

For Workers Rule Throughout the Americas!

Defend the Gains of the Cuban Revolution!



Ahmed Velázquez photos

June 12: Over a million demonstrated in Havana against European Union support to U.S. anti-Communist “human rights” campaign against Cuba. Banner in defense of “Miami Five” reads: “Free the Five Heroic Prisoners of the Yankee Empire.”

We print below, edited for publication, a presentation by Spartacist League spokesman Paul Collins given at an SL forum in New York City on September 25.

We are the Spartacist League/U.S., section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist). We are Trotskyists. Leon Trotsky was the co-leader with Lenin of the October 1917 Russian Revolution, the only successful workers revolution in history. Our program is revolutionary, proletarian and internationalist. We think it is necessary to forge Trotskyist parties in every country on the planet to work to transform the consciousness of the working class to a realization that those who labor must rule, that the capitalist system is overdue for removal from the face of the planet and that the failure to do so can only result in barbarism, most likely through a third, nuclear, world war. The capitalist system of exploitation must be replaced with working-class rule, which can lay the foundation for a world of socialist plenty and egalitarianism.

Tonight’s talk is on Cuba. We call Cuba a deformed workers state. That is, a society in which capitalism has been overthrown and workers property forms established: nationalized means of production, collectivized property, central planning and state monopoly of foreign trade. But Cuba is a society run by an anti-working-class, petty-bourgeois nationalist, Stalinist bureaucratic caste which rules under the program of “socialism in one country,” which means renouncing the struggle for international socialist revolution. We are for the unconditional military defense of the Cuban Revolution against imperialist attack and internal counterrevolu-

For Workers Political Revolution to Oust Stalinist Bureaucracy!

tion. The Bush administration has provocatively used the U.S. military base at Guantánamo Bay in Cuba to imprison captives from the U.S. war on Afghanistan. This is an obscenity—we say: U.S. out of Guantánamo Bay!

What do we mean by unconditional military defense? Despite the rule of the parasitic Stalinist caste, we defend the Cuban deformed workers state against

capitalist attack. A good analogy is to a trade union, a workers organization which, despite its treacherous pro-capitalist leadership, we defend against capitalist attack. Further, as a necessary part of our defense of the Cuban Revolution, we are for the completion and extension of that revolution internationally. For that you need a Trotskyist party to bring the consciousness of those tasks

to the Cuban proletariat and to lead the necessary political revolution to oust the Stalinist bureaucracy and institute workers democracy, i.e., the direct rule of the working class in workers councils (soviets).

We in the Spartacist League value our revolutionary continuity, standing on the program of revolutionary Leninism and Trotskyism going back to Lenin and Trotsky’s Bolshevik Party, the first four Congresses of the Third (Communist) International, the fight of Trotsky’s Left Opposition against the rise of Stalin’s bureaucratic caste in the USSR and the struggle for a Trotskyist Fourth International, the U.S. party of which was the Socialist Workers Party (SWP). And the Cuban question looms large in our continuity. In the aftermath of the 1959 Cuban Revolution, our forebears in the Revolutionary Tendency (RT) in the SWP fought the SWP’s degeneration and abandonment of revolutionary Trotskyism. The RT challenged the SWP leadership’s analysis that Cuba was a healthy workers state and that the Castro leadership were “unconscious Trotskyists.”

As we stated in *Marxist Bulletin* No. 8, “Cuba and Marxist Theory”:

“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.”

For those of you who are not familiar with it, the theory of permanent revolution holds that in the backward and impoverished countries, even the resolution of basic democratic questions like land redistribution requires a revolutionary struggle to overthrow the bloody bourgeoisies, which act as junior partners to the

continued on page 8



WV Photo

5 May 2000: Spartacist contingent raises call for workers political revolution in Cuba at NYC demonstration in defense of Puerto Rican activists.

U.S. Out of Guantánamo!



On the WCPI and Abortion

Toronto
25 November 2003

Dear comrades:

In “For Workers Revolution in Iran!” (WV No. 807, 1 August), the article polemizes against the Worker-Communist Party of Iran (WCPI) as follows: “The WCPI accommodates prevalent social conservatism; while, for example, saying that the decision to have an abortion rests with women alone, the WCPI nevertheless calls for state counseling to dissuade women from the procedure.” This significantly understates this group’s retrograde position on abortion.

WV correctly notes that the WCPI is unique on the Iranian left in its emphasis on women’s rights, including forthright opposition to the Islamic veil. But leftists who start reading the section titled “Abortion” in the WCPI’s basic programmatic statement, “A Better World,” could be excused for thinking they had

opened a “right to life” tract by mistake. Here is how the section begins:

“Few phenomena like abortion, i.e. the deliberate elimination of the human embryo because of cultural and economic pressures, display the inherent contempt for human life in the present system and the incompatibility of existing class society and exploitative relations with human life and well-being. Abortion is a testimony to the self-alienation of people and their vulnerability in the face of the deprivations and hardships that the existing class society imposes on them. *The worker-communist party is against the act of abortion.*” [emphasis added]

Only after all this does the WCPI acknowledge that “adverse social circumstances do drive a large number of women to resorting to backstreet abortions,” grudgingly conceding that abortion should be legalized “up to the twelfth week of pregnancy,” and in fact that it should be free until that point. Any later than this, abortion would only be legal “if there is danger



Worker-Communist Party of Iran
Tehran, March 8: Demonstrators defy Islamic regime by openly celebrating International Women’s Day.

to the health of the mother” as “ascertained by the competent medical authorities.”

The call for state counseling before undergoing an abortion, to which the WV article referred, reads: “The decision whether to have or not to have an abortion rests with the woman alone. The state has the duty, however, to inform her before her final decision, of the dissuasive arguments and recommendations of the scientific authorities and social counsellors as well as of the financial, material and moral commitments of the state to her and her child.”

As the WV article explains, the fight for women’s liberation against religious bigotry and all-sided, imperialist-enforced social backwardness will be a central motor force for socialist revolution in Iran. The fight for free abortion on demand, like opposition to the veil, is inte-

gral to this struggle to free women from centuries of enslavement. The WCPI is generally very critical of religious obscurantism. But their stand on abortion—treating it as a repugnant, immoral act rather than a medical procedure that a woman might need—shows they are firmly wedded to bourgeois morality. Like their declared willingness to open a “dialogue” with the U.S.-backed supporters of the blood-soaked former Shah, like their call for UN imperialist troops to be sent to Iraq, the WCPI’s stance “against the act of abortion” shows how they are an obstacle to the fight for a revolutionary vanguard party that can lead the struggle to sweep away Iran’s theocratic rulers through a socialist revolution.

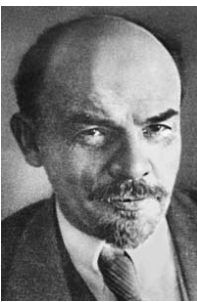
Comradely,
John Masters



TROTSKY

Free All Class-War Prisoners!

As long as the system of capitalist exploitation remains, those who fight against it will be subject to persecution and imprisonment by the ruling class. Following the Russian October Revolution of 1917, which inspired workers around the world, the American rulers launched a vicious anti-Communist campaign of arrests and deportations. James P. Cannon, a Communist Party leader who went on to become the head of the CP-initiated International Labor Defense



LENIN

and later the founder of the American Trotskyist movement, dedicated May Day 1921 to the memory and defense of class-war prisoners.

Every war has its hazards: the class war more than any other, for the organized workers wage it for the largest stakes in all the world’s history—for the Earth and all its fruits, for the complete expropriation of the present-day ruling class. In this worldwide struggle there is no compromise and no quarter. The aim of the workers is nothing less than the complete abolition of the capitalist system. Both classes are organizing on an international scale.

The list of the prisoners of the class war—the Workers’ Roll of Honor—is a long one and it increases steadily in spite of all the predictions that “normal conditions” of civil liberty will be restored. There can be no more normal conditions. This is the era of the world revolution. The war is on and there will be no more peace until the workers triumph everywhere.

It is to be expected that many will fall in battle and many be taken prisoner by the enemy before the final goal is reached. The ruling class today is the capitalist class. They maintain themselves in power by force and violence. They make the laws according to their own class interests. The revolutionary movement is a menace to their system. Therefore it is an outlaw movement. Everyone who takes an active part in the struggle for the liberation of the working class takes a chance of going to prison. When the workers get on top they will reverse the order of things. The workers will make the laws then according to their class interests. They will outlaw their class enemies and put them in jail. That is what they are doing in Russia today. It is a very simple proposition. Absolutely natural, absolutely necessary....

The day is coming when the toiling masses of America will hear that appeal and act upon it. Then the prison doors will be opened and the prisoners set free, for the masses have an authority higher than that of any court. To redouble our efforts to hasten on the day of liberation is the pledge we make to our imprisoned comrades on this First of May.

—James P. Cannon, “The Political Prisoners” (1921), reprinted in *James P. Cannon and the Early Years of American Communism* (Prometheus Research Library, 1992)

On Cuba and the SWP

New York
5 November 2003

Dear *Workers Vanguard*,

Referring to the California gubernatorial campaign of the Socialist Workers Party (SWP), to which we gave critical support during the recent recall vote, we wrote: “The SWP fails to characterize what kind of society Cuba is, leaving the impression that it supports Cuba from the standpoint of Third World national liberation” (WV No. 810, 26 September). The SWP platform, as printed in the official state handbook, indeed did not make the point that Cuba is a deformed workers state. But during the campaign, the SWP also described Cuba as follows in an editorial titled, “Campaign for Britton in California” (*Militant*, 15 September):

“The Cuban Revolution today is a living example that working people have the capacity to transform the world. The road charted in Cuba is necessary and possible in the United States and around the world, too. It is the road of working people developing the kind of leadership that can transform our unions into fighting organizations and lead working people to take political power.”

The SWP certainly recognizes that a *class transformation* took place in Cuba. But the SWP does not fight for socialist revolution in the U.S. and for proletarian political revolution in Cuba itself to oust the Stalinist Castro bureaucracy—i.e., it

does not fight for *genuine* defense of the Cuban Revolution.

Leon Trotsky was a leader of the October 1917 Russian Revolution, the first and to date only successful workers revolution. He explained that in the Soviet Union it took a political counterrevolution for the Stalinist bureaucracy to achieve its domination. In the deformed workers states of Cuba, North Korea, China and Vietnam this usurpation of power existed from birth. In Cuba, for example, a petty-bourgeois movement under highly exceptional circumstances—the absence of the working class as a contender for social power in its own right, the flight of the national bourgeoisie and hostile imperialist encirclement, and a lifeline thrown by the Soviet Union—was able to overthrow the old Batista dictatorship and eventually smash capitalist property relations. But the bonapartist regime the Castro clique threw up became a roadblock to extending and deepening the revolution. There is no workers democracy in Cuba—i.e., the working class does not have political power. In the absence of the direct rule of the working class, someone else fills that vacuum, and that someone is Castro and his cohorts.

The overthrow of capitalism in Cuba in 1960-61 has served as an acid test for *continued on page 5*

Note to Our Readers

Workers Vanguard subscribers will notice that the 2003 article index is not in this issue of the paper. Since 1981, our annual index has always been included in the last issue of the year. The index is an extremely useful tool—not least for those comrades who write and edit WV—as it gives readers the opportunity to easily search for an article by category. Unlike many

of our political opponents on the left, we have always prided ourselves on our honesty and our historical record. The index provides an easily accessible way to search the historical record of *Workers Vanguard*. We plan to have the 2003 index out very soon. It will be mailed to all our subscribers, and it will be included in the 2003 bound volume of the paper.

WORKERS VANGUARD

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

DIRECTOR OF PARTY PUBLICATIONS: Len Meyers
EDITOR: Alan Wilde
EDITOR, YOUNG SPARTACUS PAGES: Michael Davissón
PRODUCTION MANAGER: Susan Fuller
CIRCULATION MANAGER: Jeff Thomas
EDITORIAL BOARD: Rosemary Palenque (managing editor), Bruce André, Ray Bishop, Jon Brule, Karen Cole, Paul Cone, George Foster, Liz Gordon, Walter Jennings, Jane Kerrigan, James Robertson, Joseph Seymour, Alison Spencer
The Spartacist League is the U.S. Section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist).
Workers Vanguard (ISSN 0276-0746) published biweekly, except skipping three alternate issues in June, July and August (beginning with omitting the second issue in June) and with a 3-week interval in December, by the Spartacist Publishing Co., 299 Broadway, Suite 318, New York, NY 10007. Telephone: (212) 732-7862 (Editorial), (212) 732-7861 (Business). Address all correspondence to: Box 1377, GPO, New York, NY 10116. E-mail address: vanguard@tiac.net. Domestic subscriptions: \$10.00/22 issues. Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *Workers Vanguard*, Box 1377, GPO, New York, NY 10116.
Opinions expressed in signed articles or letters do not necessarily express the editorial viewpoint.
The closing date for news in this issue is 16 December.

No. 816

26 December 2003

Exchanges on the California Recall Elections

4 November 2003

To the Editor

The October 24th issue of *Workers Vanguard* contains, along with your regular barrage of polemical fury against all those on the left who dare to stand outside your ranks, a blatant and easily checked falsehood. In the article “The California Recall and the Left,” you argue that members of the socialist organization Solidarity work in the Democratic Party, asserting, “The DSA and CCDS actually work in the Democratic Party, as do some members of Solidarity!” No member of Solidarity works inside the Democratic Party and opposition to the classic CP/social-democratic strategy of realignment in the Democratic Party is one of its founding points of unity. “The capitalist parties, especially the Republican and Democratic parties, are fundamentally anti-working class, racist and sexist. We oppose any form of participation in or support for these parties. We call for the working class and its allies to form a new, independent political party that fights for their needs” (Solidarity Basis of Political Agreement, 1986, available at www.solidarity-us.org). I expect to see a public correction in the next issue.

Comradely Greetings,
Will Fulford-Jones

WV Replies:

We have no idea if Fulford-Jones—who is a supporter but not a formal member of Solidarity—is naive or cynical. Solidarity’s 1986 “Basis of Political Agreement,” which he quotes, has never prevented individual members from working within capitalist parties—Democratic Party included. In 1987, while Sheila Jordan was a prominent supporter of Solidarity, she was elected, *as a Democrat*, to the Oakland, California school board. Active in her campaign was her companion, Larry Cooperman, a member of Solidarity’s leading committee (for details see “Third Camp Over the Rainbow, Again: ‘Sheilagate,’” WV No. 438, 16 October 1987).

ber of Solidarity and a disarmament activist” when he wrote in *Against the Current* (September-October 1988):

“As a revolutionary socialist, I was excited when Jackson first campaigned five years ago. I worked on the 1984 campaign and attempted (unsuccessfully) to help build a post-election Rainbow Coalition in Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti, Michigan. In 1988, I defended Jackson in Solidarity—a lonely task. In between I was intermittently involved in local Democratic Party politics, largely in the hope that Rainbow activism might advance socialist goals.”

In the end, Schwartz reported being disillusioned with Rainbow politics. Far from being thrown out of Solidarity for violating its putative “principles,” his views were published in the journal—all part of the oh-so-comradely debate.

Fulford-Jones would probably like to claim that Solidarity’s flirtations with the Democratic Party in 1987-88 represented nothing but a temporary spell of weakness while the newly founded organization got its feet on the ground. Not so. We remember the way the late fake-Trotskyist Ernest Mandel—whom the Fourth Internationalist Caucus of Solidarity looked to for years as their international leader—treated his cothinker, the Polish dissident and Solidarność adviser, Jacek Kuron. All throughout the 1980s, Mandel and his Paris-based United Secretariat (USec) lauded Kuron as a “Trotskyist” and Solidarność—the reactionary, pro-capitalist and clericalist movement backed by the CIA and the Vatican—as a revolutionary organization of Polish workers. But when Solidarność finally took over the reins of government in 1989, with Kuron as labor minister, and began repressing workers struggles as it dismantled the Polish deformed workers state, Mandel suddenly disowned Kuron, insisting, “I don’t speak to ministers.” How dare Kuron take the next logical step and give the game away!

American Solidarity took its name from counterrevolutionary Polish Solidarność. Its entire political strategy is based on building “movements”—local and national—whose aim is to get the

tial hopefuls. This could change. In the meantime, there’s the Green Party, lately the darling of the petty-bourgeois milieus in which Solidarity plies its wares. *Against the Current* published a glowing account by one Michael Rubin, described as “a member of Solidarity in the Bay Area, a public worker trade unionist and a Green,” of Peter Camejo’s 2002 bid for California governor (“The Camejo-Warren Campaign: Greens Grow in California,” *Against the Current*, January-February 2003). When Camejo again ran for governor in the 2003 recall election, Solidarity co-sponsored, along with the International Socialist Organization and the Greens, Camejo’s University of California at Berkeley campaign appearance (*Against the Current*, November-December 2003).

Camejo cut his political teeth as a reformist hack (and sometime presidential candidate) in the reformist Socialist Workers Party of the 1960s and 1970s, as did many of Solidarity’s Mandelite members. During his 2003 campaign, he stated his admiration for Democratic candidate Cruz Bustamante, declaring, “I met with Bustamante for two hours in July, we talked mostly in Spanish, and I saw a guy who’s very frank, very straightforward. I don’t see a guy who’s slamming the door in my face, like Gray Davis” (*San Jose Mercury News*, 22 September). Fulford-Jones should wake up and smell the (organic?) coffee—the Greens are one of those “anti-working class, racist and sexist” capitalist parties that Solidarity claims (on paper) to be against.

* * *

October 16, 2003

Dear WV editor,

In regard to your September 26, 2003 issue of WV, I’d like to make two points. First, on page 10 you wrote, “The working class must seize power and establish its own government to expropriate the capitalist system.”

Any honest, fair-minded and reasonable Marxist understands what you are trying to say and totally supports it. But you are saying it in a very slovenly way, and that’s the problem. The two chief components of the capitalist system are capitalist property (the means of production and its ancillaries), and the organs of government. Following the revolution these two factors are to be handled very differently. Marxists wish to replace the capitalist system by *expropriating* the means of production and *abolishing* all capitalist state organs. There is a huge difference here. To expropriate means to take over someone’s property and use it for different ends. Marxists will expropriate the means of production and put them under workers’ control in order to create an egalitarian society. Marxists do not wish to expropriate or to put under workers’ control the Marines, CIA, Treasury Dept., and the US Congress, etc. for the achievement of socialism. Marxists wish to dismantle/abolish these organizations.

The formulation you employed—expropriate the capitalist system—can easily be opened up to a reformist interpretation, i.e. Marxists will take over (expropriate) the capitalist system and put a human face on it. I know your *penchant* for using words precisely in order to avoid programmatic ambiguity and/or misunderstanding. It is in that sense that I bring this misleading misformulation to your attention so that it will not be used again.

Secondly, in the same issue of WV, I read with disbelieving eyes your supporting the recall of Governor Davis and your critical support to the SWP’s gubernatorial candidacy in the California re-call election. You justify the former by quoting, with great approbation, the WWP. “The Workers World Party cor-

Sheila Jordan, a supporter of Solidarity, registered as a Democrat in 1987.

rectly points out that ‘organizing for a no vote on the recall gives legitimacy to the Gray Davis administration.’” (WV page 11) That’s absolutely true. That’s what the positive act of *opposing* the recall vote did in effect—support Davis.

But let’s apply the flip test. What did the positive act of *supporting* the recall vote do? It supported the anti-Davis electoral putsch of the Republicans. Every vote for the recall of the jejune and featureless Democratic Davis was objectively one vote for election of that muscleheaded misogynistic Republican Schwarzenegger. Everyone knew that should the recall have been successful Schwarzenegger was *destined* to win. Every vote for the recall, regardless of one’s succeeding vote for a minority candidate, was just another step forward for Schwarzenegger.

The other candidates from Peter Camejo (with his glib petit-bourgeois utopian capitalist schemes) to the washed-out dwarfish TV child star and the jiggling big-boobed porno actress represented nothing but a hilarious commentary on an increasingly demented capitalism. Whichever way you looked at the recall movement, pro or con, one was supporting either the Republicans or Democrats despite all assurances, protestations and the 133 other candidates to the contrary.

I believe that the only correct strategy was to abstain on the recall question and tell the workers, “Stay home! This is only another capitalist election. Whichever side wins, workers and minorities will lose—big time!” Or, given your critical support to the SWP, you should have told your readers, “Don’t pull either the ‘yes’ or ‘no’ lever on the recall portion of the ballot. Just pull the lever for the SWP!”

Now I have no problem in principle with giving critical support to the SWP. My questions are “What was the point? What did you really accomplish?”

In your article you adduced only two positive reasons for voting for the SWP: A. Vote for these reformists. When they get into power you will see how they betray the workers. B. The SWP calls for bringing home all the troops now.

Regarding the first reason, it is valid if one is dealing with a mass reformist party with broad roots in the working class—a party that has some kind of realistic chance of getting in and exposing itself before its working class base. The SWP has neither mass roots nor a working class base. So the call for critical support of the SWP speaks to absolutely nobody of any historical significance. Secondly, the SWP had zero chance of getting into the governor’s mansion. So absolutely no

continued on page 5



WV Photo

Spartacist contingent at February 2000 NYC protest against acquittal of cops who gunned down Amadou Diallo.

We assume that Jordan, who is currently the superintendent of schools in California’s Alameda County, has long since departed the reformist Solidarity swamp in search of firmer support for her electoral ambitions. Her election as a Democrat was something of a scandal for Solidarity. But it was no personal aberration. In 1987-88 Solidarity was embroiled in an internal debate over whether or not to support Jesse Jackson’s run for the Democratic Party’s presidential nomination. While Solidarity as a whole did not support Jackson, some members did. Take, for example, Justin Schwartz, who was described as a “mem-

bourgeois state to change its priorities and start acting in the interests of the oppressed. Such movements are inevitably saturated with the politics of lesser-evil electoralism and dominated by the Democratic Party. So it’s the height of hypocrisy for Fulford-Jones or anyone else to complain when they suddenly discover that, for some members, the mask inevitably fuses with the face.

If *Against the Current* has not lately been publishing the testimonials of Solidarity members working within the Democratic Party, this simply reflects the current lack of enthusiasm for any of the Democratic Party’s lackluster presiden-

Canada: Anglo-Chauvinist Provocations on the Rise

Independence for Quebec!

We reprint below an article from *Spartacist Canada No. 139* (Winter 2003/2004), newspaper of the Trotskyist League/Ligue Trotskyste of Canada, section of the International Communist League.



With the Parti Québécois [PQ] out of office and a hard-line federalist government in place in Quebec City, the Canadian rulers are gloating that the Quebec national question has been “solved.” “Mission accomplished,” bragged [then Prime Minister] Jean Chrétien as he prepared to hand the federal Liberal Party reins to Paul Martin: “The country is more united than ever.” Far from it. The polls show support for sovereignty in Quebec back up to 47 percent, and such sentiments will surely rise further in the face of new chauvinist provocations from English Canada and savage austerity attacks by the Quebec Liberal government.

Encouraged by the new provincial regime of [Quebec Liberal Party premier] Jean Charest, anglophones in bourgeois Westmount and the middle-class suburbs on Montreal’s West Island are agitating to withdraw from the largely francophone city and re-establish separate, privileged enclaves. Electronics giant Sony created an uproar in Quebec by marketing a video game whose object was to shoot down “terrorists” from a “Quebec Liberation Front” attacking Toronto malls and subways.

One of Chrétien’s parting insults—renaming Dorval Airport in Montreal after his mentor Pierre Trudeau—has also provoked widespread opposition. Trudeau is despised in much of Quebec for invoking the War Measures Act in October 1970. Using the excuse of two kidnappings by the Front de Libération du Québec, he sent the army to occupy Montreal, suspending civil liberties and jailing hundreds of nationalists, leftists and labor leaders.

Recent revelations that the federal government was again ready to send troops to Quebec in 1995 if the Yes side won the sovereignty referendum underscore how the forcible retention of Quebec in a “united” country is a cornerstone of capitalist Canada. As revolutionary internationalists and fighters against all aspects of oppression, we Trotskyists advocate independence for Quebec. This is a crucial component of our fight to make the working class conscious of the need to sweep away the rule of the exploiters through a socialist revolution.

Quebec is a distinct nation with its own language, culture and increasingly separate development. The subjugation of the Québécois at the hands of Canada’s Anglo rulers has sharply divided the working class on national lines, deeply undermining the prospects for proletarian struggle. In English Canada, the workers are imbued with reactionary “pro-Canada” patriotism, including by the NDP [social-democratic New Democratic Party] and the trade-union bureaucracy. In turn, this poisonous anti-Quebec bigotry has driven the historically more militant Québécois working class into the

“Based on rhetoric alone, the chances of violent federalist reprisals against sovereignists seemed more plausible than the reverse.”

Ottawa’s repeated moves and threats to use military force against national and social struggle in Quebec testify to the violent, chauvinist reality behind Canada’s “tolerant, peace-loving” image. The army was sent to Quebec to “restore order” amid nationalist anti-conscription protests during World War I. Less than two years after Trudeau sent the troops in 1970, several dozen top Canadian military leaders met secretly at a Montreal

paign, the government in Ottawa and top business circles added economic blackmail to the mix. Paul Martin raved that a million jobs would be lost if the Yes side won. Chrétien warned the elderly that they would lose their pensions in a sovereign Quebec. Capitalist magnates like Laurent Beaudoin of Bombardier threatened to shift operations out of Quebec in the event of independence. In the final days before the vote, the Canadian rulers worked with top business leaders to organize a massive flag-waving “unity” rally in Montreal. Employees were encouraged to take time off (with pay) to attend, while Air Canada and Via Rail slashed fares to Montreal by 90 percent and phone companies offered free long-distance calls to build this chauvinist “We love Canada” event.

Quebec and the Left

We called for a Yes vote in the 1995 referendum, headlining our leaflet “Break the Grip of National Chauvinism—Independence for Quebec!” (SC No. 106, November/December 1995). Our principled stance was in sharp contrast to “leftists” who placed themselves in the camp of Anglo chauvinism. The NDP, of course, was front and center in the “pro-Canada” campaign. The Communist Party similarly campaigned for a No vote, issuing an “urgent appeal for a united Canada.”

Bringing up the rear was the tiny anti-Spartacist sect called the “International Bolshevik Tendency” (IBT), whose leaflet (issued only in English) also called on Quebec workers to vote No to independence. So outrageous was the IBT’s stand that their only Quebec member, as he quit, denounced the group’s “de facto bloc with the Canadian bourgeoisie.” The IBT was even invited by federalist organizers to attend the chauvinist “Canadian unity” rally in Montreal on the eve of the referendum! As their ex-member noted, “To be fair, you quite properly rejected the invitation, but it shouldn’t have been made in the first place. The issue this raises is how the IBT’s propaganda effort was perceived by the ‘Canadian Unity’ business lobby. You were viewed as standing on the ‘right side’ of the political divide.” (For more details, see “‘Bolshevik Tendency’ Opposes Quebec Independence,” SC No. 108, March/April 1996.)

In the wake of the narrow referendum defeat, popular agitation for independence receded, as the PQ concentrated on managing capitalist Quebec on the backs of working people and the poor. Chrétien took the opportunity to push through the Clarity Act, legislation that effectively denies Quebec’s democratic right to self-determination. The New Democrats again underlined their adherence to the chauvinist Canadian status quo by supporting Chrétien’s anti-Quebec edict.



Canapress

Canadian troops occupied Montreal in October 1970, arresting hundreds of unionists and leftists.

arms of the bourgeois-nationalist PQ and Bloc Québécois. Meanwhile, immigrants and Native people are caught in the national-chauvinist crossfire, targeted for racist scapegoating on all sides. Quebec independence would remove a major obstacle to proletarian class consciousness, laying a basis for workers in both nations to see that their “own” capitalist exploiters are the enemy, not each other.

Ottawa’s Military Plans Against Quebec

The rulers in Ottawa also declared a “death of separatism” after the PQ lost the elections in 1985. At that time, support for even a watered-down “sovereignty-association” had plummeted to 15 percent. But only a few years later, angered by the Anglo-chauvinist bigotry that swept the country against the Meech Lake Accord’s simple assertion that Quebec was a “distinct society,” hundreds of thousands of Québécois were marching in the streets with fleur-de-lys flags. By 1995, Canada was on the brink of breaking apart, as the sovereignty referendum failed by a single percentage point.

A new book by Lawrence Martin, *Iron Man: The Defiant Reign of Jean Chrétien*, describes the panic that swept the federal Liberal cabinet as they realized they might lose the referendum. While Chrétien prepared a speech declaring that a winning referendum would merely be a “consultative exercise,” the government worked out contingency plans to send in the army “to protect federal property.” The book quotes then defense minister David Collenette: “I was in a tough position.... There were things that went on that we had to prepare for that I don’t even want to talk about.”

Chrétien, of course, denies it all. “C’est de la bullshit,” he told reporters. But as Chantal Hébert noted in her [Toronto] *Globe and Mail* column (24 October):

“For anyone who followed the federal scene in those tense 1995 days, the surprise would be that the issue of using troops to deal with civil strife after a Yes vote did not come up....

hotel on 18-19 April 1972 to discuss plans for a more sustained invasion and occupation of Quebec. Also present were senior British military officers, who described their experiences in the army occupation of Northern Ireland.

This high-level plan for a military crackdown, “Exercise Neat Pitch,” came amid major social turmoil and working-class radicalization in Quebec. Hundreds of thousands of public-sector workers were embroiled in the first of two general strikes that swept the province that spring. The second, which included the industrial private sector, saw strikers seize whole towns in the most deep-going proletarian struggle this country has ever seen. The story of “Neat Pitch,” still largely suppressed in the English Canadian media, only came to light thanks to one of the few francophone officers present, Captain Jean-René-Marcel Sauvé, who became so troubled that he leaked a copy to an aide to [senior PQ figure] Jacques Parizeau (*Presse Canadienne*, 5 April 2002).

Faced with a wall of hostility from English Canada—NDP leader David Lewis openly supported the jailing of Quebec labor leaders—the aspirations of the Quebec working class were channeled into the bourgeois-nationalist PQ. Then, following the 1976 election of the first PQ government, Trudeau again threatened to “use the sword” against any moves toward independence. And while the details of Ottawa’s military preparations in 1995 remain shrouded in mystery, the months leading up to the referendum saw several military provocations. On August 26, a convoy of hundreds of military vehicles was sent across Quebec. The same month, the secretive “anti-terrorist” Joint Task Force 2 conducted an exercise in an east-end Montreal suburb. Residents of Anjou were awakened in the middle of the night as soldiers descended in Twin Huey helicopters and fired ear-splitting stun grenades.

As support for sovereignty surged in the late days of the referendum cam-



Maclean’s

Chauvinist “Canadian unity” rally in Montreal, November 1995.

SPARTACIST CANADA
No. 139 Winter 2003/2004 50 cents

Labor Must Fight Ottawa’s Racist Dragnet!

For the capitalist rulers, the “war on terror” is the pretext to ramp up the powers of state repression. In the name of the “war on terror,” the U.S. imperialists and their allies have launched a global war on immigrants and workers. In the U.S., they have deported over 5,000 immigrants from Mexico, Central America, and the Caribbean. In Canada, they have deported over 1,000 immigrants from the same regions. In the U.S., they have deported over 1,000 immigrants from the same regions. In Canada, they have deported over 1,000 immigrants from the same regions.

“War on Terror”=War on Immigrants, Workers

Subscription: 4 Issues
C\$3 US\$5

Order from/pay to:
Spartacist Canada Publishing
Box 6867 Station A, Toronto ON M5W 1X6
Spartacist Publishing Co.
Box 1377 GPO, New York, NY 10116

Cuba and the SWP...

(continued from page 2)

revolutionaries from the beginning. The Spartacist League originated as the Revolutionary Tendency (RT) in the SWP in 1961-63. The RT reaffirmed that a petty-bourgeois, peasant-based guerrilla movement could not replace the Leninist party of the working class as a revolutionary vanguard. The model Marxist party is the Bolshevik Party that led the Russian Revolution. The SWP emerged from the Cold War in the early 1960s having lost confidence in the prospect of working-class revolution. They eagerly leaped onto the massively popular Fidelista bandwagon, and they have never gotten off. In the WV article on the recall elections, we rightly noted: “The SWP is... utterly uncritical of Fidel Castro, whose accommodation to U.S. imperialism has led him to stab in the back countless struggles of workers and peasants throughout Latin America.”

When the SWP gave uncritical support to the petty-bourgeois Castro government, they abandoned a revolutionary proletarian perspective and the vanguard party necessary to bring communist class consciousness to the proletariat, not only in Cuba but elsewhere—witness their talk of the Cuban Revolution being a model for the U.S. working class. Their labeling of the Cuban regime as a “Workers and Farmers Government” was a cover for a bureaucratic caste exercising a monopoly of political power *over* the working class.

At an October 15 event of the Los Angeles Coalition in Solidarity with Cuba which the SWP helped organize, a Spartacist League comrade spoke from the floor:

“Fidel Castro’s policy, which is supported by the Socialist Workers Party and Workers World Party, has been to conciliate the imperialists—like Democratic Party politician Jimmy Carter, who went to Cuba to promote the State Department-funded counterrevolutionary Varela Project. Castro welcomed Carter and gave him a platform just as he did the reactionary Pope.... In contrast to reformist groups like the SWP, we give no political support to the Castro bureaucracy. There needs to be a proletarian political revolution in Cuba to put political power into the hands of the working class organized into soviets. Defense

of the gains of the Cuban Revolution means, most importantly, struggling for workers revolution in this country, the imperialist belly of the beast, contrary to Castro’s Stalinist ideology of ‘socialism in one country’ that is supported by the SWP.”

With the Boris Yeltsin-led counterrevolution in the Soviet Union in 1991-92, the gains of the Cuban Revolution have been thrown into the gravest danger. The SWP supported Yeltsin in the name of “democratic rights,” a position they cover for now by ludicrously claiming that Russia is still some kind of workers state!

The fact of the matter is that the SWP not only glorifies the Castro bureaucracy but also bourgeois third-world nationalists and social movements far more retrograde. In our recall article, we wrote of the SWP: “In 1979 it actually hailed Ayatollah Khomeini’s assumption of power in Iran as an anti-imperialist victory! Increasingly, the SWP has drifted toward enthusiasm for Third World nationalists like Hugo Chávez of Venezuela, and statements by Islamic reactionary Osama bin Laden have been printed in the *Militant* (see *Militant* online, 29 October 2001, for an example).”

In 1982 Jack Barnes, then and still today leader of the SWP, formally renounced Trotskyism and permanent revolution. But programmatically and organizationally the SWP abandoned Trotskyism in deed two decades earlier with their embrace of the Castro regime and expulsion of the Revolutionary Tendency, the predecessor of the Spartacist League.

Comradely,
Karen Cole

Recall...

(continued from page 3)

one would see what those weird reformist scoundrels are really capable of doing in the event of their victory.

And as for their call of bringing the troops home now, you are quite correct. That is an eminently supportable slogan. But wait! The SWP called for bringing home all the troops during the Vietnam War during their 1964, 1968, and 1972 presidential campaigns. *You never gave them critical support then*. Yet you gave them critical support now! Has the SWP changed for the better in this 40-year interval? No, they have openly rejected Trotskyism. So why have you reversed your 40-year-old position of not sup-

porting their bring-the-troops-home-now electoral campaigns and supported the SWP electoral campaign in 2003?

I eagerly await your response!

Sincerely,
P.S.
(A very long time WV reader)

* * *

Detroit MI
October 14, 2003

Letterbox, WV,

When you come out with no support for the Democrats, no more than for the Republicans, aren’t you, in this particular case of the coming presidential election—aren’t you, albeit unconsciously, repeating Stalin’s grotesque error in the early-’30s?—his telling (or ordering) the German CP to have nothing to do with the Social Democrats, absolutely no united front with the latter, calling ’em social fascists. It enabled Hitler to win.

Not that you’re calling the Democrats fascist, but might your outlook on this coming election be analogous to that Stalin Third Period?

S.C.

WV Replies:

P.S.’s initial point is well taken. It is precisely to explain why it is necessary to forge a workers government to *expropriate* the capitalists and *abolish* their machinery of class oppression that revolutionary Marxists intervene into bourgeois elections. In the U.S., where the workers are tied to the ruling class through the trade-union misleadership’s allegiance to the Democratic Party, a key task is to advance the understanding that the labor movement must have a party of its own, one that stands completely independent of the capitalists, their state and their parties. Our call for a “yes” vote in the California recall election, and for a vote for the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) gubernatorial candidate, was the most effective way to underscore our principled opposition to all capitalist parties.

As we said in “The California Recall and the Left” (WV No. 812, 24 October), the SWP’s Joel Britton was “the one candidate on the ballot whose campaign drew even a crude class line against capitalism and war.” Our vote to Britton was from the perspective of *critical support*, and we noted that the SWP’s quirky reformist program and nominal existence means that it is not a step to the kind of

revolutionary party the working class needs. In that context, P.S. has a factual error that is quite instructive. We did in fact campaign for a vote to the SWP in the 1964 presidential election, despite its call to “Withdraw the troops from Viet Nam and send them to Mississippi,” which disarmed civil rights activists by building false illusions that the federal government would “protect” them from racist attack. At the time, the SWP—from which our tendency had just been expelled—still professed to stand on the principles of revolutionary Trotskyism, and our critical support for its candidates best enabled us to expose its reformist practice. By 1968, the SWP had completed its slide from centrism to outright reformism, and it was actively building a bloc with liberal Democratic politicians speaking for a defeatist wing of the bourgeoisie over the Vietnam War. As there was no longer a contradiction between its formal program and its practice, we did not give it critical support in that election or the ones to follow. In the recent recall elections, however, the SWP took a clear position on the side of Iraq against the American invasion and occupation, and was explicitly critical when the current antiwar movement espoused the same class-collaborationist politics that the SWP pursued three decades before.

In the face of an even critically supportable working-class candidate, P.S.’s position of abstention in the California recall would have been in fact to lend backhanded support to the Democratic Party. Indeed, though he does not hold this position, the logic of P.S.’s argument is what is expressed explicitly by S.C.: support for “lesser evil” electoral politics—i.e., the Democrats. Contrary to what S.C. implies, the Republican Party is not a fascist party; nor is the capitalist Democratic Party, unlike the German Social Democratic Party, part of the workers movement. Moreover, Trotsky’s point in Germany was not *electoral support* to the Social Democrats, which implies an endorsement of their political program. He argued for a fighting united front—a series of *actions*—between Communist and Social Democratic workers organizations to defeat the fascists, in the course of which the Communists could make clear to the Social Democratic ranks that only the Communists had the program that could make the necessary socialist revolution. ■

Today, some elements in the youthful activist milieu, notably among the anarchists, dismiss the Quebec national question as an irrelevancy, or merely a trap set by the PQ and Bloc to lull workers and the oppressed. This could not be more false. The national oppression of the Québécois within the Canadian state cannot be wished away: English Canadian chauvinism and the Quebec nationalism it engenders are constantly used by the bourgeois rulers to tie the workers to the class enemy, undermining the class struggle.

Take the struggles now brewing in Quebec against the Charest government’s austerity onslaught on welfare, social services and union jobs. Quebec union leaders are vowing to “mount the barricades” against Charest’s “declaration of war.” Working-class struggle mobilizing Quebec’s poor, unemployed and minorities is indeed urgently needed. But the labor tops’ main goal is to channel the anger accumulating at the base of Quebec society into revived illusions in the PQ—the same party that attacked workers’ jobs and livelihoods as well as social programs like health care while in office.

The PQ government’s attacks provoked widespread opposition, notably the hugely popular 1999 nurses strike. But now, in opposition, the péquistes [members of the PQ] and their labor lieutenants can again play the card of “national solidarity” against English Canada and federalist politicians like Charest. PQ leader Bernard Landry cynically gloats, “We are no longer in a position to create dissatis-

faction, and the Liberals are,” adding: “At the end of the present cycle we will make Quebec an independent nation” (*Globe and Mail*, 21 June).

Bourgeois labor haters like the PQ and Bloc use the all-too-real provocations of the English Canadian rulers to tie the workers to their coattails. As forthright opponents of Anglo bigotry and champions of Quebec independence in English Canada, we Trotskyists can with clean hands explain to the Québécois workers why nationalism is an obstacle to the struggle to emancipate working people and the oppressed.

Our proletarian internationalist stance is in sharp contrast to the “left” nationalist groupings—Union des Forces Progressistes (UFP), D’Abord Solidaires, etc.—who peddle illusions about the “progressive” nature of Quebec nationalism and act as pressure groups on the PQ and its allies in the labor bureaucracy. The UFP in particular aspires only to be a Québécois version of the NDP, another social-democratic obstacle to anti-capitalist class consciousness and struggle.

The Trotskyist League/Ligue trotskyste fights to forge a revolutionary vanguard party which takes up the cause of all the oppressed. While supporting Quebec independence, we also fight to mobilize labor’s power on behalf of Native people and immigrants, who today face stepped-up racist attacks from the capitalist rulers, anglophone and francophone alike. This notably includes Quebec’s large Arab and Muslim population, who are particular

targets of the rulers’ reactionary “war on terror.” Stop the deportations of Algerian, Palestinian and other refugees! Full citizenship rights for all immigrants!

The “united Canada” upheld by the English Canadian labor bureaucracy and especially the NDP can only mean continued national oppression of the Québécois people and a dampening of class

struggle. We fight for the only perspective that can weld together the struggles of working people—English Canadian, Québécois; immigrant, Native—against the brutal and bloody capitalist system that oppresses us all. Down with Anglo chauvinism! Break with bourgeois nationalism! For Quebec independence! Forward to North American socialist revolution! ■

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

Web site: www.icl-fi.org • E-mail address: vanguard@tiac.net

National Office: Box 1377 GPO, New York, NY 10116 (212) 732-7860

Boston

Box 390840, Central Sta.
Cambridge, MA 02139
(617) 666-9453

Chicago

Box 6441, Main PO
Chicago, IL 60680
(312) 563-0441

Public Office:

Sat. 2-5 p.m.
222 S. Morgan
(Buzzer 23)

Los Angeles

Box 29574, Los Feliz Sta.
Los Angeles, CA 90029
(213) 380-8239

Public Office: Sat. 2-5 p.m.
3806 Beverly Blvd., Room 215

New York

Box 3381, Church St. Sta.
New York, NY 10008
(212) 267-1025

Public Office:

Sat. 1-4 p.m.
299 Broadway, Suite 318

Oakland

Box 29497
Oakland, CA 94604
(510) 839-0851

Public Office:

Sat. 1-5 p.m.
1634 Telegraph
3rd Floor

San Francisco

Box 77494
San Francisco
CA 94107

TROTSKYIST LEAGUE OF CANADA/LIGUE TROTSKYSTE DU CANADA

Toronto

Box 7198, Station A
Toronto, ON M5W 1X8
(416) 593-4138

Vancouver

Box 2717, Main P.O.
Vancouver, BC V6B 3X2
(604) 687-0353

“We Need to Build Our Own Workers Party”

We reprint below, in slightly edited form, speeches by Spartacist League spokesman Mo Pirouzy and Labor Black League spokesman Jido Cooper to the Partisan Defense Committee Holiday Appeal for Class-War Prisoners, held on December 7 in the San Francisco Bay Area.

Mo Pirouzy, Spartacist League

I'd like to start with crying out loud: Down with the colonial occupation of Iraq! Down with the colonial occupation of Iraq! The U.S. imperialists are looters and murderers. What has happened in Iraq is not so much a war but a one-sided slaughter. Untold thousands of Iraqis have been killed through air strikes and overwhelming American military might. The U.S. war against the Iraqi people continues in the form of colonial occupation, which has sparked popular and justified resistance among Iraqis and proven deadly for American soldiers.

We recognize that both Iraqis and the American workers are facing a common enemy, the U.S. capitalist ruling class. Our message: It is impossible to oppose war without opposing the capitalist system that breeds it and the capitalist parties that carry it out. We challenge illusions in the reformability of the bloody American imperialist state. We are for mobilizing the only force that can challenge the rule of the capitalist class—the working class.

It is important to understand that the enslavement of Iraq is yet another price that the international working class is paying for the destruction of the Soviet degenerated workers state through capitalist counterrevolution. Today's imperialist global rampage would have been impossible when the USSR still existed. And unlike most of the reformist left who howled with the imperialist wolves, we Trotskyists of the International Communist League fought to the bitter end in defense of the Soviet workers state and

Bay Area Holiday Appeal for Class-War Prisoners



WV Photo

its collectivized property. This defense was despite and against the Stalinist misrule that had opened the door to counter-revolution.

This year's benefit takes place in the context of heightened state repression at home. The so-called “war on terror,” backed by both Republicans and Democrats, is the government's pretext for increasing its power to spy on the population, target leftists, attack civil liberties, break the power of the unions, deport immigrants and “disappear” citizens.

Over the last two decades, America's capitalists have secured fabulous riches through increasing the exploitation of the working class, while slashing social programs benefiting the poor and particularly the black ghetto masses. America's rulers *hate* and *fear* the people. It is in this context of growing social inequality—and the potential for an upsurge in social struggle—that the capitalists' state

reinforces its arsenal of state repression. For example, when the ILWU was locked in a showdown with the union-busting shipping bosses in June 2002, Homeland Security chief Tom Ridge threatened that any strike action by the workers would be a threat to “national security.” The repression the government seeks to unleash is completely consistent with the military dictatorships that the U.S. has supported over the years—the Shah of Iran, Somoza of Nicaragua, Batista, Pinochet of Chile, just to name a few. Our point here is that what the government can get away with will be determined in the class struggle, on the picket line and in the streets.

Attacks on labor, racist assaults by the cops, the reactionary assault on women's right to abortion, cuts in education, the Iraqi quagmire—all will bring, inevitably, a response from the workers, unions, immigrants, black militants and the

youth. The question is under which leadership and under what banner will the masses wage their struggle. The trade-union bureaucracy's policy is that of “America first” chauvinist protectionism, which divides the working class internationally, and the promotion of the Democratic Party, to which the union bureaucracy is intimately linked and obligated.

From February 9, 2002, when we mobilized workers against the anti-immigrant witchhunt, to our Revolutionary Internationalist Contingents defending Iraq at the big antiwar demos, we have sought to show how a revolutionary party would fight to mobilize the working class independent of the capitalist parties, Democrats and Republicans both. The reformist socialists who organized the antiwar demos deliberately kept them “respectable,” deliberately obscured the fact that imperialism is a system and deliberately channeled people into

Free Vanunu Now!

Statement by Mordechai Vanunu Defense Committee

The following statement by Jeannie Shaterian of the Bay Area Campaign to Free Mordechai Vanunu was read out at the Bay Area PDC Holiday Appeal on December 7.

Mordechai Vanunu was kidnapped by Israel's intelligence service, Mossad, September 30, 1986, given a closed trial, convicted of treason and espionage, and sentenced to eighteen years. The first eleven-plus years were spent in solitary confinement. Recently he was returned to solitary confinement for three weeks for disobeying prison regulations. His mail is censored and delayed, his visitors restricted to his family, legal team, and priest. He has been repeatedly denied parole.

What did he do? For nine years he was a technician at the so-called Negev Nuclear Research Center near Dimona, in reality a plant manufacturing components for atomic and thermonuclear weapons. As the years progressed he grew more and more disturbed by his part in it. He was deeply affected by the devastation wrought on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, by the unjust nature of Israeli society, and by the insanity of Israel's open secret—the bombs everyone knew about and no one mentioned, the lack of public debate about such an important issue. Before he was laid off, he smuggled in a camera and took extensive pictures of the plant (available on the U.S. Campaign to Free Mordechai Vanunu's Web site). He didn't get them developed for many months, after traveling through Asia to Australia and converting to Christianity. (His Orthodox Jewish parents emigrated from Morocco to Israel when

he was eight years old. He is the second of eleven children.) Although he didn't seek out publicity, but told his story to a small church group, the *Sunday Times* of London heard of him and sent a reporter to check him out. By the time his story and photographs were published in October 1986, he had already disappeared. It took the Israeli government (Shimon Peres, one of the fathers of the Israeli bomb, was Prime Minister) six weeks to acknowledge his presence in Israel. He was treated especially harshly because he had broken two sacred taboos: documenting the manufacture of nuclear weapons and breaking with Judaism.

Almost immediately an international campaign for his release arose, with its most active branches in Israel, the UK, Norway, and the U.S. He has won numerous awards in absentia, including the Right Livelihood Award and the 2002 Nuclear Free Future Award for Resistance. Amnesty International, Nobel Peace Prize Laureates Mairead Corrigan Maguire and Archbishop Desmond Tutu have spoken out for his release, as have government, religious, scientific, and creative arts people and activists throughout the world. Of course, it has been in the interests of both Israel and the U.S. to keep him as quiet and forgotten as possible, for if the U.S. admits Israel has nuclear weapons, all its aid to Israel becomes illegal according to U.S. law (the Symington Amendment of 1977).

Over the last few years there have been many significant cracks in Israel's policy of nuclear ambiguity, both within and outside of Israel. This March the BBC produced a documentary, “Israel's Secret Weapon,”



Reuters

Vanunu at pro-Palestinian rights rally in Israel, 1985. Sign reads: “Israel-Palestine: Two States for Two Peoples.”

dealing with Israel's weapons of mass destruction, chemical and biological as well as nuclear, the history of its nuclear build-up, the Vanunu case, worker safety and environmental hazards at the reactor, the secrecy policy and U.S. official reaction to all this. The Israeli government broke its ties with the BBC because of this show. On October 12 the *L.A. Times* did an extensive feature, “Israel Adds Fuel to Nuclear Dispute,” that attracted international attention.

Mordechai Vanunu's official release date is April 22, 2004. His spirits are excellent. He remains unrepentant and committed to global nuclear disarmament. He plans to leave Israel as soon as possible and settle in the U.S. That may be easier said than done. The international campaign is doing everything it can to ensure it happens. For much more information and what you can do, contact the U.S. Campaign to Free Mordechai Vanunu, www.nonviolence.org/vanunu, (520) 323-8697. You can also write to him. The address is Mordechai Vanunu, Ashkelon Prison, Ashkelon, Israel.

New York Transit Ruling

Muslim Women Banned from Work in Public

This October, an arbitrator upheld a New York City Transit (NYCT) ruling that three black Muslim bus drivers must either violate their religious convictions, or be banned from public work. NYCT launched its crackdown on these workers for wearing their Islamic headscarves in the summer of 2002, when the anti-Muslim “terror” hysteria was in full swing. The arbitrator’s ruling, which mandates that these women wear official company caps on top of their headscarves in violation of Islamic teaching, constitutes an attack on New York’s bus drivers and their union, Transport Workers Union (TWU) Local 100, because it asserts that the NYCT can remove Muslim workers from their jobs. This is an outrage! We defend these women. Union action should be organized to have them immediately reinstated to their original jobs and to fight the NYCT’s racist anti-Muslim attacks. A union leadership that defends its members would have led a walkout on the spot when supervisors first victimized these union sisters.

Two of the victimized unionists, Stephanie Lewis and Deirdre Small, had worn their headscarves (also known as *khimars*) while driving city buses since 1989 and 1998, respectively, without incident. A third, Malikah Alkebulan, was a probationary bus driver in March 2002 when the Flatbush Depot bosses began disciplining her for not wearing an official company cap over her headscarf. Recently, another Muslim bus driver, Gladys Muhammad, came forward to protest

being pulled from passenger service for the same reason. All four workers are reportedly pursuing lawsuits against the NYCT.

These attacks are part of the domestic “war on terror” launched after the criminal September 11 attack on the World Trade Center. The “war on terror” targets in the first instance immigrants and Muslims; it feeds the fire of anti-Muslim bigotry: racist attacks were particularly directed at Muslim women wearing the headscarf after September 11. Now, the “war on terror” is being used to go after just about anyone perceived as an opponent by the racist capitalist rulers, such as those who are opposed to the colonial war and occupation of Iraq. NYCT bosses are going after black Muslim women right now, but TWU members better know that it’s the entire union and workers movement that’s ultimately under fire. Blatant racism against immigrant and other minority workers by NYCT management has been on the rise. However, Lewis, Small, Alkebulan, Muhammad and other victimized transit workers are not simply helpless. They are members of TWU Local 100, a diverse, multiracial 36,000-strong union that has the ability to mobilize thousands of its members in their defense.

Local 100 officers correctly point to post-9/11 religious bigotry as the backdrop of this case, and the union held a demonstration on February 28 before an arbitration hearing. However, appealing to the spirit of “national unity” patriot-



Amsterdam News

February 28: Stephanie Lewis, one of the bus drivers victimized for wearing Islamic headscarf, at union protest at arbitration hearing.

ism, the union issued a leaflet to the bus drivers with the main slogan of “Religious Discrimination Is Un-American!” Religious discrimination and racism—as the roundups of thousands of Arab Americans and immigrants have shown—is as American as apple pie. The union tops promote “national unity” as an act of loyalty to U.S. imperialism and the capitalists’ political parties, especially the Democrats. An example of this was in Local 100’s recent union elections, where not a single candidate or slate even mentioned this case as a priority for beating back the NYCT’s anti-union assaults

the Democratic Party.

Gore Vidal said there’s one party in the U.S., the property party, and it has two right wings. The Democrats run this system in partnership with the Republicans. It was Clinton who, among many other things, rammed through Congress the Anti-Terrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act of 1996, which opened the door to the Patriot Act and under which most of the immigrants held by the government today are detained. We stand for full citizenship rights for all immigrants who have made it to this country.

Perhaps because both parties are so right wing, some garden-variety liberals are now calling themselves Greens. Matt Gonzalez, running for San Francisco mayor, is a case in point. But the Greens, too, are a capitalist party with a capitalist program. The Nader campaign had a strong component of flag-waving anti-immigrant protectionism and strident anti-Communist China-bashing. The reformist International Socialist Organization (ISO) is busy supporting Gonzalez, as they did Nader, although they do have a complaint—that Gonzalez supported the arrests of thousands of demonstrators in S.F. after the bombing of

Iraq started. But they’re not letting this minor point stand in the way of their support. This tells you a lot about not only Matt Gonzalez, but also the ISO.

In conclusion: We seek to educate the working class in the historic necessity for all mankind of the reorganization of society on the basis of a planned economy where production is based on human need, not profit. We seek to convince workers and their allies to build a workers party which will fight for a socialist future. We seek to act, as Lenin described the role of the vanguard party, as a tribune of the people. Where there is a workers strike, we’ll be there; where there is protest against the injustices of the capitalist class against blacks, immigrants and the oppressed, we’ll be there. As Rosa Luxemburg said long ago, the choices are clear—socialism or barbarism! We have a whole world to win. Workers of the world, unite!

Jido Cooper, Labor Black League for Social Defense

The Labor Black League for Social Defense, fraternally allied with the Spartacist League, stands for mobilizing black and working people in militant,

integrated struggle against the brutal system of racist oppression that is capitalist America.

The war against “terrorism” is in fact a war against oppressed peoples abroad and working people, blacks and immigrants at home. While backing the \$87 billion war budget for the colonial occupation of Iraq, the Democrats have demanded *more* of your tax dollars for repressing you right here in the so-called “homeland.”

Last April, Congresswoman Barbara Lee led a rally in Oakland to channel anger against the Iraq war into support for the Democratic Party. Labor Black League members were there to say: “Break with the Democrats! We need to build our own workers party!” We pointed to our united-front demonstration in Oakland the previous year, to show what a workers party in action looks like—mobilizing the power of organized labor in defense of immigrants, blacks and the unions against the Patriot and Maritime Security Acts, independently of the capitalist parties and their state.

Cops kept a very low profile at the Lee rally. But you look at two days later, when antiwar activists took their protest down to the docks, just symbolically touching the question of labor’s social power, and the cops moved in with guns blazing, seriously injuring both demonstrators and longshoremen with wooden projectiles.

So after that attack, liberals and reformists demanded a city council review of the police violence. Well, the existing civilian review board was bypassed, you see. There’s no surprise there. It proved totally worthless regarding the [Oakland police] “Riders” reign of terror, just as its sister body has regarding SFPD brutality. Anyway, their so-called “independent inquiry” disappeared before starting. And what about the courts? Well, they turned the Riders loose, and they’re prosecuting the *victims* of the cop rampage down at the docks. In the name of the “war on drugs,” the Oakland and San Francisco cops continue to terrorize ghettos, barrios and workplaces. Labor Black League

on this heavily immigrant and minority workforce. The TWU should not only give full support to the bus drivers’ legal challenges against the company; it should also intensify its protests and stage union-wide job actions to get their jobs back and fight for their rights!

As Marxists, we defend the right to freedom of religious beliefs. At the same time, as we wrote in “New York TWU: Fight MTA Attacks on Muslim Women Workers” (WV No. 799, 14 March), “We recognize that the headscarf prescribed by the Koran—most obviously in its extreme forms, like the head-to-toe *chador* in Iran and the *burqa* in Afghanistan—is an expression of the subjugation of women, who are oppressed by *all* religions. But in post-9/11 America, it’s the capitalists and their government that are making life hell for all Muslims, including women.”

The arbitrator’s latest decision gives a green light for more crackdowns on workers, including Sikhs, men who wear skullcaps or yarmulkes and *anyone else* who doesn’t “look right” to the boss. There is nothing “neutral” about the capitalist courts and the system of arbitration in disputes between labor and management—these are institutions set up to maintain the bosses’ system of exploitation and oppression. In fact, the company now has an excuse to never hire another Muslim woman who wears a headscarf as a bus operator, train operator, token booth clerk or many other jobs. ***The full power of TWU Local 100 should be used to stop this and all company acts of bigotry!*** ■

members took part in many of the recent protests against police brutality to say, “No illusions in civilian review boards or community control of police. Down with the racist and anti-labor ‘war on drugs’! For the decriminalization of drugs!” These are among the demands added to our Ten-Point Program in an update adopted early last year.

Last year, together with the Spartacus Youth Club, we counter-demonstrated against gay-bashing pickets of memorials for murdered transgender youth Gwen Araujo. The bourgeoisie and their state use religion to help control the masses. That’s why we added “Defend the separation of church and state!” to our demands in the Ten-Point Program for “Full democratic rights for homosexuals!” and “Government out of the bedroom!”

The imperialists have intensified their drive to restore capitalism in the deformed workers states of China, Vietnam, Cuba and North Korea. We call for the international working class to defend the remaining gains of those countries’ anti-capitalist social revolutions. They must be defended not only from imperialist military attack and economic pressure, but also from their treacherous Stalinist bureaucracies who aid the forces of capitalist restoration. So our Ten-Point Program now calls for the workers themselves in those countries to oust the bureaucracies through proletarian political revolution.

During its 20 years of activity, the Bay Area Labor Black League has helped build numerous actions to stop the KKK and Nazis, to defend civil and union rights for blacks and immigrants, and to defend abortion rights. You can see some of those activities represented in the displays around the room. So pick up a copy of our newsletter. Look over our Ten-Point Program. And if you agree with it, join the Labor Black League to fight racist capitalist oppression and to help build the party that can lead the working class to state power and to a socialist future. ■

WORKERS VANGUARD

Marxist Working-Class Biweekly of the Spartacist League

☐ \$10/22 issues of *Workers Vanguard* (includes English-language *Spartacist* and *Black History and the Class Struggle*) ☐ New ☐ Renewal
international rates: \$25/22 issues—Airmail \$10/22 issues—Seamail

☐ \$2/6 introductory issues of *Workers Vanguard* (includes English-language *Spartacist*)

☐ \$2/4 issues of *Espartaco* (en español) (includes Spanish-language *Spartacist*)

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Apt. # _____

Phone (_____) _____ E-mail _____

816

Make checks payable/mail to: Spartacist Publishing Co., Box 1377 GPO, New York, NY 10116

(continued from page 1)

rapacious imperialists. In the neocolonial countries, the only road to the resolution of the burning democratic tasks is the conquest of power by the working class, at the head of the peasantry and all the oppressed, and the extension of the revolution to the imperialist heartlands and beyond.

The RT also fought for revolutionary intervention into the mass civil rights movement in the U.S. South on a program of revolutionary integrationism, which holds that black people in the United States can have social and political equality only through the overthrow of the capitalist system and the forging of a workers state. This position was in opposition to the SWP leadership's tailing of the reformist Martin Luther King Jr. leadership of the civil rights movement and later of black nationalism.

Trotsky said correctly that those who cannot defend existing gains will never win new ones. I want to talk a little about the gains of the Cuban Revolution. Prior to the 1959 Revolution the immensely corrupt and brutal U.S. puppet regime of Batista and his cronies ruled over a society marked by mass unemployment and illiteracy, with miserable urban slums and a destitute rural population squeaking by through seasonal employment. On top of this was the systematic and brutal oppres-



sion of black people; indeed, heavily black Santiago province was a center of guerrilla struggle against Batista. Such is the Cuban "democracy" upheld by the anti-Communist rabble in Miami today.

Following the overthrow of capitalism in 1960-61, the resources of Cuban society—with heavy Soviet aid—were invested in a centralized, planned economy, with everyone guaranteed a job, decent housing, food and education. The free health care system, despite the crippling effects of the U.S. blockade, is still far and away the best among so-called “Third World” countries, and Cuban medical schools train doctors from countries like Honduras, Nicaragua and El Salvador. Cubans now enjoy one of the highest literacy rates in the world, and nearly one in eleven hold university degrees. The island has more doctors and teachers per capita than just about any country in the world.

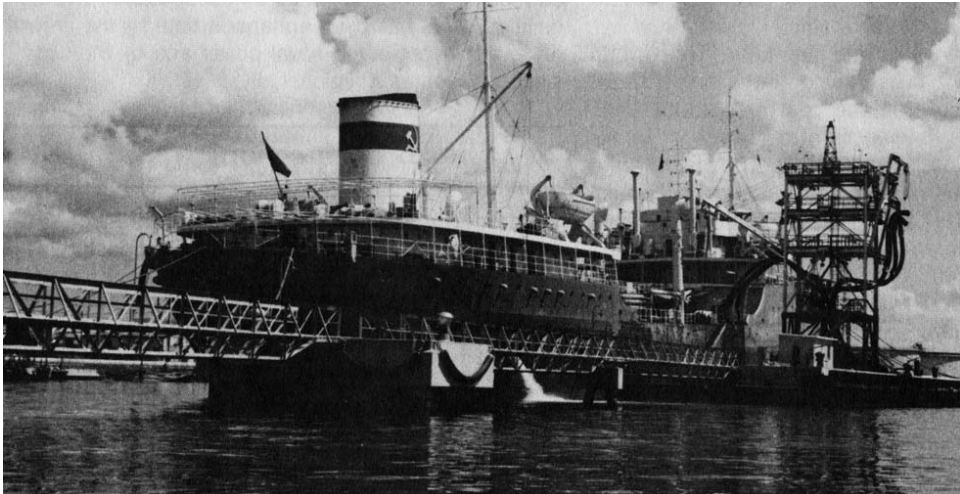
The revolution especially benefited



Members of the Cuban women's anti-aircraft unit prepare to leave Angola, 1989. Cuban forces smashed South African apartheid invasion in mid 1970s.

women. The influence of the Catholic church was broken. Abortion is a free health service, and the birthrate is only 1.5 per woman, more typical of rich countries. Prenatal care is a high priority, which has contributed to an infant mortality rate lower than in parts of the "First World." One of the first acts of the Castro regime was to outlaw racist discrimination—one reason why black Cubans are especially hostile to the predominantly white *gusanos* (worms) in Miami, who since fleeing Cuba have

Despite the Stalinist bureaucratic degeneration, the Soviet Union was the industrial and military powerhouse protecting every other country that had overthrown capitalist rule, from China to North Korea to Vietnam to Cuba. It was only fear of possible Soviet retaliation that held American imperialism back from using nuclear weapons against North Korea and China in the Korean War of the early 1950s and against North Vietnam in the 1960s. And now the Soviet Union is gone, sold out thanks to decades



Left: Cuban militiaman guards U.S. oil refinery expropriated in 1960. Above: Soviet tanker unloads oil at Havana refinery formerly owned by Exxon. Soviet Union provided vital support for Cuban deformed workers state.

been a bulwark of racist bourgeois politics in South Florida. And black people in Florida and Haiti and New York know this too!

Counterrevolution in USSR: A World-Historic Defeat

Now, as internationalists we have to talk about the international context in which we think Cuba must be viewed. For anyone who reads the daily newspapers and is not a hopeless bourgeois ideologue or anti-Communist leftist of the stripe of the International Socialist Organization (ISO), Socialist Action, the League for the Revolutionary Party (LRP) and such like, it is clear that since 1991-92 the world situation has changed enormously for the worse; that is, the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union led by Boris Yeltsin and Bush Sr. was an unparalleled defeat for the international working class and the colonial and ex-colonial peoples of the world.

of Stalinist betrayal. Another result of the counterrevolution is that the nominally independent countries of the Third World can no longer maneuver between the “two superpowers”; the American imperialists think they can do anything to anyone and get away with it. The bombing of Serbia back in 1999 by the Democratic Clinton administration was one example. The current U.S. mass slaughter in Iraq—following the 1991 Gulf War massacre and 12 years of a United Nations starvation blockade which resulted in the deaths of one and a half million Iraqis—and the ensuing colonial occupation today is another. The world has become a very dangerous, and for untold millions a very desperate place.

Further, the destruction of the Soviet Union has inflamed the rivalries between the imperialist states of North America, West Europe and Japan, whose conflicts of interest are no longer restrained by their capitalist rulers' shared commitment to the former anti-Soviet alliance. Current tensions between French and German imperialism on the one hand and U.S. imperialism on the other over how to divide up the spoils in Iraq are indicators of this. All the imperialist powers have ratcheted up their exploitation of the Third World countries and their own working classes. And not least, there has been catastrophic destruction within the former Soviet Union itself. The ICL intervened in East Germany and the USSR in the late 1980s and early '90s to fight for workers' political revolution against the Stalinist bureaucracies, whose appeasement of capitalist imperialism opened the door to the final undoing of the deformed workers states. Meanwhile the rest of the left howled with the imperialist wolves about

the victory of “democracy”—i.e., bourgeois democracy—the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie being restored to the land of the great October 1917 Revolution and strengthened throughout the world.

The imperialists in general and American imperialism in particular are making it their business to destroy the remaining deformed workers states on the planet—China, Vietnam, North Korea and Cuba—through a policy of economic strangulation and military pressure. They are also trying to regain these areas of the globe for capitalist exploitation through “free market” economic incursions into the deformed workers states, a policy of counterrevolution through “constructive engagement” which is applied to China and hotly debated by the U.S. rulers with regard to Cuba. It is emblematic of the American imperialists’ fury toward any part of the world that was ripped out of the capitalist system that, having won the Cold War against the Soviet Union, they now target the deformed workers states of North Korea, China and Cuba for a potential nuclear first strike in the Pentagon’s “Nuclear Posture Review”—that is, nuclear irradiation of hundreds of millions of people.

We are for the unconditional military defense of the deformed workers states against imperialist attack and internal counterrevolution. The imperialists are exercised by the North Korean nuclear program; we defend the right of the deformed workers states to have nuclear weapons. In today's world, it's about the only guarantee of national sovereignty—just look at the different reactions of the Pentagon to North Korea and Iraq! And we think that a key element of defense of the deformed workers states is not only to defend the gains of the revolutions but to complete them and extend them internationally.

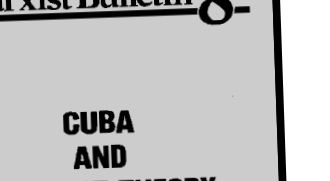
Defend Cuba Against U.S. Imperialism!

Since the Cuban Revolution led to the establishment of a deformed workers state, it has been an article of faith of the American imperialist administrations, from Democratic president “Bay of Pigs” Kennedy to Republican Bush Jr. today, that the gains of that revolution must be destroyed utterly. Bush’s administration is rife with *gusanos*, such as presidential envoy to the Americas 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.

They have tried from day one to destroy the Cuban Revolution. You had the Kennedy/CIA-engineered 1961 Bay of Pigs invasion, numerous assassination attempts against Castro, and an economic embargo which has now been in place for over 40 years. For more than three decades, the biggest obstacle to Washington's drive for capitalist restoration in Cuba was the Soviet Union, which gave Cuba some \$4 billion a year in aid and provided a crucial military shield against imperialism. In the wake of the destruction of the Soviet degenerated workers state in 1991-92, the imperialist rulers see their big chance to bury the Cuban Revolution once and for all.

At the same time, many U.S. corporations that seek to compete with capitalists from West Europe and Canada in exploiting Cuba have long pressured the U.S. government to ease restrictions and loosen the 44-year economic embargo. Representative of this imperialist policy of "constructive engagement" was last year's visit to Cuba by former Democratic president Jimmy Carter.


“Human rights” Carter is in reality a Southern peanut farmer who, during his presidency, had “ethnic purity” on his mind for U.S. policy at home and the destruction of workers states internationally—and he has not changed his spots. Carter led Cold War II, a drive for counterrevolution which raged with the Soviet intervention into Afghanistan in 1979. We Trotskyists supported the action by the Moscow Stalinists, for once solidly on the

The image shows the front cover of a book. The title 'Marxist Bulletin 8-' is at the top in a large, bold, sans-serif font. Below it, the subtitle 'CUBA AND MARXIST THEORY' is centered in a smaller, bold, sans-serif font. Underneath the subtitle, the text 'Selected Documents on the Cuban Question' is centered in an even smaller font. At the bottom of the cover, there is a small line of text: 'Published by the Spartacist League/JS., P.O. Box 1377, G.P.O., New York, NY 10116' followed by a small logo and the price '\$1.50'. The cover has a light gray background with a thin black border.

Marxist Bulletin 8-

**CUBA
AND
MARXIST THEORY**

Selected Documents on the Cuban Question

Published by the Spartacist League/JS., P.O. Box 1377, G.P.O., New York, NY 10116 —  — \$1.50

side of social progress against the CIA and their cutthroat Islamic fundamentalists. We said, “Hail Red Army in Afghanistan! Extend the gains of October to the Afghan peoples!”

Carter’s visit to Cuba was timed to coincide with a propaganda campaign known as the Varela petition campaign. The supporters of that campaign form the bulk of those imprisoned by the Cuban government in April of this year. In addition to calling for freedom of expression and association, the Varela petition also demands “free elections and the right to private enterprise”—demands that amount to a call for “democratic” counterrevolution, the “electoral” rise to power of capitalist-restorationist forces financed by American imperialist largesse, which would be accompanied by a bloodbath of workers and Communists. Yet Carter was welcomed by Castro and offered a platform on Cuban TV and radio to spew his imperialist propaganda.

The Varela project was named after a 19th-century Cuban priest. It was launched around the time of the 1998 visit by Pope John Paul II to Cuba—again with Castro’s blessing. It is led by the head of the “Christian Liberation Movement,” Oswaldo Payá, and supported and funded by the U.S. State Department, the National Endowment for Democracy and the Catholic church. The U.S. impe-



Harvey/Magnum
Cuba’s Center for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology is a leading interferon producer. Planned and collectivized economy enables Cuba to be in forefront of medical developments.

rialists see Varela as a Cuban version of the counterrevolutionary Polish Solidarność movement, as the *Washington Post* (13 January) made clear in the feature on Payá headlined “Solidarity, Cuban-Style.” The Castro bureaucracy’s policy of appeasement of imperialism and the Catholic church is deadly dangerous. Come to think of it, some of the noise recently emanating from the social democrats and liberals about Cuba is reminiscent of their performance as “left” spokesmen for counterrevolution in the period of the rise of Solidarność.

On the heels of the colonial invasion and occupation of Iraq, the imperialist regime in Washington has intensified its decades-long counterrevolutionary crusade against Cuba. Seizing on the trials and convictions this April of 78 Cuban “dissidents,” most of whom were apparently working with James Cason, head of the U.S. Interests Section in Havana, Colin Powell raged that Cuba is an “aberration in the Western hemisphere.” The U.S. expelled 14 Cuban diplomats, canceled all educational travel to Cuba and is threatening to cut off family remittances to Cuba that amount to as much as \$1 billion a year.

And, while the imperialists raised a hue and cry over the arrests in Cuba, they have carried out their own campaign against defenders of Cuba in the U.S. A case in point is the Miami Five, who have been sentenced to 15 years to life for the “crime” of monitoring the terrorist activities of *gusanos*. Free the Miami Five now!

Taking their cue from “democratic” imperialists like Carter, a wide array of “left” liberals and trade-union bureaucrats in the U.S. and internationally have



Time
Havana market has empty shelves, while those who hold U.S. currency shop at special “dollar store.” Castro bureaucracy’s introduction of the dollar into Cuban economy has sharply increased social inequality.



circulated a petition which denounces Castro’s crackdown as “brute repression” and says not one word about the U.S. invasion of Iraq or the so-called “war on terror” against immigrants, blacks and workers in the U.S. This petition was circulated by United Federation of Teachers official and Democratic Socialists of America member Leo Casey, and supported by Stanley Aronowitz and Bogdan Denitch, as well as *Nation* types like Katha Pollitt and Todd Gitlin.

For those who were squeamish about signing such an outright statement of support to the Bush regime, there was another petition circulated by the Campaign for Peace and Democracy, signed by Howard Zinn, Cornel West and all-purpose anti-Communist Noam Chomsky. The petition criticizes U.S. policy toward Cuba and Iraq but states, “We support civil liberties and democratic rights everywhere, regardless of the country’s economic, political or social system.... We support democracy in Cuba. The imprisonment of people for attempting to exercise their rights of free expression is outrageous and unacceptable.” The principal author and promoter of this petition in the U.S. was Joanne Landy, a social democrat and lifelong enemy of the Chinese, Vietnamese and Cuban Revolutions and member of the Council on Foreign Relations, one of the major institutions advising the U.S. government on its imperial policies for over half a century.

For the record, it should also be noted that Joanne Landy is a former member of the International Socialists, which spawned the ISO and Sy Landy’s LRP, which are also hostile to the Cuban Revolution. For these outfits, the abstract notion of “democracy” and not the proletarian class character of the Cuban state is the be-all and end-all. These groups are horrified by the overthrow of capitalist class rule.

I would note while we’re on the subject that in May 2003, as part of its crackdown, the Castro government executed three boat hijackers. Unlike Workers World Party and the Socialist Workers Party, for whom Castro can do no wrong, we are Marxists. We do not condone the executions, though we support those measures that are taken in defense of the gains of the Cuban Revolution, including the imprisonment of “dissidents” who are actively collaborating with U.S. imperialism. Marxists—including the Bolsheviks—are in principle opposed to the barbaric death penalty being part of the juridical code of any state.

For Workers Political Revolution in Cuba!

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, which had accounted for 85 percent of Cuba’s trade, Cuba entered a period of grave economic crisis. In particular, the Soviet Union supplied oil at below-market prices, and without oil there is not much basis for an industrial economy. The Castro bureaucracy dubbed it a “Special Period in Time of Peace,” i.e., Cuba suffers degrees of scarcity and hardship like a country at war. The government’s official figure in the mid 1990s was that the economy declined 34 percent from 1991 to 1994. Housing is cramped and deteriorating. Public transportation is dying for lack of new parts, including for maintenance. In the countryside, the tractor is not the norm, but rather carts drawn

by various beasts of burden.

There are “friends of Cuba” like the eccentric Socialist Workers Party and Workers World Party who would like us to think Cuba is socialist. But as Karl Marx said, the attainment of socialism—a society of such material abundance that classes no longer exist—requires the victory of proletarian revolution in at least several of the advanced capitalist countries in order to create an international planned economy based on the highest material and technological development.

The reactions of the Castro government to the imperialist pressure have not been that of a revolutionary socialist regime but of a nationalist bureaucratic caste in isolation. In 1994 the regime introduced market measures including joint ventures with foreign companies, cooperatives in the agricultural sector and legalization of markets for agricultural products and in service sectors. The bureaucracy 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.

According to the *NACLA Report on the Americas* (March/April 1999), sales in U.S. dollars accounted for 54 percent of Cuba’s total domestic retail sales. Over \$800 million a year flows into Cuba from the U.S., but black Cubans, whose relatives are not rich Miamians, are far less likely to receive these dollars. The growth of inequality and the danger of the encroaching free market to the planned economy can be seen in the tourist industry, which has surpassed sugar exports as the primary source of foreign exchange. In 1998, the Cuban government invested over \$500 million in tourism, as opposed to \$49 million for the foodstuffs industry and \$37 million in the steel and metals sector. And the rise in prostitution at the edge of the tourist industry represents serious deterioration of the gains of the revolution. And it’s getting worse, not better.

Cuba needs an internationalist Trotskyist party. Such a party would fight to defend and improve the living conditions of the proletariat, would fight the inequalities brought on by the bureaucracy’s dollarization of the economy, would fight the tendency toward privat-

ization in the agricultural section. Such a party would act as the tribune of the people, i.e., fight all racial and sexual discrimination in order to defend the rights of blacks, women and homosexuals. And such a party would fight to inculcate in the consciousness of the Cuban working class the need for political revolution to oust the bureaucracy, to establish the rule of workers councils, and to fight for socialist revolution throughout the Americas, without which the Cuban Revolution cannot long survive in the post-Soviet world.

The Russian Revolution and the Young Soviet Republic

Now, I want to talk about the question: What is a deformed workers state? To understand that you have to understand what a healthy workers state is, that is, Soviet Russia under the leadership of Lenin and Trotsky’s Bolshevik Party.

It is necessary to understand the origins of the Soviet Union in the October 1917 Revolution, led by the Bolshevik Party under Lenin and Trotsky, and its subsequent bureaucratic degeneration under J.V. Stalin and his heirs.

Comrade Victor Gibbons explained this very powerfully in a forum published in *WV* (see “Why We Fought to Defend the Soviet Union,” *WV* Nos. 809 and 810, 12 and 26 September). The October 1917 Revolution arose out of the struggle against the imperialist slaughter of the First World War. It was the signal act of the 20th century, which Lenin described as the epoch of imperialist decay and socialist revolution. It took the question of socialist revolution out of the realm of theory and made it real in the former Russian tsarist empire.

The October Revolution created a workers state based on workers councils and roused the toilers to forge a Red Army that triumphed in a three-year-long Civil War against the counterrevolutionary White forces and the expeditionary forces of nearly every major imperialist power. The Soviet government of Lenin and Trotsky expropriated both the Russian capitalist and Western imperialist holdings and repudiated outright Russia’s massive debt to foreign bankers. It proclaimed the right of working people

continued on page 10



Viktor Bulla
Putilov factory workers meeting for re-election of Petrograd Soviet, 1920. Russian Revolution put political power in hands of proletariat.

(continued from page 9)

As comrade Gibbons explained:
 “The revolutionary government gave land to the peasants and self-determination to the many oppressed nations (themselves largely made up of peasants) of the former tsarist empire.... The early Soviet government not only separated church and state, it poured funds into secular education and science, promoting a thoroughly materialist worldview. It eliminated all laws discriminating against national and ethnic minorities and women. Soviet Russia eliminated all discriminatory laws, including against homosexuals. Soviet Russia was the first country of significance to give the vote to women, causing the Western capitalist ‘democracies’ (e.g., the United States and Britain) to scramble to catch up.”

A black and white photograph showing a close-up of Che Guevara on the left, wearing his iconic cap and having a full beard. He is looking towards a woman on the right. The woman has dark hair and is wearing glasses and a light-colored jacket. She has her hand near her face, possibly adjusting her glasses or resting her chin. The background is slightly out of focus, showing some architectural elements.

many, an isolated dictatorship of the proletariat in Russia could not long survive. The Bolsheviks launched the Communist International, which by 1921 had attracted six million workers to its banner, and trained workers around the world in the program and strategy of revolutionary struggle. To give just one example: in the relatively politically backward U.S.A., it was the leaders of the Russian Revolution who made the important connection between the fight for black liberation and workers revolution.

ESPARTACO
PUBLICACIÓN DEL GRUPO ESPARTACISTA DE MÉXICO
NÚMERO 21
OTOMÍ-INVIERNO DE 2003
MEXICO \$2.00

¡Fuera todas las tropas imperialistas!
¡Abajo la ocupación colonial de Irak!



Replaz. 18 de junio: Artiguo titulado Imperialistas saqueadores obligando a los militares offshoots y Pensiones. Dos mililitares fueron saqueados por tropas estadounidenses.

Página 8

Imperialistas de EE.UU.: Saqueadores y asesinos

bourgeois order and joining with the capitalists in their hostility to the October Revolution. Elsewhere, in less-developed nations and regions, the main ideological obstacle and force against Bolshevism was nationalism.

In opposition to Stalin's nationalist opportunism, Trotsky's Left Opposition was founded on the program of authentic Marxism which animated the Bolshevik Revolution. The Left Opposition fought to preserve and extend the gains of the Russian Revolution which had been betrayed but not yet overthrown. It fought for a return to the road of Leninist internationalism.

Cuba is a *deformed* workers state, a qualitatively different item from a healthy workers state. On January 1, 1959 the petty-bourgeois guerrilla army led by the July 26 Movement of Fidel Castro, Che Guevara and others overthrew the corrupt, racist regime of Fulgencio Batista. The Batista regime was hated by the Cuban masses and increasingly viewed as an embarrassment by the upper layers of Cuban society, many of whom backed Castro against the avaricious dictator and his cronies, who were robbing the country blind. So the imperialist overlords in Washington let Batista fall, and his supporters fled in their yachts to Miami with suitcases full of money.

Castro formed a coalition government with bourgeois forces and pledged to protect their interests. At the same time, the program of land redistribution and the revolutionary justice meted out to Batista's former police torturers scared Castro's own bourgeois supporters. Nor was this popular with Eisenhower's CIA director Allen Dulles, or his Secretary of State brother, John Foster Dulles, who were both major stockholders of the United Fruit Company.

A black and white photograph capturing a moment of civil unrest or protest in a city. A large, heavy-duty tank is the central focus, moving down a wide street. Several men are perched on top of the tank, some waving their hands. The street is packed with a large crowd of people, both on the sidewalks and in the street behind the tank. The background is filled with urban buildings and numerous commercial signs. Prominent signs include 'HOTEL SAN CARLOS' at the top left, 'Firestone' and 'Esso' in the center, 'LIDER' in a large banner on the right, and 'RESTAURANT EL 133' further down the right side. Other smaller signs like 'EL CUÑO' and 'CARAMEL CLAY SEBORDS' are also visible. The overall atmosphere is one of a significant public demonstration.

Fruit, Standard Oil, the sugar barons and the Mafia—as well as the Cuban bourgeoisie—had been expropriated and the Cuban capitalists were either in exile or prison.

“Under the most *favorable* historic circumstances conceivable, the petty-bourgeois peasantry was only capable of creating a bureaucratically deformed workers state, that is, a state of the same order as that issuing out of the political counterrevolution of Stalin in the Soviet Union, an anti-working-class regime which blocked the possibilities to extend social revolution into Latin America and North America, and suppressed Cuba’s further development in the direction of socialism. To place the working class in political power and open the road to socialist development requires a supplemental *political* revolution led by a Trotskyist party. With the destruction of the Soviet degenerated workers state and consequently no readily available lifeline against imperialist encirclement, the narrow historical opening in which petty-bourgeois forces were able to overturn local capitalist rule has been closed, underscoring the Trotskyist perspective of permanent revolution.”

Ultimately, the only alternative to capitalist counterrevolution is international socialist revolution, which has never been Castro's perspective. When Castro proclaimed the revolution "socialist" at the time of the 1961 Bay of Pigs invasion, he adopted not the Marxist program of international revolution but the Stalinist "theory" of "socialism in one country," the corollary of which is a policy of "peaceful coexistence" with imperialism. Che Guevara expressed this policy clearly in his 1964 speech to the United Nations where he called for "peaceful coexistence between states with different economic and social systems."

ment” with the bloody U.S.-backed military junta, a program which resulted in the disarming of the leftist guerrillas and restabilization of capitalist rule. And in Nicaragua, Castro counseled the radical-nationalist Sandinistas not to take the “Cuban road,” i.e., not to antagonize the imperialists by expropriating the Nicaraguan bourgeoisie. The Sandinistas were eventually toppled and replaced by the U.S.-backed *contra* reactionaries.

What is urgently necessary is new October Revolutions. It is the task of the International Communist League to fight to forge the Trotskyist parties to lead the struggle for revolution throughout the Americas, to link the defense of the Cuban Revolution with the fight of the powerful proletariat of Brazil, Argentina, Venezuela and Mexico and with the fight for workers revolution here in the belly of the imperialist beast. Our comrades of the Grupo Espartaquista de México fight to build a revolutionary workers party in Mexico. In the U.S., we in the SL fight to build a 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.

Key to this struggle in Latin America is the fight against nationalism and for the political independence of the proletariat and its struggles. It is the Trotskyist program of permanent revolution that provides the link between working people and the oppressed in the U.S. and the working masses of Mexico and Latin America.

In the U.S., the fight for workers power means politically combatting the pro-capitalist trade-union bureaucracy whose instrument, the American Center for International Labor Solidarity (and, formerly, the American Institute for Free Labor Development), has been involved in every bloody anti-working-class coup throughout Latin America. It means breaking the working class from the Democratic and Republican parties of capitalist rule and the forging of a revolutionary workers party to fight for a workers government, i.e., the dictatorship of the proletariat.

As was stated in one of the Fourth International's founding documents, the 1938 "Theses on the World Role of American Imperialism":

"None of the countries of Latin America or the Pacific which are now under the domination of American imperialism to one degree or another is able either to attain complete freedom from foreign oppression or to retain such freedom for any length of time if it confines its struggle to the efforts of its own self. Only a union of the Latin American peoples, striving towards the goal of a united socialist America and allied in the struggle with the revolutionary proletariat of the United States, would present a force strong enough to contend successfully with North American imperialism."

10

Hussein...

(continued from page 12)

28 March). *All U.S. and imperialist troops out of Iraq now!*

In the fight against the imperialist military occupation of Iraq, it is crucial to maintain front and center the call to *defend the Palestinian people!* With the Iraq war at center stage, the Zionist rulers have tightened their choke hold on the Palestinians. The Sharon government is itself reveling in the capture of Hussein, who cynically manipulated the Palestinian cause to boost his standing among the Palestinian masses. *Israel out of the Occupied Territories! Defend the Palestinian people!*

Meanwhile, Israeli commando units are training U.S. special forces in “pre-emptive manhunting”—a program of infiltration and assassination of civilian populations drawn from Israel’s murderous experience in the West Bank and Gaza. Behind the facade of a tribunal drenched in rhetoric about “human rights,” countless Iraqi civilians will be getting their doors kicked in by stormtroopers and machine-gunned dead. The American imperialist butchers made clear, yet again, the kind of “democracy” they have in mind for Iraq

when U.S. troops yesterday fired into a protest in support of Hussein in a town west of Baghdad, killing three people.

George Bush and his British poodle Tony Blair will milk the capture of Hussein for everything they can to further their reactionary international and domestic agendas, targeting everyone from Irish opponents of British colonial rule to Muslim immigrants in the U.S. In this regard, it should be recalled that Bush’s domestic “opposition,” the Democratic Party, was gungho behind the Patriot Act that strips citizens of elementary democratic rights and rolls back hard-fought gains for labor, blacks and immigrants under the rubric of “national security.” If the Democrats appear to be a weak domestic opposition, it may be observed that their arms are surely weary from flag-waving and saluting their commander in chief. The tepid Democratic opposition to the war was argued on the basis that it detracted from the “war on terror.” To a man, every Democratic Party presidential candidate dutifully welcomed the capture of Saddam Hussein. When a Democratic politician like “antiwar” presidential candidate Dennis Kucinich calls to “end the occupation of Iraq,” his purpose is to corral mounting domestic opposition to

the war into the fold of the Democratic Party, the other capitalist party of war and racism. Neither in domestic nor foreign policy do the Democrats represent any alternative to Bush because they represent the same class interests of the capitalist rulers. We say: *Break with the Democrats! Build a workers party!*

European rulers and American liberals uneasy with the Bush doctrine of unilateral “pre-emptive war” to remap the globe in American self-interest salute the capture of Hussein while urging that the United Nations run the war crimes tribunal. Disgruntled with being left out of lucrative contracts to “rebuild” Iraq, the European rulers want the UN to oversee the division of the spoils. We say, *no illusions in the United Nations!* Twelve years of UN sanctions against Iraq killed over one and a half million Iraqi civilians while UN weapons inspections set up Iraq for the American kill. And let it not be forgotten that it was the UN “den of thieves” that exempted the American military from international war crimes tribunals!

American workers and minorities are crucial in the struggle against a U.S. “evil empire” which imposes “democracy” through military occupation, terror

and destruction. The patriotic hoopla is wearing thin as the Iraqi insurgency strikes blows every day against the American forces. Workers rights are being eroded in a lousy economy, black youth are being purged from higher education with attacks on affirmative action, civil liberties are being shredded—there is accumulating social tinder which could explode. The key is to organize these discontents around a class-struggle program and against the trade-union misleaders and liberal lefts who tie the workers and oppressed to their class enemy in the Democratic Party.

We in the Spartacist League are dedicated to the task of forging a revolutionary leadership, a workers party like Lenin and Trotsky built, the party that led the workers to victory in the 1917 Russian Revolution. The counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union in 1991-92 has created a more dangerous world of unbridled U.S. military aggression. We fight to build the workers party that will bring the Russian Revolution back—to America and everywhere else around the world—through new October Revolutions! *Anti-imperialism abroad means class struggle at home! U.S. and all imperialist forces out of Iraq now! ■*

Arar...

(continued from page 12)

On October 5, the Canadian government finally secured Arar’s release from imprisonment in Syria. The next day he arrived back in Canada, ending his 375-day ordeal. Arar of course renounced the lies he was forced to tell under torture and is struggling to get his life back. His family is currently living on welfare as Arar won’t be able to return to his profession until he can clear his name.

Arar’s ordeal was the result of the INS working with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) to profile Arar as a terrorist. As our comrades of the Trotskyist League/Ligue Trotskyste of Canada wrote in *Spartacist Canada* (No. 139, Winter 2003/2004): “If not for the dossier of information provided by Canadian security services that got him put on the U.S. ‘Viper’ watch list, Arar’s transit through the U.S. last year might have been as uneventful as his many other recent trips there—his U.S. work permit had even been renewed post-9/11.”

During his interrogation, the INS showed Arar a copy of his 1997 apartment lease which was witnessed and signed by Abdullah Almalki, another Canadian citizen whom Arar encountered during his imprisonment in Syria who was tortured even more severely than Arar. No one knows how many victims of the “anti-terror” witchhunt languish under such conditions, let alone how many have died. The ostensible link the RCMP drew between Abdullah Almalki and “terrorism” is the suspicion that his brother sells computer equipment to companies who in turn sell it to other companies and which eventually ends up in the hands of supposed “terrorists.” Based on these criteria anyone that had a relative who sold as much as a box-cutter that eventually ended up in the hands of someone the FBI and RCMP regard as a terrorist could be stripped of all legal rights and treated like an “enemy combatant.”

Defend Democratic Rights!

On November 11, Republicans and Democrats in the U.S. Senate voted for sanctions against Syria if its government fails to provide more “assistance” in the “war on terror.” On December 12, President Bush signed the bill. The torture of Maher Arar is an example of the kind of “assistance” they’re demanding more of. Commenting on the relationship between the U.S. government and the Syrian regime, the *Washington Post* (5 November) quotes the counterterrorism coordinator for the State Department, Cofer Black, as praising the “assistance” the Syrian government has



AP
Detainee from Afghanistan at notorious Camp X-Ray in Guantánamo Bay being taken for interrogation by military officials in 2002.

provided on Al Qaeda. The U.S. in fact has established a policy of deporting suspects to countries where they expect them to be tortured. The policy is known as “extraordinary rendition.” It was started in 1998 under the Clinton administration. In addition to Syria, the CIA now deports its victims to Jordan, Egypt and Morocco.

The ordeal inflicted on Arar by U.S. federal authorities is part of their never-ending global “war against terror.” This so-called “war” has been used to excuse the denial of democratic rights to anyone this government suspects of posing a threat. The U.S. government is holding hundreds of prisoners at the American military base at Guantánamo Bay, Cuba. These prisoners, who include youths, are being deprived of the legal rights of “prisoners of war.” Though a few have been released, those who remain have been denied any contact with lawyers and their families, a promised exception being made for a few British and Australian citizens. This treatment reflects what is done to prisoners by American-supported regimes ruled by dictators from the Near East to Africa and Latin America. *We demand freedom for the Guantánamo detainees!*

Arar was treated like an “enemy combatant,” a status which justifies being stripped of all democratic rights. In the “war against terror” American citizens, who supposedly are guaranteed their democratic rights under the Constitution, can have these rights stripped away as well.

Jose Padilla has been declared an “enemy combatant” and indefinitely imprisoned without charges, a hearing or representation by a lawyer. In an *amici curiae* brief filed by the Spartacist League and the Partisan Defense Committee, we state: “The Executive has imposed martial law on Jose Padilla, a citizen, on the pretext of an alleged ‘war

on terrorism’ which is in fact not a military conflict but a political agenda. This is an unprecedented assertion of imperial powers by the President.” The “war on terror” is no more a real shooting war than is a “war on evil” or “war on cancer.”

The Democratic Party paved the way for Bush, and in fact most of the immigrants who have been detained since the September 11 attacks are being held under “anti-terrorism” laws enacted under Clinton. At the same time, measures like the USA-Patriot Act, which received bipartisan support, mark a qualitative diminution of democratic rights in the U.S.

What stands behind the “war on terror” and the attacks on democratic rights is the need by large sections of the bourgeoisie and their capitalist state to increase repressive control over the population, particularly working people, blacks and immigrants. These police-state measures were illustrated by the occupation of the

black community of Benton Harbor, Michigan following an explosion of community rage over acts of deadly police brutality in June. Virtual martial law was imposed on the community, which was invaded by hundreds of cops in riot gear along with armored vehicles.

These measures are also designed to improve the government’s ability to attack labor unions and bust strikes. Every democratic right working people and minorities enjoy today has been won through protracted and militant struggle. The current assault on these rights illustrates that without struggle these rights will be taken away.

The way to fight the continued evisceration of democratic rights and the kind of ordeal inflicted on Maher Arar was demonstrated in Oakland on 9 February 2002, when the Partisan Defense Committee and the Bay Area Labor Black League for Social Defense initiated a united-front protest against the Patriot and Maritime Security Acts. This demonstration brought together the struggles of immigrants, blacks and organized labor in opposition to the government’s anti-immigrant hysteria. It is the multiracial labor movement, with its significant immigrant component, that has the social power to lead all the oppressed in a struggle against the government’s repressive measures.

The fight to build a revolutionary workers party, independent of the Democratic and Republican parties of capitalism, is critical for mobilizing the power of labor against racist repression and in defense of immigrants as part of the struggle for a workers government. *Full citizenship rights for all immigrants! Down with the “war on terror”! Down with the USA-Patriot Act! Free the detainees! ■*

Get Your Copy of
CLASS-STRUGGLE
DEFENSE NOTES!

No. 31
Summer 2003
50¢ (24 pages)

Order from/
make checks payable to:
Partisan Defense Committee
P.O. Box 99
Canal Street Station
New York, NY 10013-0099

Phone: (212) 406-4252
E-mail: 75057.3201
@compuserve.com

Pc Partisan Defense Committee
CLASS-STRUGGLE DEFENSE NOTES
Number 31 50¢ Summer 2003

BRIEF OF AMICI CURIAE SPARTACIST LEAGUE AND PARTISAN DEFENSE COMMITTEE ON BEHALF OF JOSE PADILLA AND GRANTING HIS WRIT OF HABEAS CORPUS

In The
UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS
For The Second Circuit
Docket No. 03-2235
03-2438

JOSE PADILLA, Donna R. Newman,
as Next Friend of Jose Padilla,
Petitioner-Appellee-cross-Appellant,
v.
DONALD RUMSFELD,
Respondent-Appellant-cross-Appellee.

On Appeal from the United States District Court
for the Southern District of New York

SEE PAGE 2

Free All MOVE Prisoners! Free Mumia Abu-Jamal!
25th Anniversary of Powelton Village Siege 18
“Anti-Terror” Dragnet Threatens 13,000 with Expulsions
Stop the Deportations! 22

Imperialists Gloat over Capture of Former Henchman Saddam Hussein

Iraq: U.S. Occupiers Get Out Now!

DECEMBER 16—The architects of imperialist war and mass murder in the White House and Pentagon and 10 Downing Street hail the capture of Saddam Hussein as a great day for “world peace” and “justice” while they intensify their brutal war against the Iraqi people. Saddam Hussein was Washington’s bloody bastard. He was Washington’s close ally and client while he massacred tens of thousands of Kurdish people. He was a mainstay of U.S. imperialist policy in the Near East while he arrested, tortured and executed thousands of Iraqi Communists, workers’ leaders, leftists, ethnic minorities and religious opponents, and waged eight years of bloody war with predominantly Shi’ite Iran. But when Hussein slipped his leash and made a grab for Kuwait in 1990, this former ally and flunkey for U.S. imperialism in the Near East became Washington’s all-purpose bogeyman.

Now the main enemy of the world’s working people, the U.S. imperialist state—which killed hundreds of thousands of Japanese in the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, which butchered over three million Koreans, which

burned the flesh off Vietnamese villagers with napalm, which wreaked destruction in the former Yugoslavia in the 1999 war in the Balkans—just had its Iraqi stooges set up a tribunal which will likely try Saddam Hussein. This shameless hypocrisy should steel the resolve of all genuine fighters for social justice to sweep away the whole rotting system of imperialist capitalism and its lackeys and to create

societies where those who labor rule. When workers tribunals of a victorious socialist revolution in the United States try America’s capitalist exploiters for their crimes against the oppressed masses of the world, black America, labor, immigrants and the poor, and when Iraqi Kurds, leftists and workers rip the oil wealth out of the hands of the military occupiers and judge them and their former henchmen,

then we can start talking about justice.

Despite the gloating, not even the Pentagon spokesmen pretend that the capture of Saddam Hussein will end the Iraqi insurgency. While presenting Saddam Hussein as their demonic poster boy and pretext for war, the bible-thumping Christian fundamentalist bigots running the brutal military occupation are waging war against the entire Iraqi people. In this conflict, *we have a side—with the Iraqi people against the imperialist occupiers!* This has been our forthright position from the beginning. With the onset of the U.S. rape of Iraq, the Political Bureau of the Spartacist League/U.S. issued a statement declaring: “It is in the class interest of the international proletariat to clearly take a side in defense of Iraq without giving any political support to the bloody Saddam Hussein regime. Every victory for the U.S. imperialists can only encourage further military adventures. In turn, every humiliation, every setback, every defeat they suffer will serve to assist the struggles of working people and the oppressed around the globe” (WV No. 800,

continued on page 11



1983: Donald Rumsfeld, architect of murderous colonial war on Iraq, greets Saddam Hussein in Baghdad on behalf of Reagan administration. In 1980s, U.S. imperialists armed Hussein regime as key U.S. ally in Near East.

Down With the “Anti-Terrorist” Witchhunt!

The Deportation, Detention and Torture of Maher Arar

On 26 September 2002 Syrian-born Canadian citizen Maher Arar was arrested by officials of the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) at New York’s Kennedy Airport. Maher Arar, a 33-year-old telecommunications engineer, was on his way back to Canada after a family vacation in Tunisia and was waiting for his connecting flight when he was abducted by INS officials.

Arar was taken to a secluded area of Kennedy Airport and interrogated. His interrogators hurled insults and questions at him for hours while denying him the right to legal counsel. His requests to be sent back to his home in Canada were ignored. Instead he was taken to the Metropolitan Detention Center in Brooklyn, where he was strip-searched. During his detention he again asked to be sent back to Canada and not Syria, where he feared being tortured. After confining Arar for over a week, U.S. authorities deported him to Syria, a country he had not set foot in for some 16 years.

He was beaten in the van that took him from Jordan to the Syrian prison

where he was held. He was placed in a dark cell. In a moving description of his ordeal, Arar wrote in a piece published in the *Los Angeles Times* (10 December):

“I describe my cell in Syria as a grave because it was just 3 feet wide, 6 feet long, 7 feet high and unlit. While I was there I sometimes felt on the verge of death after beatings with a black electrical cable about two inches thick. They mostly aimed for my palms but sometimes missed and hit my wrists. Other times, I was left alone in a special ‘waiting room’ within earshot of others’ screams. At the end of the day, they would tell me that tomorrow would be worse. In those 10 1/2 months I lost about 40 pounds. I never saw, but only heard, the agony of my fellow prisoners. I was so scared I urinated on myself twice.”

Arar said he would have admitted to anything to end the torture. He continued in his piece:

“I agreed to sign any document they put before me, even those I wasn’t allowed to read. And eventually I would say anything at all to avoid more torture. ‘Do you want me to use that?’ someone would ask when I didn’t answer soon enough, pointing to a steel chair in the corner of the interrogation room.

Arar with wife Monia Mazigh at November 4 Ottawa press conference.



“No, I told them, I did not want them to use that. And yes, I told them, I had been to Afghanistan. It wasn’t true, but it seemed important enough to my jailers. After a month, broken physically and mentally, I was also instructed to write these things down on a piece of paper next to other answers to other questions that they had gone ahead and penned on my behalf.”

The Grand Inquisitors of the Spanish Inquisition could get their victims to admit to the most fantastic and absurd acts of witchcraft. This was accepted as evidence proving that the accused had intimate relations with the devil. Torture

techniques today are if anything more effective in getting their victims to make self-incriminating statements. With the mentality of bloodthirsty crusaders carrying out their global “war against evil,” Bush administration officials have pointed to the confessions extracted from Arar under torture as evidence of his supposed guilt (*New York Times*, 15 November)!

Arar was fortunate enough to have a determined activist wife, Monia Mazigh, who campaigned for human rights groups to take up the fight for his freedom.

continued on page 11

Down With the USA-Patriot Act!