also small-scale peasant agriculture from the full force of foreign capitalist

competition through tariffs, subsidies, import licenses, limits on access to foreign exchange and other such palliatives.

But these measures cannot fundamentally protect the Chinese economy against the dominant imperialist powers. The 1949 Revolution that overthrew the Chinese bourgeoisie and ousted the imperialists led to the creation of a centrally planned economy and state monopoly of foreign trade, which resulted in massive social progress, including advancement of industry. But against the economies of the U.S., Japan and West Europe, Chinese

industry, with its relatively low productivity of labor, cannot compete on the world market. By abandoning the state monopoly of foreign trade, the Beijing bureaucracy is opening the mainland’s economy to even greater imperialist pressures.

With China’s recent entry into the World Trade Organization (WTO), Western and Japanese imperialists demand that China’s remaining trade barriers be eliminated or radically reduced. Beijing is for the first time granting a foreign bank—America’s Citibank—the right to provide foreign-currency reserves to domestic customers. The regime has promised to eventually drop all restrictions against foreign banks offering local currency services to Chinese customers. These moves would provide Western and Japanese bankers points of direct contact on the mainland with entrepreneurs, rural businessmen and other capitalist-restorationist forces.

Meanwhile, the U.S. has adopted “anti-dumping” tariffs as high as 30 percent for Chinese and other steel imports! Faced with U.S. protectionism and seeking to take advantage of lower Chinese tariffs under the WTO agreement, a number of steel-producing countries have sharply increased exports to China, causing revenues at the largest state-owned steel company, Baoshan Iron & Steel, to plummet.

Regime spokesmen openly declare that as the economy adjusts to the terms of international competition stipulated by the WTO, the already soaring unemployment rate will *triple* over the next three years, with as many as ten million workers losing their jobs annually. Even this may be an understatement. Western bankers and academics estimate the current

rate of unemployment at around 9-10 percent. The rate in the “rust belt” cities is commonly put at 25 percent. Unlike in capitalist societies, China’s state industries are supposed to maintain benefits for laid-off workers; no one is being kicked out of their subsidized housing. But there is enormous pressure for state enterprises to cut back on such benefits, as overseas bankers demand that the central government stop bailing out these companies.

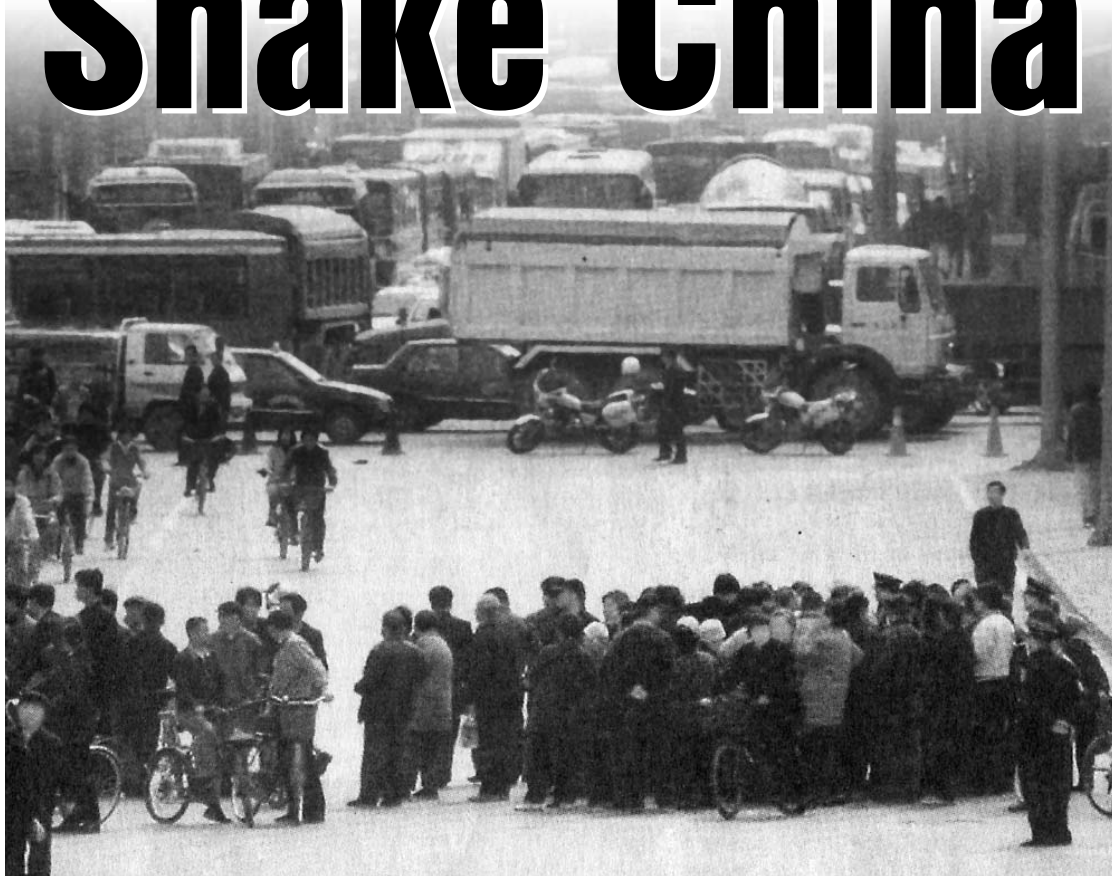
It is among the peasantry that the WTO may take its greatest toll, as import duties are sharply reduced on foreign produce. Some estimate that as many as 40 million Chinese peasants would be displaced if WTO strictures are enforced. Given China’s backward agricultural techniques, even relatively well-off farmers will not be able to compete with produce imported from advanced capitalist countries. The poorer northern and western regions, which include most of China’s ethnic minorities, would be particularly hard hit, aggravating the yawning gap in living standards between the rural hinterland and the booming eastern coastal regions. Moreover, with local officials charged with raising funds for public services since the mid 1980s, the rural population is subjected to extortionate taxes and specially incurred fees, which also help fill the pockets of thieving officials. The result has been a wildfire of peasant protests and riots.

However, the actual effects of China’s entry into the WTO are not predetermined. The rules stipulated by the WTO for trade among member countries, like all other international agreements between sovereign states, are not self-enforcing, and are mainly honored in the breach. Member governments formally agree to abide by WTO rules and decisions and, if necessary, to change their existing policies accordingly. But if a member state violates these rules, openly or surreptitiously, its trading partners have no recourse other than retaliation in kind (just like in the pre-WTO days). Thus the European Union is now threatening to raise tariffs on an array of American imports in retaliation for Bush’s recent increase in U.S. tariffs on foreign steel (which certainly violated WTO rules).

Obviously, the current leadership of the Chinese Stalinist bureaucracy has not joined the WTO with the intention of then flouting its rules and thereby antagonizing the American as well as the Japanese and European ruling classes. But greater fear of internal social unrest may cause them to do that.

Three years ago, right-wing American economists Mark Groombridge and Claude Barfield published a book on China’s then-pending accession to the WTO in which they expressed skepticism that China’s leaders would subject state-owned enterprises (SOEs) to unrestricted international competition:

“The authors consider it naive to think that China will allow SOEs to make decisions based solely on commercial considerations. China has been attempting to restructure its SOEs since 1978,



Beijing: Some 200 retired auto workers shut down traffic on a major thoroughfare to protest pension cuts, March 27.

Defend the Gains of the 1949 Revolution!



Laid-off factory workers protest in northeastern city of Liaoyang this March. Unemployment has risen dramatically in China’s “rust belt.”

Brown/AFP

making the attempt a top priority since 1984. Although considerable progress has been made in some cases, it is clear that commercial factors are not the only considerations; political, social and dubious economic factors count as well. Politically, some Chinese leaders still see SOEs as a tool to protect state leaders from hostile domestic and foreign forces by preserving control over strategic resources.”

—*Tiger by the Tail: China and the World Trade Organization* (1999)

The authors voice concern that if the Chinese government does not restructure its economy according to the dictates of Wall Street and Washington, “the WTO will face enervating disruptions and turmoil for many years to come after China’s accession.”

In their own way, these right-wing ideologues recognize that China is not now a capitalist state. The actual economic effects of entry will be determined by the struggle of the Chinese working class and rural toilers against the privations caused by the “market reforms” instituted by the ruling Stalinist bureaucracy. A parasitic layer administering the collectivized economy that issued out of the 1949 Revolution, this bureaucratic caste is acting ever more openly and directly as a transmission belt for the pressures of world capitalism upon the Chinese deformed workers state.

A proletarian political revolution that ousts the bureaucracy and establishes the rule of workers and peasants councils would re-establish a centrally planned economy and with it a state monopoly of foreign trade. This would necessarily mean pulling out of the WTO and repudiating or radically revising some of the other economic agreements negotiated by the Beijing regime with the capitalist powers. We are not here advocating a return to the economic autarky of the Mao era. To whatever extent possible, a Chinese workers state should take advantage of the international division of labor by promoting a high level of both exports and imports. At the same time, a regime of workers and peasants councils would face intense imperialist hostility, both militarily and economically (e.g., an economic embargo). This underlines the inextricable link between the defense of the gains of the Chinese Revolution and the struggle for socialist revolution internationally.

The Workers State and the Monopoly of Foreign Trade

Some Chinese leftists point to the New Economic Policy (NEP) developed by the Soviet workers state in 1921 as a justification for China’s entry into the WTO and the “market-oriented reforms” in general. Such a comparison is false to the core. Unlike the “reforms” of Deng Xiaoping, Jiang Zemin & Co., the NEP was seen as a temporary means of revitalizing the economy of the workers state that issued out of the 1917 October

1949 Revolution liberated women from centuries-old bondage, symbolized by crippling footbinding (near right). Present-day university graduation ceremony. Women’s gains are being eroded by CCP regime’s “market reforms.”



Joseph Abeles Collection



Shanghai Century Publishing

Revolution. On top of the destruction wreaked by World War I, following the revolution industry was further devastated by a three-year civil war and an imperialist embargo. Most importantly, Lenin and Trotsky’s Bolsheviks fought for the *international extension* of the revolution, particularly to the advanced capitalist countries. Even as the NEP was implemented domestically, the Bolsheviks dedicated much of their efforts to building the Third (Communist) International—an international of revolutionary parties whose task was to lead the working class in the overthrow of the world capitalist order.

Lenin described the NEP as a “strategic retreat” from policies enacted during the Civil War, when the young workers state successfully defended itself against imperialist invasion and counterrevolutionary White armies. Under “war communism,” the Soviet regime requisitioned grain from the peasantry in order to feed its army and workers in the cities. This created huge resentments among the peasants, who began to withhold grain. The dictatorship of the proletariat in backward Soviet Russia had to lean heavily on the peasantry, which was the overwhelming majority of the population. As the Civil War wound down and the revolutionary tide that swept Europe after WWI receded, the cracks in the *smychka* (alliance) between the proletariat and peasantry made a turn in policy urgently necessary.

To get the economy moving, the Bolshevik regime made a series of concessions to market forces. Under the NEP, peasants were allowed to market produce exceeding the quota they were obliged to sell to the state. Small-scale industry (employing no more than 20 people) was encouraged. State industries had to sell their products on the market, giving peasants something to buy in exchange for their produce. Leeway was allowed for foreign investment in leased factories or joint ventures, although imperialist hos-

tility largely blocked such investment.

Crucially, trade was kept under the control of the state. Lenin and Trotsky collaborated to beat back proposals put forward by elements in the Bolshevik leadership, including J. V. Stalin, to weaken the state monopoly of foreign trade. When Nikolai Bukharin advocated reliance on protective tariffs, Lenin insisted in “Re the Monopoly of Foreign Trade” (December 1922):

“No tariff system can be effective in the epoch of imperialism when there are monstrous contrasts between pauper countries and immensely rich countries. Several times Bukharin mentions tariff barriers, failing to realise that under the circumstances indicated any of the wealthy industrial countries can completely break down such tariff barriers. To do this it will be sufficient for it to introduce an export bounty to encourage the export to Russia of goods upon which we have imposed high import duties. All of the industrial countries have more than enough money for this purpose, and by means of such a measure any of them could easily ruin our home industry.

“Consequently, all Bukharin’s arguments about the tariff system would in practice only leave Russian industry entirely unprotected and lead to the adoption of free trading under a very flimsy veil.”

Lenin concluded: “In the present epoch of imperialism the only system of protection worthy of consideration is the monopoly of foreign trade.” This fight with Bukharin, who at that time represented a small minority in the party, foreshadowed a similar fight waged by Trotsky in the mid 1920s, when both Bukharin and Stalin were at the helm of the party.

Industrialization and Revolutionary Internationalism

While the NEP succeeded in reviving economic life, it also created a layer of speculators, small traders and well-to-do peasants (kulaks) who were a corrosive influence on the apparatus of the workers state. Lenin was alarmed at the danger this posed, particularly as these layers found voice among state officials and party leaders. One of the last battles fought by Lenin, who was incapacitated for a year before his death in January 1924, was against the burgeoning bureaucracy that was exerting a conservatizing pressure on the small proletarian vanguard organized in the Bolshevik Party.

As early as April 1923, Trotsky warned of the danger posed by the “scissors crisis” (the lack of sufficient manufactured goods to exchange for agricultural produce, leading the peasants to withhold food from the cities). In early October, he wrote to the Bolshevik Central Committee to demand that it address the urgent need for planned industrialization and open a campaign against bureaucratism in the party. Later that same month, the failure of the expected German revolution shattered the hope of the Soviet workers that a proletarian revolution in Europe would end the desperate isolation of the Soviet republic. The demoralization that swept the working class strengthened the then-ruling “triumvirate” of Stalin, Zinoviev and Kamenev, who expressed the conservative and nationalist outlook of the coalescing bureaucratic stratum.

A loose anti-bureaucratic opposition demanding economic planning and a

faster pace of industrialization came together around Trotsky in the leadup to the Thirteenth Party Conference, held in January 1924. At this conference, the Left Opposition was bureaucratically defeated by Stalin and his allies in the triumvirate. With the benefit of hindsight, Trotsky wrote in his 1935 piece “The Workers’ State, Thermidor and Bonapartism”:

“The smashing of the Left Opposition implied in the most direct and immediate sense the transfer of power from the hands of the revolutionary vanguard into the hands of the more conservative elements among the bureaucracy and the upper crust of the working class. The year 1924—that was the beginning of the Soviet Thermidor.”

In late 1924, Stalin propounded the “theory” of “socialism in one country.” Initially developed as a rationale for economic autarky, this anti-Marxist dogma later served as the bureaucracy’s ideological justification for forfeiting the cause of proletarian revolution internationally in a futile effort to appease world imperialism. As Trotsky noted in his seminal work, *The Revolution Betrayed* (1937):

“Irresoluteness before the individual peasant enterprises, distrust of large plans, defense of a minimum tempo, neglect of international problems—all this taken together formed the essence of the theory of ‘socialism in one country,’ first put forward by Stalin in the autumn of 1924 after the defeat of the proletariat in Germany. Not to hurry with industrialization, not to quarrel with the muzhik, not to count on world revolution, and above all to protect the power of the party bureaucracy from criticism!”

Coming to the fore as a leading theoretician for the bureaucratic regime, Bukharin argued to “build socialism even on a pauper technical basis” and to grant ever greater concessions to the rich peasants. In 1925, he urged the kulaks to “enrich yourselves,” a potentially fatal conciliation of social forces that would inevitably seek the restoration of capitalism in Russia. Encouraged by the bureaucracy, the “NEPmen” continued to grow in strength: at the end of 1926, nearly 60 percent of the industrial labor force worked in privately owned small-scale industry, under the grip of petty capitalists who controlled supply and distribution. The NEPmen and kulaks were demanding that they be allowed to sell their produce on the world market and to import industrial and consumer products.

The bureaucracy’s increasing conciliation of the kulaks led to a conflict of interests in the triumvirate, pitting Zinoviev and Kamenev, with their proletarian bases in Leningrad and Moscow, against Stalin and Bukharin’s pro-kulak policies. In the summer of 1925, Stalin seized control of the Moscow party organization; later that year he smashed Zinoviev’s base of support. In 1926, Zinoviev and Kamenev joined forces with Trotsky’s Left Opposition to form the United Opposition (UO). The UO advocated the planned construction of heavy industry, to be financed by increased taxation of the kulaks. The Opposition also called for a rise in workers’ wages and for the use of economic incentives to further voluntary collectivization among poorer peasants.

In response to Bukharin’s drive to weaken the monopoly of foreign trade,

continued on page 6



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Members of Trotskyist Left Opposition exiled in Siberia commemorate anniversary of Russian Revolution, 1928. Banner reads: “Turn the Fire to the Right—Against Kulak, Nepman and Bureaucrat—Not in Words, But in Deeds.”

China...

(continued from page 5)

the September 1927 “Platform of the Opposition” asserted that the state monopoly “is a vitally necessary instrument for socialist construction, under the circumstances of a higher technological level in the capitalist countries.” But, the Platform continued:

“No domestic policy can by itself deliver us from the economic, political, and military dangers of the capitalist encirclement. The task at home is to move forward as far as possible on the road of socialist construction by strengthening ourselves with a proper class policy, by proper relations between the working class and the peasantry. The internal resources of the Soviet Union are enormous and make this entirely possible. While we make use of the world capitalist market for this purpose, our fundamental historical expectations continue to be linked with the further development of the world proletarian revolution. Its victory in the advanced countries will break the ring of capitalist encirclement, deliver us from our heavy military burden, enormously strengthen us technologically, accelerate our entire development—in town and countryside, in factory and school—and give us the possibility of really building socialism—that is, a classless society, based on the highest level of technology and real equality among all its members both at work and in the enjoyment of the fruits of their labor.”

When the conciliation of the kulaks proved every bit the disaster predicted by the Opposition, Stalin moved to purge his former Bukharinite bloc partners and implement part of the Opposition’s economic program. This turn foreclosed the immediate threat of capitalist restoration. Having laid none of the technical or economic foundations, the Soviet state—with Stalin’s characteristic brutality—moved to collectivize the peasantry and initiate an adventurous rate of industrialization.

In forming the UO, Trotsky and Zinoviev-Kamenev had shared a theoretical opposition to “socialism in one country” and opposition to the pro-peasant economic policies of Stalin and Bukharin. However, on the critical international question of the then-unfolding Chinese Revolution of 1925-27 Trotsky and Zinoviev had fundamental differences. On the instructions of the Comintern, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) was buried inside the bourgeois-nationalist Guomindang (Kuomintang), a policy which eventually paved the way for a bloody defeat. Even before the UO was formed, Trotsky had called for the full withdrawal of the CCP from the Guomindang. This demand, opposed by Zinoviev and his supporters, was not the public line of the UO.

The UO platform called for the “revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry,” insisting

that the Chinese Revolution could only be a national-democratic revolution, not a socialist one. Again, this was at variance with Trotsky’s position. In September 1927, Trotsky argued that “the business at hand is the *dictatorship of the proletariat*” in China. It was on the basis of the experience of the defeat of the Chinese Revolution of 1925-27 that Trotsky came to generalize his theory of permanent revolution, which had been confirmed by the October Revolution: in countries of belated capitalist development, only the dictatorship of the proletariat, leaning on the peasant masses and fighting to extend proletarian rule to the imperialist countries, could break the fetters of political despotism and economic and social backwardness. In his 1928 article “The Opposition’s Errors—Real and Alleged,” Trotsky noted:

“Last fall we did not explain aloud that the experience of 1925-27 had already liquidated the slogan of the democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry for the Chinese revolution, and that in the future this slogan would



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lead either to a regurgitation of Kuomintangism or to adventures. This was quite clearly and precisely predicted. But even here we made concessions (completely impermissible ones) to those who underestimated the depth of the backsliding on the Chinese question.”

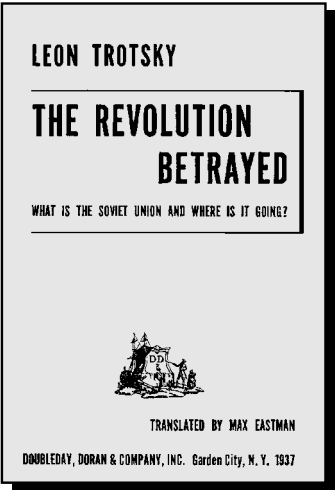
China on the Brink

In China today, the policies of the Stalinist bureaucracy closely resemble those advocated by Bukharin, and then some. The current Beijing regime has discarded even the fig leaf of egalitarian socialism, and many of its offspring openly aspire to become capitalists.

One of the most incisive Chinese critics of the corruption engendered by “market reforms” is the journalist He Qing-

lian, who recently went into exile in the U.S. Her article “China’s Listing Social Structure” (*New Left Review*, September-October 2000) takes aim at the Communist Party leadership for setting up their “princeling” sons (and daughters) in business, calling this a “one family, two systems arrangement.” This is a play on the regime’s policy on the reversion of Hong Kong from British colonial rule to Chinese control in 1997. The policy was dubbed “one country, two systems,” referring to the fact that while political power lay in Beijing, Hong Kong remains capitalist.

Some officials have set themselves up as exploiters by routing funds through dummy corporations in Hong Kong back into the mainland as “foreign” investment. Recently, there has been a marked outflow of money from the mainland, despite laws against the export of capital. The “princelings” and other entrepreneurs often invest overseas via connections they made through joint ventures and other dealings with foreign businessmen.



Bolshevik leader Leon Trotsky’s *The Revolution Betrayed* analyzed rise of Stalinist bureaucracy in USSR, pointed to need for workers political revolution to oust bureaucratic regime.

Describing China’s growing social polarization, He Qinglian writes:

“Many large or medium Chinese cities now have wealthy neighborhoods, often guarded by state-of-the-art security systems. Consumption too is highly stratified. Specialty stores sell high-fashion items to the rich; street stalls offer cheap wares to the poor. Commercialized political power redistributes wealth to an elite now reproducing itself across generations. Members of the middle or lower classes are acutely aware of the mechanisms of dispossession and exploitation. The most obvious phenomenon is the contrast in the fate of managers and workers when a state enterprise goes bankrupt. Workers are thrown off-post without the slightest compensation, but a former manager or head of a factory never falls into the same pit of poverty. On the contrary, he will often be re-employed by the buyer of the firm’s residual assets—not because of his skill as a manager, but for his cooperation in disposing of state property. Such bosses display ever-stronger anti-social tendencies. The result is a rise in terrorist incidents, physical attacks on the rich, stoppages and sabotage in state-owned enterprises—all manifestations of class conflict.”

This is a powerful depiction of a country on the brink of explosion. But where will this lead?

Many purported leftists advance the anti-Marxist notion that capitalist restoration has succeeded in China and the bureaucracy has become a possessing class in its own right (a view apparently shared by He). This position is characteristic of what passes for “Trotskyism” in China, as represented by the Hong Kong-based Pioneer group associated with the United Secretariat (Usec). An article in the Usec’s *International Viewpoint* (March 2002) stated: “The overwhelming majority of technocrats and bureaucrats—the backbone of the CCP—have benefited handsomely from the restoration of a capitalist market economy, and they certainly see no reason to reverse its course.”

Many in the bureaucracy may aspire to a place in the ruling class of a capitalist China for themselves and their children. But this would require a *social counter-revolution* that destroys the workers state and creates a new bourgeois state. Writing of the USSR under Stalin, Trotsky noted in *The Revolution Betrayed*: “The contrast between forms of property and norms of distribution cannot grow indefinitely. Either the bourgeois norm must in one form or another spread to the means of production, or the norms of distribution must be brought into correspondence with the socialist property system.” In China, despite the erosion of nationalized industry, state enterprises are still the core of the economy. As Trotsky wrote, the bureaucracy “continues to preserve state property only to the extent that it fears the proletariat.”

From its support to the counterrevolutionary Polish Solidarność movement in the early 1980s to the Yeltsin-led counter-revolution in the USSR in 1991-92 to China today, the Usec has consistently sided with the forces of “democratic” counterrevolution. The Usec has repeatedly backed pro-imperialist Chinese “dissidents” who act as domestic agents for capitalist restoration, and a Pioneer spokesman at a public forum in Tokyo last November declared that his group would defend capitalist Taiwan in a war with China. Against such counterfeit “Trotskyists,” the ICL stands for the unconditional military defense of the Chinese deformed workers state against Taiwan or any other capitalist state, and against any internal threat of capitalist counterrevolution. The fight for proletarian political revolution is premised on defense of the gains of the 1949 Revolution.

Beware “Labor” Front Men for Imperialism!

Throughout the anti-Soviet Cold War, the American AFL-CIO labor bureaucracy promoted and funded “free trade unions” in East Europe—centrally Solidarność in the 1980s, which spearheaded the capitalist counterrevolution in the Soviet bloc. Today, the labor lieutenants of U.S. imperialism, working through such agencies as the American Center for International Labor Solidarity, want to carry out a similar operation in China. They hope to exploit the hostility of Chinese workers to the oppressive and corrupt Beijing bureaucracy by appealing to “democracy.” In the mouths of the AFL-CIO tops, “democracy” is nothing but a code word for re-establishing the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie through counterrevolution. The American labor tops combine anti-Communist tirades against China with flag-waving trade protectionism. At a protest outside the Seattle WTO meeting in December 1999, which also attracted a wide range of liberal and leftist youth, a delegation of AFL-CIO officials demonstratively dumped a load of Chinese steel into Puget Sound.

The All-China Federation of Trade Unions (ACFTU), the only union body legally allowed in China, acts as an arm of the bureaucracy to police the workers, including in the Special Economic Zones (SEZs) where union officials openly act in league with the capitalist exploiters. In a truly grotesque display, this May Day—traditionally a commemoration of international working-class solidarity—ACFTU officials “honored” a group of capitalist entrepreneurs as “model workers”!

Workers organizations independent of the bureaucracy have begun to emerge in the recent wave of labor protests. In Daqing, retired oil workers built their own organization counterposed to the ACFTU. Other workers have tried to install a new leadership in order to transform their ACFTU union into an organization that fights for their interests. Any organization which is to defend the workers’ interests must stand in *defense of the workers state and its collectivized foundations*. As we wrote in “Chinese Miners Revolt Against

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‘Market Reforms’” (WV No. 735, 5 May 2000):

“A proletarian political revolution will begin under the banner of struggles against social inequality and political oppression, as in 1989. The struggle for freedom of the trade unions—based on the defense of socialized property—as well as for the right of assembly and freedom of the press, will unfold as part of the fight for soviet democracy, for the formation of workers councils opposing the bureaucratic parasites and suppressing counterrevolutionary elements. The central question is that of revolutionary leadership, which can only be resolved by forging a Leninist-Trotskyist party to bring revolutionary socialist consciousness to the working class.”

As workers struggles develop in China, the central importance of defending the gains of the 1949 Revolution is illustrated in the negative by the history of Han Dongfang, who is upheld by the AFL-CIO bureaucracy and the capitalist media as an “independent” labor leader. A railroad worker in 1989, Han emerged as a leader of the Beijing Autonomous Workers Federation, a key workers organization during the Tiananmen protests. Similar groups arose in city after city, joined by many of the regime’s own ACFTU unions. The entry of the working class into the student-initiated protests marked an incipient political revolution. Faced with this proletarian upheaval, the bureaucracy was fracturing, with recalcitrant military commanders refusing to



Der Spiegel

Chinese students, scientists and others residing in the U.S. were potential “Communist agents.”

In the guise of defending workers’ rights, Han’s outfit and others, like the New York City-based “China Labor Watch,” seek to bring imperialist pressure to bear on the Chinese deformed workers state. They are lauded in the West as harbingers of a Chinese version of Polish Solidarność. In East Europe and the former Soviet Union, many workers bought

Nevertheless, with the establishment of planned industrial development, women were vaulted into the workforce at many levels, although some discrimination remained. The skills and education they achieved can be measured today at the mammoth Three Gorges dam construction site, where women as well as men operate some of the world’s largest and most powerful earthmoving machinery. One would be hard-pressed to find this sight duplicated in even the most advanced capitalist societies. It would certainly not be seen in a country like capitalist India, which before 1949 was roughly at the same level of social development as China but today remains mired in hideous poverty, barbaric anti-woman practices and all-around backwardness.

But today women in cities like Guangzhou (Canton) account for only one-third of workers in state industry, whereas previously they had held nearly half the jobs. In part, this is due to discrimination against older women. For some years, the official retirement age for women has been lower than that for men. After the regime began encouraging “early retirement” in 1994, the age was lowered to the point that in some large plants it is now 42 for women (and 52 for men). In large part, this is a veiled form of layoffs.

With consummate cynicism, the government’s 29 April report, “Labor and Social Security in China,” crows that “a total of 30 cities so far have carried out a ‘starting a business’ training program, offering training to laid-off and unemployed persons who wish to establish a small business.” This is scant solace to the vast majority of women who have lost their jobs. In the mid 1990s, a study of the economically depressed northeastern city of Shenyang showed that a large proportion of those laid off were women over the age of 35. Many have been forced to eke out a living peddling from street stalls. Predictably, there has also been a



Left: CIA-backed, Vatican-sponsored Solidarność “union” spearheaded counterrevolution in Poland. Today, Han Dongfang, publisher of “China Labour Watch,” spews counterrevolutionary propaganda on U.S.-sponsored Radio Free Asia.

rise in prostitution. An additional danger to women’s rights is the growth of reactionary religious sects like Falun Gong, which opposes abortion, considers women inferior to men and is rife with anti-homosexual bigotry.

In the countryside, where some two-thirds of the population lives, women have suffered gravely since the decollectivization of agriculture beginning in 1978. While the communes of the Mao era were essentially large aggregates of backward peasant plots, women did achieve a certain degree of equality. But the division of the land into individually leased family-operated plots—the first “market reform”—has breathed new life into centuries-old horrors rooted in the traditional Chinese family structure, such as female infanticide and the buying and selling of “wives.” With rural life such a dead end for young women, many flocked to sweatshops in the SEZs, even if this meant toiling up to 14 hours a day with barely a day or two off per month.

As we wrote in “China: ‘Free Market’ Misery Targets Women” (*Women and Revolution* No. 45, Winter-Spring 1996):

“A China run by democratically elected workers and peasants councils would make short shrift of the scum who traffic in human beings. But to overcome the social pathology that has brought about the return of female infanticide, abandonment of children and selling of women into slavery requires alleviating the poverty and isolation of the peasant masses, which in turn requires the massive modernization and mechanization of the countryside to lay the material basis for a rational recollectivization of agriculture. This task is dependent on the economic integration of China into a socialist Asia based on the advanced industrial capacity of countries like Japan and Australia.”

For a Leninist-Trotskyist Party!

The resistance of the Chinese working class to attacks on their livelihoods has
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Reiser/Bilderberg

Moscow street market. Restoration of capitalism has brought terrible immiseration to working people in former USSR.

follow orders to suppress the protests. Eventually, the regime found units it could mobilize against the protests and carried out a bloody campaign of terror aimed squarely at the workers. What was crucially missing in the 1989 upheaval was a revolutionary leadership.

Forced to flee China, Han made his way to the U.S., where he was adopted by right-wing Congressmen and the AFL-CIO hierarchy. Converting to Christianity, Han soon became a pro-imperialist “dissident.” He eventually set up shop in Hong Kong, where he publishes the journal *China Labour Bulletin* (now available only on the Internet), which includes correspondence with workers on the mainland. The purpose he serves is demonstrated by his regular show on Radio Free Asia, an arm of the U.S. government that broadcasts into China. In 1999, Han and three other Chinese “human rights” activists issued a letter commending California Republican Congressman Christopher Cox for his “courageous work in promoting freedom within the People’s Republic of China.” Cox spearheaded the racist witchhunt against Taiwanese-born scientist Wen Ho Lee the same year and ranted that all the tens of thousands of mainland

the lie that capitalist restoration would bring prosperity and living standards comparable to the U.S., West Europe and Japan. But it will not be easy to sell “free enterprise” to Chinese workers, many of whom have already experienced the miseries of “free market” exploitation in the SEZs. It is telling that in his service to imperialism, Han has to resort to leftist-sounding rhetoric in denouncing the corruption of rich cadres and capitalist exploitation in such plants.

The Struggle for the Liberation of Women

It is no accident that women have played a prominent role in the recent workers’ protests. While the 1949 Revolution brought enormous social and economic gains to Chinese women, many of these gains have been eroded by “market reforms.”

After 1949, women were given access to education and the right to marry whomever they chose (and to divorce as well), as enshrined in the 1950 Marriage Law. However, the weight of traditional peasant backwardness frequently prevented those newly won rights from becoming a reality. Moreover, Stalinist ideology glorifies the family, particularly in China where the Communist Party was based on the peasantry. Party cadre assigned to enforce the Marriage Law in the villages often bowed to the pressure of peasants who wanted to maintain the traditional family structure.

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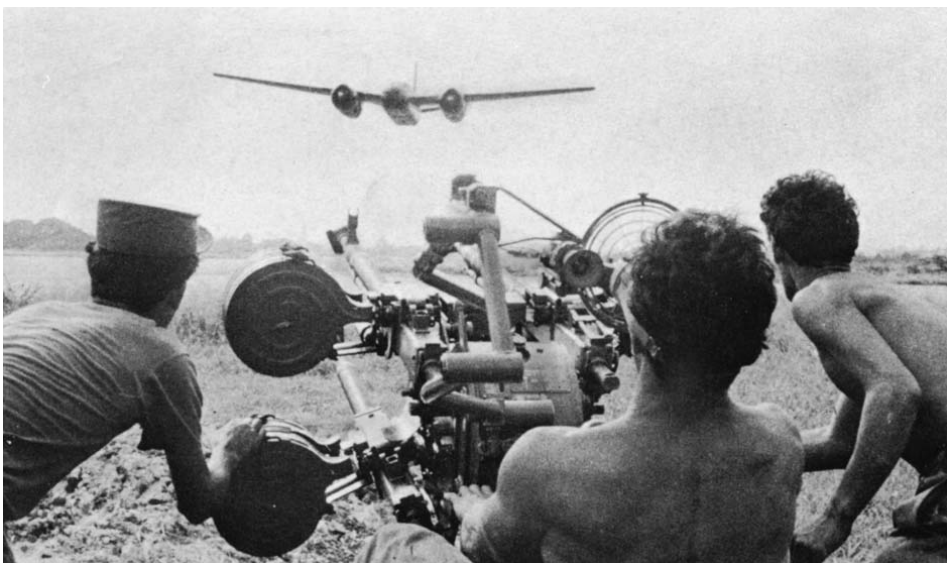
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and then under American-backed puppet dictators.

The U.S. seizure of Cuba from Spain in the 1898 Spanish-American War was followed by a brutal military occupation. Cubans who opposed American decrees were horsewhipped in the street, journalists were thrown in jail and “anti-American” publications were shut down by military censors. The U.S. contemptuously rejected Cuban demands for universal suffrage, not least because it would have meant giving the vote to the 40 percent of the Cuban population which was black. American business interests took over the railroads, mines and sugar properties. The occupation ended in 1902 (with the island poorer than it had been 80 years earlier!) only after Cuba had been forced to incorporate into its constitution a clause giving the U.S. the “right” to intervene whenever it saw fit.

For the next 56 years, the Cuban toilers suffered under the neocolonial domination of U.S. imperialism, and one U.S. puppet dictator after another. The last of these was Fulgencio Batista, who ruled over a society marked by systematic and brutal oppression of black people, mass unemployment and illiteracy, miserable urban slums and a destitute rural population squeaking by through seasonal employment. It was only the overthrow of the hated Batista regime in January 1959 by Castro’s rebel army that heralded an end to this squalid imperialist depredation.

The rebel army under Castro—a former supporter of the liberal bourgeois Ortodoxo party—was a politically heterogeneous petty-bourgeois formation. At the same time, the smashing of the Batista regime left the old bourgeois state apparatus shattered. The new government implemented a series of reforms culled straight from the Ortodoxo party’s liberal program. But the land distribution and the revolutionary justice meted out to Batista’s former police torturers scared Castro’s own bourgeois supporters, who started fleeing to Miami. It also scared



Raul Corrales

Cuban soldiers defeat CIA Bay of Pigs invasion, 1961. Below (from left): Bush appointees Otto Reich, John Negroponte, Elliot Abrams—architects of bloody counterrevolution in Latin America.



AP



U.S. Mission



Economist

enjoy one of the highest literacy rates in the world, and nearly one in eleven hold university degrees. The revolution especially benefited women: domination of the Catholic church was broken; abortion is a free health service; and the birthrate is only 1.5 per woman, which is more typical of rich countries. Despite the crippling effects of the U.S. blockade, the free health care system is still far and away the best among “Third World” countries. Infant mortality is lower than in parts of the “First World,” and Cuba has more doctors and teachers per capita than just about anywhere in the world. The pretext for the White House’s “bio-terrorism” slander against Cuba is the fact that in developing a system to provide medical care for its population, Cuba has

Today, with the Soviet Union destroyed and consequently no readily available lifeline against imperialist encirclement, the narrow historical opening for petty-bourgeois forces to overturn local capitalist rule has been closed.

The SL’s precursor, the Revolutionary Tendency (RT) within the Socialist Workers Party (SWP), waged a political struggle in the SWP over precisely this question. The SWP, which had been the party of revolutionary Trotskyism in the U.S., equated the Castro bureaucracy with the revolutionary internationalist Bolshevik government of Lenin and Trotsky. In so doing, the SWP leaders explicitly rejected both the necessity of a Leninist-Trotskyist party to provide revolutionary leadership and the centrality of the proletariat in the fight for socialism. The RT characterized Cuba as a bureaucratically deformed workers state and showed that the Castroite guerrillas in power had embraced the nationalist-Stalinist model of the USSR after its degeneration, which meant upholding the dogma of “socialism in one country” and opposing the perspective of international proletarian revolution. As we explained in the 1973 Preface to “Cuba and Marxist Theory” (*Marxist Bulletin* No. 8):

“In opposing the SWP Majority’s revisionism, our original tendency came into existence and fought for three main programmatic points in orienting to the Cuban revolution and its defense: insistence on the Permanent Revolution, i.e. the view that no essential task of the revolution could be achieved short of the victory and consolidation of a workers state; and, correspondingly, insistence on the struggle for hegemony of the working class in the revolution; together with the necessity for a conscious Trotskyist party as the proletarian vanguard to lead that struggle.”

Trotskyists are the most militant, unconditional defenders of the Cuban deformed workers state against imperialism and counterrevolution. At the same time, we fight for proletarian political revolution to oust the Stalinist bureaucracy and place political power in the hands of workers councils animated by a program of revolutionary internationalism.

For Socialist Revolution Throughout the Americas!

By 1965, the SWP had degenerated into outright reformism, while remaining cheerleaders for the Castro regime to this day. In an article reporting on Carter’s visit, the SWP’s *Militant* (3 June) had not a word of criticism of Castro’s embrace of this “human rights” imperialist, nor does it even mention the dangers posed to the gains of the Cuban Revolution by the imperialist economic penetra-

tion favored by Carter. In fact, it was Castro who invited Carter to Cuba and gave him a platform to attack the revolution on nationwide television.

Similarly, when the Pope visited in 1998 explicitly for the purpose of fomenting counterrevolution, the *Militant* (9 February 1998) fatuously headlined, “Confident Revolutionary Gov’t Hosts Pope In Cuba.” This is the Pope Wojtyla who was the godfather of the CIA-financed Solidarność movement, which spearheaded the drive for the restoration of capitalism in Poland. Indeed, the few times the SWP has differed with Castro was when they stood to his right, capitulating to the U.S. ruling class by championing anti-Soviet counterrevolutionaries like Solidarność and Russia’s Boris Yeltsin. When defense of the Soviet Union, Cuba’s main economic lifeline, was posed pointblank in 1991, the SWP backed Yeltsin’s forces of counterrevolution, exclaiming “Soviet Workers Win Giant Victory by Defeating Coup” (*Militant*, 6 September 1991).

The International Socialist Organization (ISO) at least manages to recognize that Carter “represents a wing of Corporate America whose interests aren’t humanitarian” and which wants “the freedom to locate operations there to take advantage of the country’s low-wage workforce, as their Canadian and European competitors increasingly have” (*Socialist Worker*, 24 May). But while it opportunistically caters to the continued popularity of Cuba among leftists and youth in the U.S., the ISO has been defined from its origins by visceral anti-Communist hostility to the deformed workers states, which it characterizes as “state capitalist” and refuses to defend against imperialism and counterrevolution. Several years ago, the ISO’s then-cothinkers in Canada *hailed a counterrevolutionary riot* in Havana as a sign that “Cuban workers and peasants have begun to break the hold of a repressive regime” (*Socialist Worker* [Canada], September 1994).

Among the most abject apologists for the Castro bureaucracy is the Workers World Party (WWP). An editorial in *Workers World* (23 May) titled “Carter and Cuba” has no criticism of Castro and asserts, “Even after all these years of material difficulties caused by the U.S. blockade, the socialist government in Cuba doesn’t have much to fear from the internal opposition.” The editorial concludes by calling on the “progressive movement” to “reject Carter’s preaching to Cuba on democracy, while taking advantage of the attention focused on the blockade to campaign more vigorously than ever against it.”

Workers World’s polyannish proclamation to the contrary, the Cuban Revolution is today in great peril. To avert economic disaster following the cutoff of Soviet aid in 1989-90, the Cuban bureaucracy has increasingly opened the country to imperialist economic penetration and instituted a series of “market reforms.” Cuba today has substantial imperialist investment, especially from West European and Canadian corporations. This is generally in the form of joint ventures in tourism and mining, among other industries. In the mid 1990s, the regime also legalized the holding and exchange of U.S. currency, a “dollarization” of the economy which has led to sharp and growing income differentials hitting women and black Cubans the hardest. Hundreds of billions of dollars flow into Cuba from the U.S., but black Cubans, whose relatives are not rich Miamians, are far less likely to receive those greenbacks.

The growth of inequality and the danger of the growing free market to the planned economy can be seen in the tourist industry, which now makes up over 40 percent of the Cuban economy. Though paid in pesos, those who work in tourism, which largely excludes blacks, get most of their income in dollars through tips, giving them access to luxuries and even basic necessities which most Cubans can’t get. Desperate women trying to feed their families have been forced into prostitution at the edges of the booming tour-



WV Photo

Spartacist contingent at NYC demonstration in defense of Cuba, 1994.

the American imperialists, not least the United Fruit Company, which controlled much of the island. Washington began to institute punitive measures against Cuba, leading Castro to sign a trade agreement with the Soviet Union.

Faced with an escalating imperialist offensive, the Cuban government nationalized U.S.-owned properties and followed this in October 1960 with a decisive blow against the economic base of domestic reaction, nationalizing all banks and businesses. These nationalizations liquidated the Cuban bourgeoisie as a class.

The elimination of capitalist class rule in Cuba led to enormous gains for its working people that remain tangible today. The centralized planned economy guaranteed everyone a job, decent housing, food and education. Cubans now

become one of the world’s most advanced manufacturers of pharmaceuticals.

But the Cuban workers state has been bureaucratically deformed from its inception, with the working class excluded from political power. In explaining how a petty-bourgeois guerrilla movement led to the creation of a deformed workers state, we wrote in the Spartacist League’s Declaration of Principles adopted in 1966:

“Movements of this sort can under certain conditions, i.e., the extreme disorganization of the capitalist class in the colonial country and the absence of the working class contending in its own right for social power, smash capitalist property relations; however, they cannot bring the working class to *political* power. Rather, they create bureaucratic anti-working-class regimes which suppress any further development of these revolutions towards socialism.”

ist industry. While the counterrevolutionary dissidents may be few in number today, the growing imperialist penetration and social inequality serve to continually reinforce pro-capitalist tendencies within Cuba and to undermine support for the revolution among the population.

WWP’s refusal to criticize Castro or the Cuban bureaucracy for embracing imperialists like Carter dovetails with its own tailing after liberal Democrats and other “progressives” in the U.S. Like other reformist pseudo-socialists who call for “solidarity with Cuba,” WWP is looking for a lash-up with liberal Democrats who oppose the embargo as ineffective from the standpoint of fomenting counterrevolution. In the few mealy-mouthed criticisms of Carter to be found in its editorial, nowhere did WWP point to the counterrevolutionary character of his “human rights” crusade in the late 1970s or to the danger posed by the imperialist penetration Carter and significant sections of the American bourgeoisie

advocate for Cuba today.

It was New Jersey Democratic Senator Robert Torricelli who authored legislation under the Clinton administration to *tighten* the embargo. On the other hand, no less a right-winger than Attorney General John Ashcroft was instrumental, when he was a Missouri Senator, in passing a 1999 bill to end the embargo on food shipments to Cuba. Indeed, many Republicans, especially from farm states eager to increase agricultural exports to Cuba, have called for easing or ending the embargo.

By amnestying Castro’s nationalist policies, WWP undermines the defense of the Cuban Revolution. The Castro regime has always aimed for “peaceful co-existence” with imperialism, as Che Guevara proclaimed in a 1964 speech to the United Nations. In practice, this has meant opposition to the struggle for socialist revolution throughout Latin America. For example, in 1979 Castro advised the radical-nationalist Sandinista

guerrillas who were then in power in Nicaragua *not* to take the “Cuban road” of expropriating the bourgeoisie. This culminated in the defeat of the Nicaraguan Revolution in the 1980s, as the Sandinistas eventually handed power back to the capitalist contras.

Cuba cannot survive indefinitely as an isolated workers state. Genuine defense of the Cuban Revolution against imperialism requires a program for workers revolution throughout the Americas—and above all here in the United States. There is plenty of tinder for revolutionary upheavals throughout Latin America today. Argentina has been on the brink of a revolutionary situation for months, with successive governments trying to enforce IMF dictates amid widespread unemployment, poverty and unrest. In Mexico, the living standards of working people have plummeted as a result of the U.S. “free trade” rape of that country under NAFTA and as the border is tightened as part of the U.S. “war on terror.”

The key requirement for victory is the forging of internationalist proletarian vanguard parties.

The Cuban Revolution today stands at a crossroads. Revolutionaries in the U.S. have a special duty to defend Cuba against capitalist restoration and American imperialism. It is in the United States, the bastion of world imperialism, where the decisive struggle will be fought for the emancipation of the working masses throughout the Americas. It is necessary to forge a revolutionary workers party which brings to the proletariat the understanding that the defense of the Cuban Revolution is an integral part of its struggle against the American capitalist exploiters and their system of union-busting, racist oppression and imperialist war. Such a party can only be built by breaking workers and minorities from illusions in the Democratic Party. The SL is dedicated to the fight to build the Leninist vanguard party needed to lead that struggle to victory.■

Germany...

(continued from page 12)

Party (SpAD) and Spartakist Youth went to the picket lines and mobilized others to express solidarity with the strike. On May 13, the first day of rolling strikes in Berlin, the Spartakist Youth at the heavily minority and working-class Technical University organized a successful strike support rally on the campus, declaring: “Victory to the IG Metall strike! Come with us to the picket lines!”

In discussions on the picket lines and at strike rallies, our comrades stressed—both to the many workers of Turkish or Kurdish origin as well as to ethnic German workers—that defense of immigrants and minorities against government persecution and right-wing terror was a central task for the whole of the labor movement. The back-page article on IG Metall in the current issue of Spartakist, which was sold on the picket lines, prominently featured the demand “Full Citizenship Rights for All!” More than 10 percent of IG Metall’s members are workers of immigrant background. But except for a relative handful, even those who were born and have lived in Germany all their lives are denied citizenship under chauvinist laws that grant automatic citizenship only to ethnic Germans.

Now the government has used the “global war on terror” as a pretext to institute the racist *Rasterfahndung*, a system of computerized “racial profiling” aimed at millions of mainly Muslim immigrants. New “Security Check” laws mandate secret service background checks of airport, transport and other workers, including tracking down affiliation with socialist or communist organizations. Though currently directed primarily at immigrants, such laws are clearly a threat to all leftists and union militants. At several of the struck plants, a significant number of IG Metall shop stewards were of immigrant origin, among them supporters of Turkish Stalinist organizations. Worker and immigrant rights will advance together or be thrown back separately!

Though the ethnic divisions fostered by the bosses were to be seen on the picket lines, where German workers often congregated apart from their Turkish and Kurdish class brothers and sisters, it could also be seen how such divisions can be transcended through class struggle. At a picket line in Stuttgart, a Greek worker led others in singing Turkish songs. A sense of internationalism was also engendered by news that Daimler-Chrysler workers in Brazil had brought off a half-hour solidarity strike, and delegations from the American and Canadian auto workers unions were greeted with enthusiasm on the strike lines.

Most strikers shared the illusions promoted by the union tops that the SPD should be supported as a “lesser evil.” Particularly in the wake of the huge



Spartakist

Spartakist Youth hold rally at Berlin Technical University in solidarity with IG Metall strike, May 13

electoral gains by the fascist Le Pen in France, even the many workers who hate the SPD said they would vote for Schröder against arch-reactionary CDU candidate Edmund Stoiber, who is an out-and-out racist union-hater. Other workers, especially those of immigrant origin, expressed support for the Party of Democratic Socialism (PDS), which posures as a “left” alternative to the SPD.

Our comrades explained that while the SPD and PDS claim to stand for the interests of the working people, they are wedded to the bourgeois order. Thus they administer capitalist state repression and anti-working-class austerity and are no barrier against the right, as was seen recently in Saxony-Anhalt, where the PDS had propped up the former SPD government. The PDS has garnered a substantial electoral base in the East by playing to the grievances of working people there. But when these born-again social democrats were the Stalinist ruling party in the former East Germany, they helped push through the capitalist counterrevolution that destroyed the deformed workers state and turned the East into an industrial wasteland. This could be seen on the IG Metall picket lines in Berlin and other parts of the East, where factories that once employed thousands of workers now employ only a few hundred. In Saxony-Anhalt, the *official* unemployment rate is 22 percent.

Now, in Berlin the PDS has joined with the SPD in a coalition government which is trying to enforce harsh austerity measures against public service workers—including a 10 percent wage cut and 30,000 layoffs—while shutting down or cutting back hospitals, day-care centers, schools and other social services. The closing of day-care facilities in particular angered many women on the IG Metall strike lines in Berlin, as they know that this could force them out of work like hundreds of thousands of other women workers in the East. There have been protests of tens of thousands of unionists in the last couple of months against

these cutbacks, but the union bureaucrats refuse to call strike action against “their” SPD/PDS municipal government.

Fake leftists like the centrist Gruppe Arbeitermacht (GAM), affiliated to the British Workers Power group, serve to provide a “militant” cover for the SPD and trade-union tops—the better to help corral disgruntled workers back into the social-democratic fold. At the Berlin May Day march, the only placards carried by the GAM contingent demanded, “All Out on Strike! 6.5 Percent and Not a Cent Less!” Not once in its leaflets directed toward the strike does the GAM even hint at the need to combat racist state terror or to fight for full citizenship rights.

In focusing solely on economic demands, seeking to pressure the social-democratic labor bureaucracy to be more militant, the GAM acts to reinforce the existing consciousness of the workers, which is limited to trade-union struggle *under* capitalism. We seek to bring to the proletariat the understanding that if it is to pursue the class struggle *against* capitalism, it must defend not only its own immediate economic interests but the

rights and interests of all the exploited and oppressed.

The GAM refuses to take up the fight against anti-immigrant racism in its strike propaganda because to do so would mean attacking the SPD and PDS as well as the chauvinist trade-union bureaucrats who oppose mobilizing the unions against racist laws and deportations. In an undated leaflet (“6.5%! Not a Cent Less! Prepare to Strike Now!”) issued before the rolling strikes began, the GAM asked incredibly: “On Which Side Do Schröder and the SPD Stand?” Schröder and the SPD stand at the head of the *capitalist* government which is waging war against workers and minorities, a fact the GAM strives mightily to obscure. The GAM leaflet’s lip service to building a revolutionary workers party notwithstanding, its perennial electoral support to the social democrats demonstrates that the GAM is just part of the syphilitic chain that binds the working class to the capitalist order through the agency of the social democracy. As in 1998 and in the Berlin elections, for the upcoming federal elections the SpAD declares: No vote to SPD, PDS!

The discontent with the SPD among wide sections of workers provides an important opportunity for Marxists to further the fight for a class-struggle leadership of the unions and for a multi-ethnic revolutionary workers party. That means relentlessly exposing the role of the social democrats as labor lieutenants of the capitalist class in order to split the SPD’s working-class base from its pro-capitalist program and leadership. As we wrote in “Full Citizenship Rights for All Immigrants! SPD, PDS, Greens Attack Workers, Minorities—Unchain the Power of IG Metall” (*Spartakist* No. 147, Spring 2002): “The only way forward is the forging of a revolutionary workers party whose aim is the expropriation of the capitalist class and the creation of a planned, collectivized economy under a workers government, which will benefit not the profits of the few but the needs of all.”■

Spartakist

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China...

(continued from page 7)

created some fissures in the bureaucratic caste itself. Moves by Chinese president Jiang Zemin to invite capitalists to join the CCP were met with significant internal opposition. Fearing that disgruntled workers may link up with such leftist elements, the regime recently placed a prominent Maoist named Wei Wei under house arrest and shut down at least two journals reporting on corruption and the plight of the working class. (For a Trotskyist polemic against Wei Wei's views, see "Whither China? 'Market Socialism' and the Legacy of Mao," WV Nos. 743 and 745, 6 October and 3 November 2000.)

In Shenyang a few years ago, CCP veterans went into rebellion after the arrest of a local official, Zhou Wei. A CCP cadre for more than 40 years, Zhou had led a series of protests and petition campaigns denouncing the government for corruption and for refusing to defend peasants, workers and retirees like himself. Protests in the city became so common at one point that the day's road blockages were announced on the morning news! Such events illuminate the potential to forge a new, egalitarian communist party in China. But this requires a sharp political struggle to break such mil-

itants from the dead end of Maoism and win them to the genuine communism of Lenin and Trotsky.

A Chinese Leninist-Trotskyist party would wage uncompromising struggle against the Han chauvinism promoted by the nationalist CCP regime. It would seek to imbue the proletariat with the understanding that it must fight for the interests of all the oppressed—from women and homosexuals to the poor peasantry and national and ethnic minorities.

A crucial task is the defense of migrant laborers who have flocked to the cities and towns. Forced into the most dangerous and menial work, they lack the rights of legal city residents and are typically forced to live in segregated areas. Under conditions of rising unemployment, tensions are mounting between urban residents and migrant workers, who are seen as stealing jobs and depressing wages. Working-class militants must fight for migrants to receive all the rights enjoyed by legal residents, including access to housing and public education, and demand equal pay for equal work.

To date, the most militant protests have generally been by workers who have been laid off or older workers living on meager pensions. What is necessary is to bring the strategic core of the Chinese proletariat—those employed in basic industry and transport—into battle. These are the workers who have the social power to

Spartacist Group Japan at April 1996 protest against U.S.-Japan military alliance. Signs at center read: "For the Right of Nuclear and Military Testing for Chinese Workers State!" and "Not One Man, Not One Yen to Imperialist Japanese Military!"



oust the bureaucracy and defeat the forces of capitalist restoration. But such a development will not happen automatically or spontaneously. There must be built in China a revolutionary vanguard party which can unify in struggle all sectors of the working class in alliance with the rural toilers and urban poor.

Above all, a Leninist-Trotskyist party is needed to provide Chinese workers with a revolutionary proletarian internationalist strategy. For even the most advanced leftist Chinese workers, the prospect for socialist revolution in Japan or the United States may seem remote

or utopian. What is actually utopian is the belief that there is a nationally limited road to socialism in China. The modernization of China—ensuring a decent life for all its inhabitants on the basis of access to advanced technology and productive resources now concentrated in North America, West Europe and Japan—requires proletarian revolutions in the imperialist centers, establishing an *internationally planned socialist economy*. The International Communist League fights to build revolutionary workers parties which are the necessary element to lead the working class to power internationally. ■

Letter...

(continued from page 2)

article, "The Birth of the Zionist State" (WV Nos. 33 and 45, 23 November 1973 and 24 May 1974), what was originally a small colony of Zionist settlers had been consolidated by 1947 into a nation, largely as a result of two waves of refugees from the Nazis—before and after the Holocaust—who were not allowed to go elsewhere.

Niall C. notes that Hebrew is the mother tongue of only about half of Israeli Jews and many of the recent immigrants from the former Soviet Union still speak Russian. (One might add that there are four Russian-language dailies and two political parties representing recent Russian immigrants.) In fact, every new wave of immigration, from the original Zionist settlers to East European survivors of the Holocaust to the large influx of Sephardic Jews from the Arab countries, arrived speaking a language other than Hebrew—Yiddish, German, Russian, Arabic, Ladino, etc. But their mother tongue was almost literally beaten out of them and they were made to learn Hebrew, which is the language of their children.

Of course, immigrants settling in any country ultimately adopt the language spoken there, but language plays a particular role in Israel because of its history. Modern Hebrew is an artificial language created for the sole purpose of creating a nation out of disparate Jewish populations, seeking to bind together atheists, secular Jews and the ultra-Orthodox, including the Hasidim (many of whom,

ironically, do not recognize the "Jewish state" and deliberately continue to speak Yiddish). For example, a July 1996 paper on language education ("National Profiles of Languages in Education: Israel: Language Policy," posted on the Internet) by two Israeli academics, Bernard Spol-

Israeli tank moves through Bethlehem last month, part of Zionist blitzkrieg against Palestinian people.



sky and Elana Shohamy, noted: "Significantly, the revitalization of Hebrew as a major component in Zionism and Jewish nationalism has guaranteed the language a status that is ideologically highly privileged. One of the concomitants of this secular Zionist ideology has been the strong encouragement of Hebrew learning and use by immigrants, and the active discouragement of public (or even private use) [sic] of the other languages known by the population." To that end, Israel has a Cabinet-level Ministry of Immigration *and Absorption*, and a whole series of

subsidized language institutions, *ulpanim*, which new immigrants have to go through.

Language is used not only to create a common national identity among Jewish immigrants but also to reinforce the segregation and oppression of the remaining

Palestinian Arab population within Israel. Though 20 percent of Israel's total population, the Arab population is overwhelmingly confined to a handful of poverty-stricken areas and exclusively Arab villages; only 8 percent live in "mixed" cities like Haifa. Arabic is the language of instruction in all schools in the "Arab sector." It is not surprising, then, that while Hebrew and Arabic are both nominally official languages, it is English which is the second language for both Hebrew- and Arabic-speakers. A February 1997 study by the same academics, "Language in Israeli Society and Education," notes:

"Because of the accepted minority status of Israeli Arabs, their language poses no threat to the hegemony of Hebrew in the society as a whole.... It is without a doubt a minority language, denied in law and in fact the status that might be expected to result from being the second official language....

"From the point of view of Israel, the integration of a non-Jewish minority raises serious issues concerning the nature of Jewish state. This issue no doubt underlies the willingness to allow and even encourage Arab language maintenance while at the same time discouraging Jewish immigrants from loyalty to their languages."

This gets to the nub of the question: in the case of Israel/Palestine, we are dealing with two distinct nations, not simply different religions (in fact, a sizable number of Palestinians are Christian, not Muslim). Niall C.'s comparison with the Afrikaners or the French *colons*, the

pieds-noirs, in Algeria is at best confused and misleading. From the outset, the Zionists sought to create a separate political economy based on exclusion of the indigenous Palestinian population (though over time, many Arabs were hired by Israeli capitalists as menial laborers). The white settler population in South Africa, in contrast, did not primarily aim to displace the indigenous African peoples but rather to exploit them ever more extensively and systematically. As for the *pieds-noirs*, it is enough to note that they were automatically citizens of France, and when Algeria won its independence in 1962 the Europeans got out.

The notion that the Hebrew-speaking people cannot be fully deemed a nation because the Zionists keep on "forcing out the Arabs" is moralism, not Marxism. It is of a piece with the line pushed by various "leftist" apologists for Arab nationalism that oppressor peoples do not have the right to self-determination. All nations have been formed through the bloody dispossession of weaker peoples. In the case of interpenetrated peoples—including in the Balkans, as seen not least over the past decade with the nationalist fratricide unleashed by counterrevolution—under capitalism such national conflicts can only be resolved through forcible expulsion or genocide. In any case, we reject the irredentist program of driving out entire peoples, whether or not they are nations, whether or not they were formerly oppressors.

Those who reject the Hebrew-speaking people's right to a national existence serve only to drive the Israeli proletariat even more deeply into the arms of their Zionist capitalist exploiters. The only salvation for the Palestinian people lies in a socialist federation of the Near East forged through the revolutionary overthrow of the bourgeois order throughout the region. As we wrote in "Defend the Palestinian People! All Israeli Troops, Settlers Out of the Occupied Territories!" (WV No. 778, 5 April):

"There can be no justice for the Palestinian people within the framework of capitalist rule. On the contrary, the system of private property and private ownership of the means of production necessarily contains within it the components of nationalism and religion, which make impossible the settlement of the conflicting national claims of the Palestinian Arab and Hebrew-speaking populations. Only through the overthrow of both the Israeli bourgeoisie and all the Arab ruling classes can the right of national self-determination for these peoples and the many other peoples of the region be equitably realized." ■

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French Elections...

(continued from page 3)

As we wrote last issue: “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.”

We reprint below the translation of a 17 May leaflet by the LTF distributed at the LO Fête and elsewhere.

* * *

Anyone who thought LO had finally woken up to the need to fight racist oppression and the security campaign, which above all targets dark-skinned workers, is going to be bitterly disappointed. Despite LO’s commendable opposition to the swamp of reactionary unity with Chirac on the second round of the presidential elections (a swamp into which the miserable LCR jumped head-first) and despite their acknowledgement (better late than never) that the Mitterrand and Jospin governments paved the way for Le Pen with their anti-immigrant policies, LO has returned to its shameful line of capitulation to racist police repression, exactly one week after “France’s top cop,” Jacques Chirac, named his new government.

Faced with the escalation of Vigipirate (on which LO maintains a deafening silence), with anti-woman and anti-immigrant roundups in minority communities, LO gives its advice on how better to police the *banlieues* and doesn’t utter a single word against racist terror! LO “opposes” the Chirac government because its security campaign is not effective enough! The content of LO’s nauseating call on those who voted for Le Pen to not vote for him a second time now becomes more understandable.

Instead of defending immigrants and all those targeted by the CRS [riot police] and racist roundups, LO declares in their editorial this week:

“The first act by Sarkozy, the new minister of the interior, was a staged photo op showing him in a Seine-Saint-Denis district accompanying a police patrol in plebeian neighborhoods. This will not solve insecurity in the plebeian neighborhoods. It will eliminate neither the pimping of prostitutes nor the exploitation of these unfortunates from East European countries, but it will satisfy right-thinking people and will, with a cheap fix, restore state authority over the weakest.”

With this prostitution before bourgeois “morality” enforced by the CRS, one has to wonder what LO will say in their presentation on the Bible at the “scientific” stand at this year’s LO Fête.

In the same issue of *Lutte Ouvrière* (17 May) there is a long article in which LO explains how to really fight crime. Since September 11 and the ratcheting up of Vigipirate, minority youth are besieged by an army of cops who stop them for identity checks in the *Métro*, in the streets and in the entrance halls of their own apartment buildings. While the Chirac government announces an escalation in the police occupation of Paris with an additional 400 cops, LO writes: “The policy of state budget cuts has, in turn, led to a...virtual disappearance of the police presence in plebeian neighborhoods.” What planet do you live on, LO? France is the European country with the highest number of cops per citizen (one for every 265 people). The cops are the guard dogs of capital against the working class and the oppressed.

In the same article, LO demands:

“As for police duties which are indispensable to society, they should be carried out by people who are close enough to the inhabitants of the neighborhood where they are deployed to be able to defuse many conflicts.”

It is *criminal* for a supposedly leftist party to speak of “police duties which are indispensable”! Their duties are to break



WV Photo
French soldiers at Eiffel Tower in April. Vigipirate campaign means racist cop terror against immigrants, minorities.

strikes and oppress youth who oppose this society which offers them no future! Furthermore, LO’s proposal to deploy even more cops and *gendarmes* in the *banlieues*/ghettos and to station cops closer to the housing projects was already implemented by the Jospin government, and it provoked riots against police repression!

To cover this rotten line, LO might remind you of their more seemly (and rarer) articles in defense of *sans-papiers* [undocumented immigrants] and against the security campaigns of all the governments of the past 20 years, articles which they published as the country was shaken by the gigantic anti-racist and anti-Le Pen demonstrations. Regarding LO’s zigzags, it must be noted that LO bowed before the anti-racist demonstrations by youth, but it has not broken with its grotesque historical line. Hence, it appears that LO’s declarations against the past anti-immigrant security campaigns of the Mitterrand and Jospin governments were only embellish-

ments to cover its capitulation before the current security campaign.

We say: Beware of false advertising! LO’s opposition to class collaboration is emptied of all content by its capitulation to the racist security campaign, which is a crucial mechanism in France for tying the workers to their own bourgeoisie. As we explained in our open letter to LO, LO’s indifference to racial oppression is the consequence of their perspective of class collaboration, to reform the rotten capitalist system instead of sweeping it away through proletarian socialist revolution. There is no party in these elections for which one can vote to advance the interests of the working class and the oppressed. This party has to be built. The Ligue Trotskyiste de France fights for a genuine revolutionary multiethnic workers party. We say: *Down with Vigipirate! Down with the racist security campaign! For full citizenship rights for all immigrants! Stop the deportations and racist roundups!* ■

ILA...

(continued from page 12)

operators concerns (Charleston *Post and Courier*, 20 May). The SPA is pushing to expand the Port of Charleston, the country’s fourth-busiest container port, and all the cargo is handled by the 33 crane operators. Within two days, the SPA had relented, agreeing to negotiate on the outstanding issues, even though state law forbids collective bargaining with state employees.

This victory came 43 days before the contract expiration of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union on the West Coast, where the ship operators association has declared its intent to attack work rules and a wide range of union gains. The Charleston walkout illustrates the type of determined labor action needed to beat back the bosses’ anti-union attacks.

In January 2000, the Charleston waterfront was the scene of a bitter confrontation, as longshoremen protesting attempts to use non-union stevedores defied hundreds of cops firing tear gas and shock grenades at the picketing workers (see

WV Photo
Trade unionists from around the country at June 2001 protest in Columbia, South Carolina demand freedom for Charleston Five.



“Charleston ILA Battles Racist Union-Busting Assault,” WV No. 728, 28 January 2000). That labor action resulted in a victory over the union-busting efforts of the Nordana Line and the SPA. Late last year, following a defense campaign that drew support from unions around the world, the state finally dropped its ven-

detta against the Charleston Five, who had been framed up on bogus felony “riot” charges for defending their union against the massive police assault.

It was around the time of the longshoremen’s successful struggle against union-busting that the crane operators and a hundred other formerly non-union port workers joined Local 1422. In an interview with WV, Cross explained that the SPA had launched an attack on the crane operators because “they wouldn’t tolerate us joining the union.” He added that following the criminal attack on the World Trade Center, the SPA “told us times were rough and everybody took a crunch and we’ve got to cut back.” This only serves to underline that the flag-waving “national unity” promoted by the capitalists means attacks on the working class.

That the predominantly white and highly skilled crane operators joined this overwhelmingly black ILA local shows how class struggle can cut across the racial divisions fostered by the ruling class to divide and weaken the whole working class. To this day, decades after

the formal abolition of Jim Crow segregation, there are still some segregated ILA locals and hiring halls in the South. This speaks to the refusal of the pro-capitalist union bureaucracy to mobilize labor’s power in struggle against every instance of racial oppression and discrimination. Yet such a struggle is key to organizing the racist “open shop” South—not least in South Carolina, where barely 4 percent of workers are currently unionized.

The struggles for black rights and union rights are inseparable. But the pro-capitalist labor tops shackle the power of the working class to the class enemy, primarily through the Democratic Party. It is necessary to fight for a new, class-struggle leadership of labor committed to the political independence of the working class and to the cause of black freedom. Union-busting, racial oppression and the increasing immiseration of workers and the poor will only be eradicated through a socialist revolution that smashes the capitalist system and places the multi-racial working class in power. Break with the Democrats—For a workers party to fight for a workers government! ■

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South Carolina Port Walkout

ILA Crane Operators Defeat Anti-Union Assault

For two days beginning May 17, the Port of Charleston in South Carolina was paralyzed as 33 crane operators, members of International Longshoremen's Association (ILA) Local 1422, walked off the job to demand the reinstatement of a victimized worker, Virgil Cross. The walkout ended after the State Ports Authority (SPA) agreed to reinstate Cross and not fire or discipline any of the workers who walked out. The SPA also agreed

to modify and re-examine pay and work rule changes it had imposed, including the elimination of nighttime and weekend overtime differential pay. ILA Local 1422 president Kenneth Riley told *Workers Vanguard* that the crane operators "recognized the strength that they had. If they stick together, they can demand that [the SPA] come to the

table. And they did that. They withheld their labor, they assembled at the union hall and demanded that the state negotiate."

The SPA had suspended Cross for talking about the crane operators' grievances to a TV crew doing a story on the port. The other crane operators immediately met in the ILA union

hall and decided to walkout, defying a South Carolina law that bans state workers from striking.

Unlike the longshoremen, who work for private stevedore and shipping companies, the crane operators are employed directly by the SPA, a state agency. But as cranes were idled and container-laden ships tied up in the harbor, SPA chairman Whitemarch Smith discovered that "you have to be sensitive" to the

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Bureaucrats Sell Out for Ruling Social Democrats

Germany: Metal Workers Strikes Rattle Government

BERLIN, May 25—Hundreds of thousands of members of the IG Metall industrial union staged a series of one-day rolling strikes earlier this month. Centered in the auto and electrical industries in the southwestern state of Baden-Württemberg and in the Berlin/Brandenburg districts, the strikes vividly demonstrated the potential power of this integrated workforce: men and women, ethnic Germans and workers of Turkish, Kurdish, Greek and Yugoslav descent all stood side by side on the picket lines.

The counterrevolutionary annexation of the former East German (DDR) deformed workers state in 1990 meant devastation in the East and escalating attacks on workers' living standards in the West. After ten years of dwindling wages and austerity cutbacks in social services, the metal workers were demanding a 6.5 percent pay raise. The strikes were widely popular; workers around the country understood that a victory by the powerful IG Metall union—which represents 2.7 million workers—would make it easier for them to successfully fight attacks on wages and benefits. The strikes came only weeks after the Social Democrats (SPD), who rule Germany at the federal level in coalition with the bourgeois Greens, suffered a stinging defeat at the hands of the right-wing Christian Democratic Union (CDU) in state elections in Saxony-Anhalt. From Austria and Italy to France and Holland, capitalist governments led by social democrats or class-collaborationist popular-front coalitions have paved the way for rightist demagogues by carrying out anti-labor and anti-immigrant attacks. A solid strike and decisive victory by the huge multiethnic IG Metall union would have set a powerful example for work-



Spartakist

Berlin, May 13: IG Metall strikers at DaimlerChrysler auto plant.

ers throughout West Europe. But the IG Metall bureaucrats pushed through a sellout.

SPD chancellor Gerhard Schröder feared that an extended strike might cost his government a victory in federal elections scheduled for September. A day after the strikes began, Schröder demanded that both sides "return as soon as possible to the negotiating table and solve the wage conflict." Less than two weeks later, the IG Metall bureaucrats dutifully settled the strike in the key Baden-Württemberg district, accepting a wage increase amounting to less than 3.5 percent and continuing the lower wages and longer hours imposed on workers in the former East Germany. The financial newspaper *Handelsblatt*

(16 May) headlined: "Metal Contract Helps Schröder."

But on the picket lines, the contract was greeted with anger. Workers in major factories in Baden-Württemberg voted against it by 53 to 59 percent. But the union rules require a 75 percent vote to overturn a settlement! It is such bureaucratic rules—accompanied by the whole structure of institutionalized class collaboration sanctioned by law—that the pro-SPD union misleaders wield in their efforts to prevent class struggle. Germany has approximately 10 percent as many strikes as the U.S., where strike activity has been at its lowest point in decades.

The IG Metall tops' betrayal will only encourage further attacks by the bosses,

as employers organization president Dieter Hundt immediately made clear in threatening further plant "rationalizations" and layoffs. In selling out workers struggles in order to secure votes for the SPD as a supposed way to "fight the right," the social-democratic union tops only help to strengthen the forces of right-wing reaction.

It was only the extreme anger of the IG Metall ranks that compelled the union leadership to call a strike. Even before the leadup to the contract dispute, massive opposition within the working class to the U.S.-led bombing of Afghanistan and Germany's participation in the war impelled the unions onto a collision course with the SPD/Green government. When IG Metall called for a halt to the bombing, Schröder arrogantly warned the union to "keep your fingers out of foreign policy." In January, thousands of IG Metall shipyard workers went on strike, followed two weeks later by a walkout at the GM Opel plant in Bochum.

Mass meetings of shop stewards at the giant Siemens corporation and other electrical and auto companies angrily demanded wage increases of up to 10 to 12 percent and made clear that they were ready to strike.

From the outset, the IG Metall bureaucracy did everything in its power to keep from hurting the bosses' profits, refusing to call all-out strike action in favor of "flexi-strikes," which meant in practice that a one-day plant strike was followed by massive overtime to make up lost production. The union tops even used a specially developed computer program to avoid striking plants that might cause parts shortages elsewhere!

Comrades of the Spartakist Workers

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