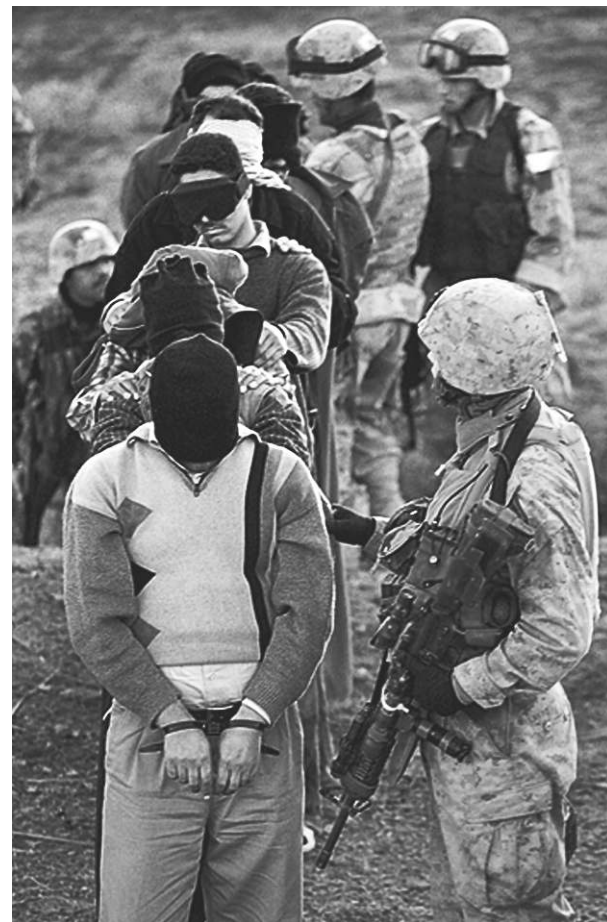


## Reformists Crawl to Democrats

# Down With U.S. Imperialism! For Class Struggle at Home!

## U.S. Out of Iraq, Afghanistan! Hands Off Iran!



January 23: U.S. Marine and Iraqi troops round up detainees in Anbar province.

The U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003 has led to the death of hundreds of thousands of Iraqis, a toll that increases daily with the communal warfare between Sunnis and Shi'ites unleashed by the occupation. The United Nations estimates that some 8 percent of the population has been forced to flee the country, while untold thousands remaining in Iraq have been driven from their neighborhoods and towns.

The war and occupation that have devastated Iraq and its peoples is also increasingly a debacle for U.S. imperialism. It is the growing defeatist mood in the ruling class that the liberals and reformist left appeal to in their calls for national anti-war demonstrations on March 17-18—the fourth anniversary of the war—that beg the capitalist politicians for peace. Their appeal to the Democratic Party—the other party of U.S. imperialism—is explicit and direct, summed up in a common chant at recent protests: “Stop the killing! Stop the war! What the hell is Congress for?”

Perceiving that real damage has been done to the interests of U.S. imperialism by the Iraq occupation, Bush's bourgeois critics are increasingly vocal. A number of politicians and media mouthpieces have warned Bush against issuing a (highly likely) pardon of Lewis “Scooter” Libby, Vice President Cheney's former chief of staff, following his March 6 conviction on charges of lying and obstruction of justice in the CIA “leak” case. Libby was the fall guy for the White House for the outing of Valerie Plame as a CIA agent, which was the Bush gang's retaliation for her husband Joseph Wilson's exposure of some of their more grotesque lies about Iraqi “weapons of mass destruction.”

With the U.S. bogged down in a los-

ing military adventure, the *Los Angeles Times* (12 March) reports that “American military planners have begun plotting a fallback strategy for Iraq that includes a gradual withdrawal of forces” in the event that “the current troop buildup fails or is derailed by Congress.” The article notes “an atmosphere of extraordinary tension within the Pentagon.”

In a bid to extricate the U.S. from the Iraq morass, Democratic House Speaker Nancy Pelosi on March 8 announced a bill to pull troops out by August 2008, or sooner if the Iraqi government does not meet “benchmarks” set by its Washington handlers. Democratic leaders banged heads for weeks to come up with a bill that might actually pass and would not portray them as soft on “national defense.” The bill would *increase* funds for the military, on top of hikes demanded by Bush. According to Democratic Congressman David R. Obey, chair of the House Appropriations Committee, the

bill would “redirect more of our resources to the war against Al Qaeda and the Taliban in Afghanistan, fighting the right war in the right place.”

The latest atrocities in this “right war” include the slaughter on March 4 of at least 16 people in Afghanistan's eastern Nangarhar province, when U.S. troops opened fire on civilians. Troops then seized and deleted photographs and film footage of the massacre from AP cameramen. The next day, nine members of one family were killed in a U.S. air strike in central Afghanistan. The Bush administration has also engaged in a series of military moves against Iran, dispatching additional naval forces to the Persian Gulf/Arabian Sea region, and continues to push for stricter UN sanctions against Tehran over its nuclear energy program. The recent increase in U.S. troop levels in Iraq and Afghanistan poses an added threat to Iran.

As revolutionary Marxists, we say that

working people in the U.S. and internationally have a side against the U.S. occupation of Iraq and Afghanistan. This does not entail the least political support to either the Islamic fundamentalists or the nationalist remnants of the Ba'athists in Iraq, or to the Taliban and similar reactionary forces in Afghanistan. We oppose any economic sanctions, which are acts of war, against Iran. Iran *needs* nuclear weapons as a deterrent against imperialist attack. In the event of military attack by the U.S. or any country acting on its behalf, we call for military defense of Iran while giving no political support to the mullah regime.

We warn that a big reason the Democrats look to cut U.S. losses in Iraq is to reinforce American military capabilities directed against China, the largest and most powerful of the remaining countries where capitalist rule was overthrown. We stand for the unconditional military defense of the Chinese, North Korean, Vietnamese and Cuban deformed workers states against imperialism and domestic counterrevolution, despite the rule of parasitic Stalinist bureaucracies.

The same ruling class that has wreaked devastation from Iraq to Afghanistan and threatens more of the same in Iran has slashed the pensions, health care and jobs of the working people at home while shredding democratic rights in the name of the “war on terror.” The scandal over the horrendous conditions at Walter Reed Army Medical Center, which has prompted the resignation of the Army's surgeon general among others, is only the latest display of the contempt the capitalist rulers have for those they exploit and oppress, and in this case send off to kill and be killed in their predatory wars.

The crimes of America's racist capitalist rulers are compounded by the sheer incompetence and corruption of the current administration. This deadly combination was seen by all in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, when largely poor and

*continued on page 8*



20 March 2004: Spartacist contingent at Los Angeles protest on first anniversary of bloody U.S. invasion of Iraq.



# Wikipedia: A Million Monkeys Typing

Since Wikipedia was launched in 2001 with the professed aim of providing a “free encyclopedia to every single person on the planet in their own language,” it has grown explosively. With the number of visitors doubling every four months, it has become the third most popular “news and information” source on the Web. Nearly anything searched on Google returns Wikipedia as one of its top hits. Wikipedia exists in over 200 languages—including, get this, Klingon!—and the English site alone boasts nearly 1.7 million entries. By way of comparison, the

*Encyclopedia Britannica* does not exceed 120,000 entries. *But Wikipedia is no encyclopedia.* A menace to historical knowledge, it is a New Age fraud that often provides a sanctuary for libel and character assassination. The software tool called “wiki” (derived from a Hawaiian term for “quick” or “informal”) enables anyone to create or edit entries whenever whatever enters their minds. The *New Yorker* (31 July 2006) observed, “The user who spends the most time on the site—or who yells the loudest—wins.”

A lie can travel halfway around the world while the truth is putting on its shoes, as the old proverb says. As scandals grow over the disinformation in many of Wikipedia’s entries, criticism has mounted in bourgeois academia and the media. Last month, the History Department of Middlebury College in Vermont became one of the academic institutions to bar students from using Wikipedia citations. As Marxist materialists, our worldview is rooted in historical and scientific truth. Thus *Workers Vanguard* has had a strict, years-long policy of not using Wikipedia as a factual source of any kind. Most ominously, beginning in 2004 Wikipedia has been cited in over 100 judicial rulings, including at the appellate level just below the U.S. Supreme Court. Right-wing judge Richard A. Posner of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit in Chicago recently gushed that “Wikipedia is a terrific resource.... Partly because it [is] so convenient, it often has been updated recently and is very accurate” (*New York Times*, 29 January). Posner speaks like a true believer in the Bush administration, whose idea of “accuracy” can be gauged by its lies about Saddam Hussein’s “weapons of mass destruction.” One Jimmy Wales, an options trader who became the founder and guru of Wikipedia, tours the world promoting his “volunteer community” of “open participation.” Wales explicitly rejected scientific peer review of entries because it was “intimidating; it felt like homework.” There is no such oppressive authority in “wikiality,” to borrow a

posted by others.” A local man later came forward as the author of the smear, saying that he thought Wikipedia was a “gag” Web site. Jimmy Wales himself could read how some Wikipedist in 2005 concluded Wales’ biographical entry with the tale of his murder “at 18:54 EST on December 12” by three shots to the head. The anonymity on which Wikipedia prides itself recently flared up into a scandal in the media when one of its most respected administrators, known previously only as “Essjay,” turned out to be a fraud. For years he had thrown around credentials of a “tenured professor of religion” with “a Ph.D. in theology and a degree in canon law,” when in fact he is a 24-year-old with neither advanced degrees nor teaching experience. Wikipedia’s mendacity was further proven when Wales cynically welcomed the self-confessed liar onto his staff, only to drop him a week later after getting blowback. The Web is a powerful and useful tool. But it also has a lot of garbage. The *New Yorker* article remarked that Eric Raymond, the open-source software pioneer whose work inspired Wales, stated that “‘disaster’ is not too strong a word” for Wikipedia. A founding partner of Wikipedia who has since extracted himself described what he left behind as “difficult people, trolls, and their enablers.” What better habitat for the dregs of yesterday’s Spartacist-hating “Marxism” and “Trotskyism” Internet newsgroups, the kind of people who probably have not left their computers, bathed or seen sunlight in weeks? As for cyberspace frauds, we are reminded of David North’s Socialist

Equality Party, an organization of dubious political bandits that years ago liquidated its paper in favor of the “World Socialist Web Site”—a medium through which it can rewrite its history when convenient.

The Web is often lauded as a means of mass participation and democracy. But neither facts nor scientific laws are determined by such methods, much less by an anonymous, multiplayer, fantasy computer game. Science is the product of hard work and a rigorous critical assimilation of the achievements of past cultures and epochs, and it is embodied in the work of authoritative figures and institutions. This does not suit the petty-bourgeois Wikipedia crowd, which is thriving in a period dominated ideologically by the bourgeoisie’s

“death of communism” myth and the attendant growth of religious superstition. Wales himself is an Ayn Randist free marketer. Whatever resentments Wikipedia’s fans have of the genuine ills of bourgeois academia have been twisted into a secular variant of George Bush’s faith-based idiocy.

In the period of its revolutionary ascent, the bourgeoisie fought for knowledge as crucial for economic progress and as a weapon against feudalist clerical tyranny. Diderot’s Encyclopedists helped to ideologically arm the Great French Revolution of 1789-93. Today, capitalism in its death agony creates a barrier to the expansion of the means of production while dragging culture back into a new dark age. What quality education the U.S. bourgeoisie maintains is increasingly restricted to elite universities. The growth and influence of Wikipedia occurs in a period when public education is in tatters and masses of ghetto and barrio youth rot in today’s Bastilles.

Embracing science and the scientific method, we Marxists understand that only the revolutionary overthrow of the decaying bourgeois order by the proletariat will pave the way for the elimination of scarcity, making mankind’s great achievements and knowledge available to all. ■



TROTSKY

## In Commemoration of the Paris Commune

March 18 marks the date in 1871 of the workers’ uprising that created the Paris Commune. The Paris Commune stood as the first proletarian dictatorship in history until it was crushed in a massacre by bourgeois military forces who killed tens of thousands of workers. In his introduction to an address by Karl Marx given shortly after the Commune’s suppression, Friedrich Engels explained that the working class must smash the bourgeois state machinery and create its

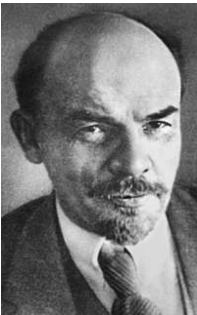
own state on the road to communist society, in which class divisions will have been overcome and there will be no need for a state power.

From the very outset the Commune was compelled to recognise that the working class, once come to power, could not go on managing with the old state machine; that in order not to lose again its only just conquered supremacy, this working class must, on the one hand, do away with all the old repressive machinery previously used against it itself, and, on the other, safeguard itself against its own deputies and officials, by declaring them all, without exception, subject to recall at any moment. What had been the characteristic attribute of the former state? Society had created its own organs to look after its common interests, originally through simple division of labour. But these organs, at whose head was the state power, had in the course of time, in pursuance of their own special interests, transformed themselves from the servants of society into the masters of society. This can be seen, for example, not only in the hereditary monarchy, but equally so in the democratic republic. Nowhere do “politicians” form a more separate and powerful section of the nation than precisely in North America. There, each of the two major parties which alternately succeed each other in power is itself in turn controlled by people who make a business of politics, who speculate on seats in the legislative assemblies of the Union as well as of the separate states, or who make a living by carrying on agitation for their party and on its victory are rewarded with positions....

According to the philosophical conception, the state is the “realisation of the idea,” or the Kingdom of God on earth, translated into philosophical terms, the sphere in which eternal truth and justice is or should be realised. And from this follows a superstitious reverence for the state and everything connected with it, which takes root the more readily since people are accustomed from childhood to imagine that the affairs and interests common to the whole of society could not be looked after otherwise than as they have been looked after in the past, that is, through the state and its lucratively positioned officials. And people think they have taken quite an extraordinarily bold step forward when they have rid themselves of belief in hereditary monarchy and swear by the democratic republic. In reality, however, the state is nothing but a machine for the oppression of one class by another, and indeed in the democratic republic no less than in the monarchy; and at best an evil inherited by the proletariat after its victorious struggle for class supremacy, whose worst sides the victorious proletariat, just like the Commune, cannot avoid having to lop off at once as much as possible until such time as a generation reared in new, free social conditions is able to throw the entire lumber of the state on the scrap heap.

Of late, the Social-Democratic philistine has once more been filled with wholesome terror at the words: Dictatorship of the Proletariat. Well and good, gentlemen, do you want to know what this dictatorship looks like? Look at the Paris Commune. That was the Dictatorship of the Proletariat.

—Friedrich Engels, 1891 Introduction to Karl Marx, *The Civil War in France* (1871)



LENIN



Peter Steiner

term from Stephen Colbert of Comedy Central’s *The Colbert Report*. “I love Wikipedia,” Colbert said in a July 2006 episode. “Any user can change any entry, and if enough other users agree with them, it becomes true.”

Wikipedia is not just low farce. The *New York Times* (24 December 2005) notes “dozens of accounts of people editing entries to suit their own business or personal interests, or their biases.” Nazi white supremacists alter terms such as “racist” to “white nationalist,” while corporations hire bloggers to write favorable entries on their companies.

Anonymous libelers attack from behind Wikipedia’s apparent immunity. One prominent target was John Seigenthaler, former editor of the *Tennessean* in Nashville, who in September 2005 discovered that for four months Wikipedia had been carrying the smear that he was implicated in the assassinations of John and Robert Kennedy. This was meant to wound and defame, as Seigenthaler had been one of Robert Kennedy’s pallbearers. Seigenthaler wrote in *USA Today* (29 November 2005) that due to federal law, “unlike print and broadcast companies, online service providers cannot be sued for disseminating defamatory attacks on citizens

# WORKERS VANGUARD

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

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# Judy Coleman, 1918-2007

Julia (Judy) Coleman, a longtime supporter of the Communist Party (CP) and later a friend of the Spartacist League, died at home on February 19. Throughout her life she was motivated by a deep hatred of capitalist exploitation and racist oppression, and as a Partisan Defense Committee sustainer, she was concerned above all with the fight to free Mumia Abu-Jamal. We extend our condolences to her friends and to her family, Paul, Diana, Kathy, Kris, Pavlos and Corenthia.

Born in Brooklyn, New York on 20 April 1918, Judy married Esmond Coleman in 1936. They were together for 56 years until Es's death in 1992. During her first year at New York University, she became active in the Young Communist League student fraction and joined the CP in 1939. In later years she was especially proud of her political work as a CP activist in the black ghetto in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania during World War II and in San Francisco's Fillmore district in the 1950s.

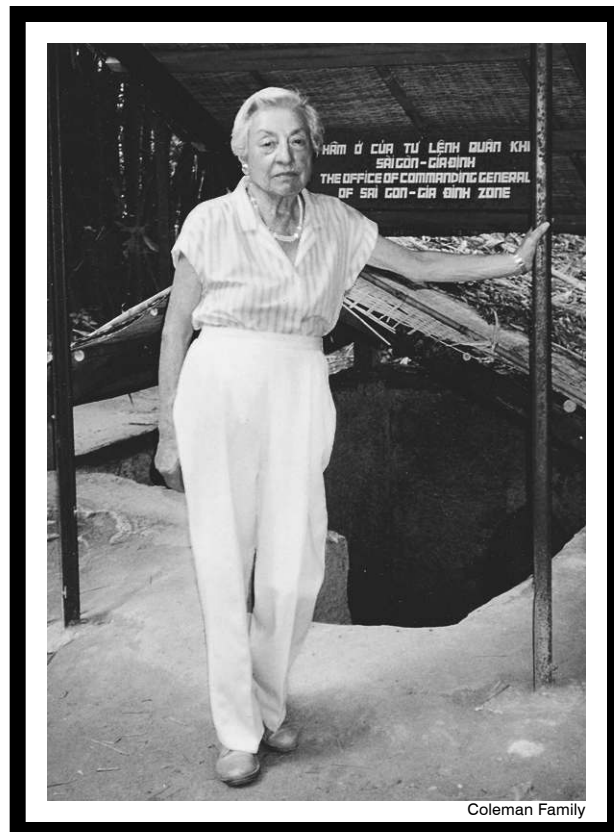
During the McCarthy era Judy and Es hid, housed and took care of various CPers who faced prosecution from the government witchhunters. After close friends and comrades were called before the House Un-American Activities Committee and blacklisted, Judy became one of the first social workers in California to enter private practice. She left the CP in the late 1950s, after the Khrushchev revelations about Stalin's terror and the

1956 Soviet invasion of Hungary which crushed the workers political revolution there. But she continued to call herself a socialist. She would often comment that she hadn't voted for the Democrats since she left the CP. She came to respect the politics of the Spartacist League, and remarked that the U.S.'s bloody role in Vietnam had made her see that the Trotskyists of the 1940s, unlike the Stalinists who supported the "democratic" imperialists in the Second World War, had been right to oppose U.S. imperialism. A PDC sustainer from 1999, she was a fixture at Bay Area PDC picnics and Holiday Appeals.

Judy had a deep interest in the working people she met and an uncanny ability to earn their confidence. Everywhere she went, people told her their life story and sought her advice. She traveled all over the world, visiting 41 countries, with Es and by herself.

She had a sharp eye for hypocrisy and cant. At the end of her life, when she was asked if she would like to see any political people from the old days, she responded with typical acid wit, "I'd like to talk to Earl Browder and set him straight about that 'Communism is 20th Century Americanism' slogan," naming one of the more grotesque slogans of the Stalinist Popular Front period.

We will all miss her insightful stories, compassion, humor and good company.



Judy Coleman at entrance to tunnels of Cu Chi, Vietnam, 1994.

## Abuses Workers, Screws Customers Labor: Organize JetBlue!

Valentine's Day turned into a Halloween horror for hundreds of JetBlue customers, with passengers on nine aircraft forced to sit for over eight hours on the tarmac at JFK airport in New York. Drinking water and food supplies gave out, toilets overflowed and parents resorted to ripping up T-shirts to make diapers. JetBlue had kept its aircraft in the takeoff queue during a lengthy ice storm in a calculated gamble to avoid cancellations and diminished profits. The non-union, cut-rate carrier, a darling of Wall Street, then fell apart. The airline canceled more than 1,100 flights over the next six days, as management was unable to coordinate operations and move personnel to offset the initial disruptions. The meltdown exposed how the company's much-heralded profitability rests largely on short staffing, an undersized fleet, a shoestring communications system, etc.

The JetBlue nightmare is emblematic of the ever-more unfriendly skies of the U.S. airline industry, where drastic cost-cutting is common to all carriers. JetBlue was only one of several airlines that screwed over their customers during the Valentine's Day storm. And in December, American Airlines stranded hundreds of passengers on a runway in Texas for almost nine hours. Workers and passengers alike have suffered from airlines competing for profits by slashing wages, stealing pensions and stretching their operations dangerously thin, at the expense of safety as well as comfort.

In few industries is the relationship between working conditions and passenger service and safety as direct as it is in air transport. Passengers are increasingly being squeezed into tiny, narrow seats of jam-packed aircraft while the workers handling their luggage, the flight attendants serving them, the mechanics making the planes airworthy and the pilots doing the flying are regularly overworked and otherwise abused. Even as the skies are more crowded than ever, the airlines continue to cut staffing.

A concerted effort by the unions to organize JetBlue would be a giant step toward reversing the industry-wide offensive against jobs, wages and working con-



Stranded JetBlue passengers at Kennedy Airport, February 15.

ditions. Crucially, the situation also cries out for organizing workers at "third party" contractors, to whom maintenance and other work is increasingly outsourced. Since 2001, the bosses at the major carriers have wrung massive concessions from the unions in part by raising the bogeyman of the non-union JetBlue, where lower wages, hefty health care payments, harsh discipline and unpaid, off-the-clock training courses are the norm. JetBlue CEO David Neeleman is known for bragging that by keeping out unions, the carrier has avoided "unproductive labor work rules." After the Valentine's Day disaster, the same Neeleman appeared on the David Letterman show begging the public to give the airline another chance.

JetBlue's contempt for its passengers and workers is a matter of record. In 2005, JetBlue conducted an "experiment" in which 29 pilots flew up to 11 hours in a day, in excess of the legal limit of eight hours, in an attempt to show that pilots could fly longer hours without fatigue. This grotesque exercise was halted only after leaders of pilots unions complained to FAA headquarters. With its 2006 "Re-

turn to Profitability" plan, JetBlue cut the number of employees per aircraft by 14 percent while continuing to expand its flight network—an invitation to disaster.

The company's flight attendants, who have to clean the aircraft cabins because the company is too cheap to hire cleaners,

are trying to organize into the Association of Flight Attendants. Baggage handlers have fought to be organized into the International Association of Machinists. But last year, the National Mediation Board intervened to block a union certification election after the company inflated the list of eligible voters, a common tactic employed by corporations and backed by the capitalist government.

Responsibility for the failure to undertake the necessary hard struggle to organize JetBlue and other non-union outfits lies with the pro-capitalist union tops, who see the bosses and their state as "partners." The labor tops at United Airlines pushed the company's Employee Stock Ownership Plan in exchange for massive concessions, a scheme that proved absolutely worthless when the company went bankrupt. Airline unions have enormous social power—the world economy simply could not function without air transport. But instead of using that power, the leadership of the airline unions has allowed the companies to pick them off one by one.

The consequences of the bureaucrats' class collaborationism were made graphically clear when the Aircraft Mechanics Fraternal Association (AMFA) at Northwest Airlines struck against outsourcing and cutbacks in 2005, the most significant industry strike in recent years. The request for solidarity by the AMFA craft union was met with outright scabbing orchestrated by the leaders of the other unions, many of whom rationalized their backstabbing by complaining about AMFA's raids against the Machinists, Teamsters and others. The strike went down to a bitter defeat, and an opportunity to improve the fighting position of workers at *all* carriers was betrayed.

*continued on page 9*

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# Courts Cover for Secret Police

## Turn Over FBI Files! Free Leonard Peltier!

The struggle for American Indian Movement (AIM) leader Leonard Peltier's freedom suffered a double blow last month when two of his legal challenges for release of FBI files were turned down. In separate lawsuits under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), a three-judge panel of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit in New York and Judge Donovan W. Frank of the District of Minnesota kept under government seal thousands of FBI documents, once again covering up the racist frame-up that has already stolen 30 years of the life of this courageous fighter for the oppressed.

Leonard Peltier and the radical AIM were targets of the FBI's sinister and deadly COINTELPRO activities in the 1970s because they resisted the enforced poverty, unending humiliation and racist oppression meted out by the U.S. government. The Oglala Sioux Pine Ridge Reservation was a war zone into which the FBI and Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) poured hundreds of agents, supplemented by trained and armed thugs, in order to terrorize and crush Native American activists. On 26 June 1975, the FBI, BIA and local cops launched a brutal attack. At its peak, 250 Feds surrounded 30 AIM militants and their supporters. In the fire-fight, the FBI lost two agents.

Peltier, who fled to Canada, and three others were charged with the agents' deaths. Charges were dropped against one of the three, and the two others were acquitted in 1976 by a Cedar Rapids,

Iowa jury, who stated they had not believed "much of anything" said by government witnesses and that it seemed "pretty much a clear-cut case of self-defense." Peltier was extradited from Canada and his trial moved to Fargo, North Dakota, a town with strong bias against Native Americans. On 18 April 1977, he was convicted by an all-white jury. At his sentencing, Peltier denounced the judge for his privileged position in the racist establishment that had gone "about the business of murdering my people and attempting to destroy our culture." The judge then sentenced Peltier to two consecutive life terms. And although a federal attorney in a later proceeding would admit that the government did not know who shot the agents, every legal door has been slammed in Peltier's face.

Last month's decisions illustrate the capitalist rulers' determination to keep buried the dirty workings of their secret police. It has been known for years that the government withheld exculpatory evidence from the defense during Peltier's trial, including ballistics tests showing that his gun was not used in the shooting. In 2001, Peltier's lawyers learned that there were some **140,000 pages** in his FBI files and initiated a series of FOIA lawsuits. Peltier has strong reason to believe that the files would provide evidence of government attempts to infiltrate the original defense team. However, the Second Circuit decision exempted the FBI from having to reveal a "confi-

dential source" or the information the source provided.

In the Minnesota decision, Judge Frank, a Clinton appointee, declared misconduct by the FBI to be "irrelevant" and admonished Peltier's attorneys to prove that the FBI is acting in "bad faith," all the while denying access to the documents that could indisputably prove it! Frank dismissed Peltier's efforts to reverse his conviction as "not the core purpose of the FOIA," which he said is governed by "the public interest standard." What he means is the bourgeois rulers' interest in condemning this fighter for Native American rights to a life of prison hell.

Now 62, Peltier has developed diabetes and high blood pressure and has already suffered a stroke, which left him partially blind in one eye. Peltier has been part of the Partisan Defense Committee's pro-

gram of stipends to class-war prisoners since 2005. The PDC and Spartacist League support the dogged pursuit of every legal opening, while placing no faith in the justice of the capitalist courts. We are dedicated to building a revolutionary movement based on the social power of the working class which, in struggling for power against this brutal and vicious ruling class, will win freedom for its class-war victims. Free Leonard Peltier!

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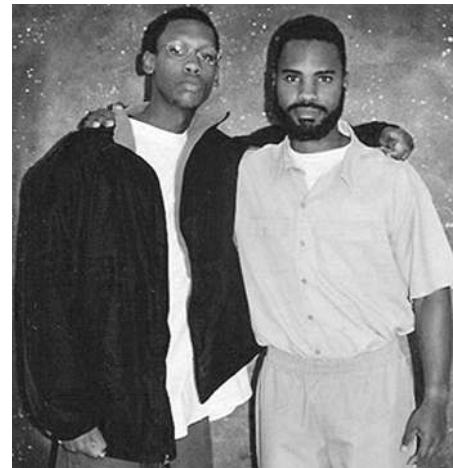
To learn more about supporting Leonard Peltier's defense, visit the Leonard Peltier Defense Committee Web site: [www.leonardpeltier.net](http://www.leonardpeltier.net). Write to Leonard Peltier, #89637-132, USP Lewisburg, P.O. Box 1000, Lewisburg, PA 17837. For more information about the PDC: [www.partisandefense.org](http://www.partisandefense.org). ■

## Habeas Corpus Appeal Denied for Jamal Hart

### Free Him Now!

On February 26, the United States District Court for the Middle District of Pennsylvania denied Jamal Hart's *habeas corpus* petition, which could have freed him after more than ten years in prison. Hart, son of death row political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal, was sentenced in 1998 to 15 and a half years on bogus firearms possession charges. Hart was framed up for his prominent activism in the campaign to free his father.

Hart was first charged under Pennsylvania state laws, which would have resulted in probation. However, the Justice Department under Democratic president Bill Clinton intervened to use federal laws to exponentially extend the sentencing range for Hart. The prosecution labeled Hart a "career criminal" because of three previous convictions. However, as Hart explained in a January 15 letter from the federal penitentiary at Schuylkill, Pennsylvania, to the Partisan Defense Committee, "After thorough research by prison officials here at FCI Schuylkill, it has been revealed that an assault conviction I was accused of in 1995 DOES NOT EXIST and should not have counted in the first place. Due to this blatant miscarriage of justice, I should have been sentenced to the original sentence range of 6 years 5 months to 8 years instead



Monique Code  
**Jamal Hart (right) with his son, Jamal Hart Jr.**

of the dreadful 15 years to life."

Hart's appeal could have laid the basis for a reduction of his sentence and his release for time served. However, Judge Edwin M. Kosik would not even consider Hart's appeal based on the specious argument that his court lacked jurisdiction. Like the frame-up of his father for a crime that the government knows he did not commit, Hart's conviction and the denial of his recent petition illustrate the racist nature of the capitalist "justice" system. From the outset, the PDC condemned the prosecution of Jamal Hart as a racist political frame-up. He should never have spent one day in jail. **Free Jamal Hart now!** ■

## Honor Mumia Abu-Jamal!

### PDC Letter on NYC Street-Naming

*The following letter was sent by the Partisan Defense Committee to Christine C. Quinn, Speaker of the New York City Council, on March 8.*

We are writing to join the efforts to have a New York City street named after Mumia Abu-Jamal. A fighter for black freedom from the age of 14, Mumia's name should take its place on a street sign beside such champions of black rights as Malcolm X and Frederick Douglass in this center of black culture, with this crucial difference: a street named for Mumia must honor a *living* fighter for the rights of the oppressed and exploited.

A Black Panther Party spokesman in his youth, later a supporter of the MOVE organization and award-winning journalist known as the "voice of the voiceless," Mumia was framed up in 1982 on false charges of killing a Philadelphia police officer. Sentenced to death based on his political history and beliefs, Mumia has spent over 24 years on death row for a crime that cops and prosecutors know he did not commit. The frame-up of Mumia Abu-Jamal shows what the death penalty is all about. It is a legacy of chattel slavery and a barbaric outrage; it is the lynch rope made legal.

Mumia Abu-Jamal is an innocent man. Mumia's case exemplifies the race and class bias of the U.S. justice system against

workers, black people, the poor and all the oppressed. The notorious trial judge, Albert Sabo, was overheard promising, "I'm going to help them fry the n---r." Racist jury-rigging, false testimony coerced through police threats and prosecutorial cover-up were the basis for Mumia's conviction. Both the Pennsylvania state courts and the federal courts have refused to consider the reams of documented evidence that prove Mumia's innocence. Foremost is the sworn confession of Arnold Beverly that he, not Mumia, shot and killed the police officer, and that Mumia had nothing to do with the shooting.

Millions around the world have seen Mumia's case as a rallying point against the barbaric and racist death penalty in the U.S. Representatives of the Partisan Defense Committee and our French sister organization, the Comité de Défense Sociale, participated in the ceremonies last April when a street in the Paris suburb of Saint-Denis was designated Rue Mumia Abu-Jamal.

Recently, the U.S. House of Representatives voted to condemn Saint-Denis for its symbolic act honoring Mumia. As Mumia himself said about an earlier attempt to vilify that French city, "The merchants of death" seek "not only to kill me but to wipe my name from the face of the earth." Mumia Abu-Jamal Street would not only frustrate those efforts but help rally all those opposed not only to Mumia's imprisonment and execution but to all legal lynchings. As part of that effort, we support the naming of a New York City street after Mumia Abu-Jamal. ■

## JOIN THE CAMPAIGN TO FREE MUMIA ABU-JAMAL!

### Funds are urgently needed for legal defense!

**Make a contribution today, payable to "National Lawyers Guild Foundation" (earmarked for "Mumia") and mail to: Committee to Save Mumia Abu-Jamal, P.O. Box 2012, New York, NY 10159.**

**Organize protest!** Pass motions in your unions, campus, community and religious organizations demanding Mumia's freedom. Get your union or organization to make a contribution and join rallies and protests for Mumia. Publicize Mumia's case in your union or organization's newsletter.

**Spread the word!** Contact the PDC for copies of *The Fight to Free Mumia Abu-Jamal—Mumia Is Innocent!* This pamphlet arms activists in the struggle for Mumia's freedom by presenting the political basis of the state vendetta against Mumia and the explosive evidence which completely destroys the more than two-decades-long frame-up of this eloquent fighter for black freedom. It is available for \$1. Get the PDC button: "Free Mumia Abu-Jamal! Abolish the Racist Death Penalty!"—\$1 each. Order the PDC video, *From Death Row, This Is Mumia Abu-Jamal*—\$10 for DVD, \$15 for VHS. Bundles of the 4-page brochure, *Mumia Is an Innocent Man: Free Mumia Abu-Jamal!*—\$2 for 25 copies. Order from/make checks payable to Partisan Defense Committee at our New York City address below.

#### Partisan Defense Committee

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# Labor Must Oppose “Canadian Unity” Chauvinism

## Trotskyists Say: Independence for Quebec!

The following article is reprinted from Spartacist Canada No. 152 (Spring 2007), newspaper of the Trotskyist League/Ligue trotskyste, Canadian section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist).

**SPARTACIST** CANADA

Quebec is a nation, oppressed within a majority English-speaking Canada. For over two centuries, attempts by the English rulers to “solve” the national question through repression, assimilation or, more rarely, accommodation have met with failure each and every time. The latest gambit by Tory [Conservative Party] prime minister Stephen Harper—a November 27 parliamentary motion stating that “the Québécois form a nation within a united Canada”—will eventually meet the same fate.

The motion, introduced by the Tories for crass electoral purposes, has no legal value and will most likely be forgotten in good time. But the hand-wringing in English Canadian ruling circles over the mere idea of acknowledging that there is a Quebec nation says much about this oppressive capitalist country. As far as the Canadian rulers are concerned, Quebec may be a nation, but it has *no national rights*. The Clarity Act, passed in 2000 by the Chrétien Liberal government with support from the Tories and NDP [social-democratic National Democratic Party], effectively outlaws Quebec’s democratic right to self-determination, i.e., to independence. Harper, a founding leader of the arch Anglo-chauvinist Reform Party, was the law’s ideological father, while Stéphane Dion, now Liberal Party leader, was its chief architect, pushing the law through parliament in the face of widespread opposition in Quebec.

Behind the “we love Quebec” rhetoric currently favoured by the capitalist parties in Ottawa lies the fact of Quebec’s forcible subjugation within the Canadian state. During the 1970 “October crisis,” the Trudeau Liberal government ordered a military occupation of Quebec, aiming to crush growing national and social strug-

gle there. Seven years later, after the election of the first Parti Québécois [PQ] government, Trudeau again threatened to “use the sword” against Quebec independence. The lead-up to the PQ’s 1995 sovereignty referendum saw the federal government launch shadowy military exercises in and around Montreal. The referendum’s razor-thin defeat—a “near-death experience” for Canada, said the media—produced both the Clarity Act and the Liberals’ notorious sponsorship program, a cynical ploy to push “Canadian unity” in Quebec through bribes and corruption.



no credit

**Left: Conservative Party prime minister Stephen Harper. Right: 1970 military occupation of Montreal ordered by Liberal premier Pierre Trudeau under War Measures Act.**

The latest “unity” gambit began last fall when Liberal leadership candidate Michael Ignatieff endorsed a “Quebec nation” motion introduced by the Liberals’ Quebec wing. The sovereigntist Bloc Québécois then presented a motion to the same effect in parliament, only to be outflanked by Harper, who added the words “within a united Canada.” Harper made no secret of his intent, telling the assembled MPs [members of Parliament]: “Our position is clear. Do the Québécois form a nation within Canada? The answer is yes. Do the Québécois form an independent nation? The answer is no and the answer will always be no” (CBC News, 22 November 2006).

Most Liberals ended up backing the motion, as did the NDP. After some hemming and hawing the Bloc did the same, underlining the fundamental meaninglessness of it all. Bloc leader Gilles Duceppe, joined by the PQ’s André Boisclair, argued that the motion will help the recognition of an independent Quebec in the future. Pierre Dubuc, spokesman for the PQ’s “left-wing” SPQ-Libre caucus, was more nuanced:

“...adding the complement ‘in a united Canada’ constrains us to applaud with only one hand, because the right to self-determination and secession of the Quebec nation is still denied. Prime minister Harper acts like a husband who would recognize the existence of his wife only in the framework of a ‘united couple,’ simultaneously denying her the right to divorce.”

—*L’aut’journal*, December 2006–January 2007

Dubuc noted that Harper was careful to use the term “Québécois” as opposed to “Quebec” in the English version of the motion. By implying that the nation is solely that of old-stock francophones, this leaves the door open to a future partition of Quebec, most specifically, carv-

ing up the island of Montreal along linguistic lines. This program, for which Harper was a central proponent during the 1995 referendum, can only be a recipe for chauvinist “ethnic cleansing.”

### Class Struggle and National Oppression

The whole purpose of the capitalists’ “Canadian unity” campaigns is to reinforce the chauvinist binds that tie workers and the oppressed in English Canada to their exploiters. The NDP social democrats and the central trade-union bureauc-



Canapress

racy promote this reactionary nationalism in the labour movement. While rarely lifting a finger when workers are under attack from the bosses, the labour tops sell to the multiracial working class of English Canada the lie that this is “the greatest country in the world,” as a solace for an increasingly oppressive and economically uncertain existence. In Quebec, symmetrically, the labour tops push the more militant francophone proletariat into the trap of supporting their “own” bourgeois nationalists of the Bloc and PQ. The result is a deeply divided working class, profoundly undermining prospects for the struggle of labour against capital.

A Léger opinion poll last November gave a snapshot of this national divide: 77 percent of respondents outside Quebec rejected the notion of Quebec as a nation, while francophone Québécois supported it by 71 percent. English Canada and Quebec are divided just as two separate countries speaking different languages are divided. Indeed the division is arguably even deeper than that, if one takes into account the mutual animosity generated by never-ending “national unity” crises. The Québécois justifiably resent being treated as a second-class nation. At the same time, the dominant Anglo bourgeoisie has ample trouble defining just what *its* national characteristics are, given how little separates English Canada from the U.S. culturally, linguistically or, increasingly, economically. All this also nicely covers up the truly criminal treatment of Native people, beleaguered immigrants and ethnic minorities, and victims of Canada’s “peacekeeping” abroad like the detainees tortured in Afghanistan. It’s worth noting how the Bloc and PQ, “responsible” would-be rulers of an independent capitalist Quebec, support Canada’s role in the bloody occupation of Afghanistan.

We Marxists advocate *independence for Quebec*, both to fight the dominant Anglo chauvinism, and as the only evident road to make clear to the workers of both nations that their enemies are their own respective capitalists and not each other. Since our inception, the Trotskyist League/Ligue trotskyste has upheld Quebec’s right to self-determination, not least within the English Canadian labour movement. We defended the FLQ left-nationalists jailed and persecuted in the 1970s, despite our profound political differences. We denounced the multi-

ple threats against Quebec by Trudeau, Chrétien and others. In 1992, we called for a No vote against [Prime Minister] Brian Mulroney’s Charlottetown Accord, another attempt to “solve” the national question within a united Canada—i.e., to put Quebec “back in its place” and reinforce the Canadian state. Before the 1995 sovereignty referendum, we went over to advocacy of independence, recognizing that this is the only way to get the question off the agenda and bring the *class* question to the fore—to highlight the understanding that all nationalisms are ultimately tools of the bosses against the workers, and that, in the words of the *Communist Manifesto*, “The working men have no country.”

### Pseudo-Socialists in the Camp of Anglo Chauvinism

The Canadian capitalists (and a large proportion of the Québécois ones) will go very far indeed to stop Quebec independence, which they see as a threat to their interests, both financial and political. At the same time, they obviously worry about the constant “constitutional” and parliamentary instability borne of the unresolved Quebec national question. Entrenched support for the sovereigntist Bloc—which has won a majority of Quebec seats in all five elections since its founding in 1990—all but guarantees this will continue. Since 2004, minority governments, both Liberal and Tory, have followed one another. The next federal election, possibly this spring, isn’t likely to change this. Columnist John Ibbitson expressed the rulers’ concerns in the *Globe and Mail* (30 January):

“If, as expected, the next government is a minority, the cycle will repeat itself, and pre-election preparations will begin again. At some point, this constant state of political crisis will start to exact a toll.

*continued on page 10*

### Labor Black Struggle League and Spartacus Youth Club

#### Chicago:

**Saturday, March 24, 4 p.m.**

Video Presentation

**Mumia Is an Innocent Man  
Abolish the Racist Death Penalty!  
Free Mumia Abu-Jamal!**

222 S. Morgan Street (Buzzer 23)  
(near CTA Blue Line UIC-Halsted station)

For more information: (312) 563-0441  
e-mail: chicagospartacist@sbcglobal.net

### Labor Black League for Social Defense

#### Bay Area:

**Saturday, March 24, 3 p.m.**

Workers Vanguard Readers Circle

**The Racist Frame-Up  
of Mumia Abu-Jamal  
and the State Vendetta  
Against the Black Panthers**

1634 Telegraph Ave., 3rd floor, Oakland  
(near 19th St. BART station)

For more information: (510) 839-0851

## Mao: The Unknown Story

# Reformist Left Buys into Anti-Communist Big Lie

Ten years ago, *The Black Book of Communism* was published as part of a bourgeois propaganda barrage proclaiming the “death of communism” in the aftermath of the destruction of the Soviet Union. Written mainly by French ex-leftists, the *Black Book* was a focus internationally for a renewed campaign of hysterical slanders against Communism and the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution. We denounced this tract at the time as “846 pages of lies and amalgams aimed at justifying repression against organizations and individuals who might still look to communism, and at contributing to counterrevolutionary efforts to destroy the Cuban, Chinese, Vietnamese and North Korean deformed workers states” (“*Black Book*: Anti-Communist Big Lie,” *WV* No. 692, 5 June 1998).

Now comes a paperback edition of a stepchild of the *Black Book* titled *Mao: The Unknown Story* by Jung Chang and Jon Halliday, also former leftists. Chang, author of the best seller *Wild Swans: Three Daughters of China* (a useful book to read), was part of a privileged family of Communist Party (CCP) bureaucrats and served as a Red Guard during Mao’s Cultural Revolution. Halliday is a former member of the *New Left Review* editorial board who once admired “Mao Zedong Thought” and edited an English translation of Albanian Stalinist Enver Hoxha’s works.

Chang and Halliday do their *Black Book* forebears one better. Where the *Black Book* conjured up the fantastical figure of “close to 100 million deaths” supposedly caused by Communism, which it lyingly equated with fascist barbarism, *Mao: The Unknown Story* opens with the statement that Mao was himself “responsible for well over 70 million deaths in peacetime, more than any other twentieth-century leader.” U.S. imperialist chief George W. Bush has spoken glowingly of the book, which he seems to have actually read.

This crude, 814-page anti-Communist screed is no doubt intended as a contribution to the drive to overthrow the Chinese bureaucratically deformed workers state. Since translated into Chinese, it has been promoted internationally, including in Taiwan, refuge of the bloodsoaked bourgeoisie that was driven off the mainland by the 1949 Revolution. With all the “accuracy” of supermarket tabloid trash, the book regurgitates hysterical lies long promulgated by the revolution’s losers—Chiang Kai-shek’s Guomindang—and then some.

What Chang and Halliday present as “basic facts” ranges from the absurd to the outrageous. Millions of peasants who fought desperately against the Japanese imperialist occupiers and Chinese landlords for their liberation are presented as

mere violent thugs egged on by power-mad Communists, while “the warlords had always made sure that the social structure was preserved, and life went on as usual for civilians.” They claim that Mao wanted an “Earth Control Committee” (shades of James Bond) and present Generalissimo Chiang—butcher of Communists, workers and peasants—as, if

the *China Journal* (January 2006), leftist historian Gregor Benton and Steve Tsang conclude that the authors “misread sources, use them selectively, use them out of context, or otherwise trim or bend them to cast Mao in an unrelentingly bad light.”

For many of its academic critics, the problem with the book is that it does not serve its counterrevolutionary purpose.



Camera Press

**On way to victory over Chiang Kai-shek, People’s Liberation Army attacks Guomindang forces in northeast China in late 1940s. Peasant denounces landlord at People’s Tribunal following 1949 Revolution.**



Riboud/Magnum

anything, too kindhearted. The book whitewashes the horrendous massacres carried out by Chiang’s forces after the workers in Shanghai insurrected in April 1927; among the tens of thousands killed in 1927 alone were some 25,000 CCP members.

The defeat of Chiang’s corrupt and feeble Nationalist army by Mao’s peasant-guerrilla forces in the civil war following World War II is chalked up to such fantasies as Chiang’s supposed loving nature and the Reds using the Japanese occupiers for their benefit—the same occupation forces that carried out such horrors as the 1937 Nanjing massacre. During World War II, when China’s struggle against the occupation became subordinated to U.S. imperialism, Chiang’s American overlords bitterly complained that he had no appetite to fight the Japanese. Mao’s forces were independent from the imperialists and deserved the military support of proletarian revolutionaries.

A wide range of serious scholars and China specialists has criticized the Chang/Halliday book as bad history and worse methodology. Even a rather favorable review by Columbia University academic Andrew Nathan in the *London Review of Books* (17 November 2005) states that “many of their discoveries come from sources that cannot be checked, others are openly speculative or are based on circumstantial evidence, and some are untrue.” In one of a series of critical articles in

Thus Tsang wrote in the *Sydney Morning Herald* (8 October 2005): “Mao was a monster,” but the book’s “distortion of history to make their case will in the end make it more difficult to reveal how horrible Mao and the Chinese Communist Party system were, and how much damage they really did to the Chinese people.”

Revoltingly, ostensible leftists have trumpeted the book with far fewer reservations. An article by Phil Hearse in *International Viewpoint* online (July-August 2005), publication of the fake-Trotskyist United Secretariat (USec), states: “If even 20% of the facts about the modus operandi of the CCP and Mao presented in this book are true (and that’s an absolute minimum) it is going to force many leftists—even those who were always critical of Mao and Maoism—to re-evaluate their views.”

Charlie Hore writes in *International Socialism* (April 2006), published by the Cliffite Socialist Workers Party (SWP) in Britain, that “this is for the most part a serious and densely-researched book” whose main fault seems to be that it doesn’t recognize that “the Chinese Revolution was in no way a socialist revolution.” Hore’s comrade Chris Harman opines in *Socialist Worker* online (18 June 2005) that the book’s “weakest point” is its claim that Mao was responsible for more mass death “than either Hitler or Stalin.” Not that Harman disputes the authors’ grotesque equation of Soviet Rus-

sia and Red China with the Nazi regime. The problem, according to Harman, is that “all rulers in this barbaric capitalist world are prepared to see people die if it is necessary to achieve their goals of accumulating wealth or armaments.”

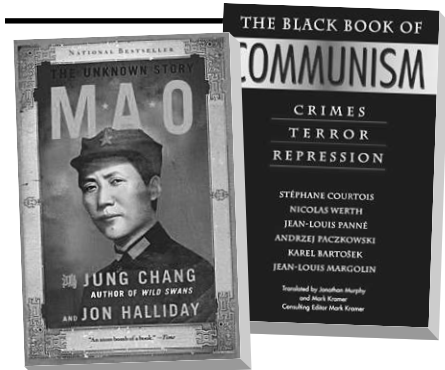
Regurgitating anti-Communist lies is nothing new for the USec and Cliffites, who openly championed the forces of capitalist counterrevolution in East Europe and the former Soviet Union. Today they join in the imperialist-sponsored drive for “democratic” counterrevolution in China, the largest and most powerful of the remaining countries where capitalist rule has been overthrown.

### “Leftist” Cheerleaders for Counterrevolution

You don’t have to be a Maoist to revile the “history” presented by Chang and Halliday. We Trotskyists of the International Communist League unconditionally defend the Chinese deformed workers state against imperialism and internal counterrevolution, just as we fought to the last in defense of the East European and Soviet deformed and degenerated workers states. The ICL defends as well the other remaining deformed workers states: North Korea, Vietnam and Cuba. The 1949 Chinese Revolution ended the rule of the rapacious capitalists and landlords and liberated the most populous nation on earth from imperialist subjugation. Although deformed from its inception by the rule of the parasitic CCP bureaucracy, the workers state accomplished tremendous gains for the workers, peasants and, particularly, women.

At the same time, we fight for proletarian political revolution to oust the Stalinist bureaucracy, which from Mao’s time on has undermined the gains of the revolution. The repression of capitalist/landlord forces was necessary to carry out and consolidate social revolution. However, the CCP regime also repressed the proletariat, excluding the workers from political power and imprisoning or executing Trotskyists. Our program—for a regime of workers, soldiers and peasants councils committed to defending and extending the gains of 1949 through the struggle for international proletarian revolution—is crucial to defeating the threat of counterrevolution in China. Only through the extension of proletarian revolution to the advanced capitalist countries will the basis be laid for the development of socialist society in China and internationally.

Our revolutionary internationalist perspective, born of the proletarian October Revolution of 1917 led by Lenin and Trotsky’s Bolshevik Party, is counterposed to the reactionary Stalinist-Maoist dogma of “socialism in one country” and its corollary, “peaceful coexistence” with imperialism. This nationalist schema expressed the material interests of the bureaucratic caste led by J. V. Stalin that usurped political power in the Soviet Union in 1923-24. During the second Chinese Revolution of 1925-27, the degenerating Communist International under Stalin and Nikolai Bukharin ordered the CCP, which had already liquidated into the Guomindang, to utterly prostrate itself before Chiang’s forces, paving the way to the counterrevolutionary bloodbath (see “The Origins of Chinese Trotskyism,” *Spartacist* [English-language edition] No. 53, Summer 1997).



Lies, for a purpose.





Der Spiegel photos

**Left: Solidarność leader Lech Walesa, praying in Gdansk Shipyard, 1980. Right: Russian Orthodox priest on Yeltsin's barricades of counterrevolution, August 1991.**



Our political opposition to the Chinese Stalinist regime has nothing in common with those who call for fighting Stalinism through the agency of imperialist “democracy,” which pretty much defines the tendency founded by Tony Cliff and led by the British SWP. Cliff cravenly broke from the Trotskyist Fourth International at the onset of the Korean War when he refused to defend the Chinese and North Korean deformed workers states against U.S. and British imperialism. More than three million Koreans were slaughtered by the imperialist forces, who fought under the auspices of the United Nations. Under the pressure of the Cold War, Cliff developed the “theory” that the USSR was a “state capitalist” society, an accommodation to bourgeois anti-Sovietism.

Chang/Halliday decry the Korean War as the product of “the global ambitions of the two Communist tyrants, Stalin and Mao.” They go on to denounce the military buildup of Mao’s China as part of a “secret superpower programme” and grotesquely assert that “Mao’s Bomb caused 100 times as many deaths as both of the Bombs the Americans dropped on Japan.” Whereas the USec’s Hearse finds the dire picture of economic hardships painted by Chang and Halliday “utterly convincing,” the SWP’s Harman chimes in that China’s “capitalist” rulers aimed to “build up modern industries and produce modern armaments, just like their equivalents everywhere else in the world.” Harman continues by pointing to Mao’s successors, who opened China to foreign investment as part of a program of “market reforms”: “The goal of catching up with the West and increasing China’s military power did not die with Mao. But now it was to be done through participation in the world markets.”

These Stalinophobes write *not one word* about the repeated threats by the U.S. rulers to use their immense nuclear arsenal against China! The U.S. and other imperialist powers pursue both military and economic means in pursuit of capitalist counterrevolution in China. We say it’s a damn good thing that China has been able to defend itself militarily against these forces, starting with the Korean War. Just as the development of the Soviet Union’s nuclear arsenal served to deter the war-crazed imperialists, China’s successful test of a nuclear weapon in 1964 provided Beijing with a deterrent against imperialist attack and bought time for the cause of international proletarian revolution.

In a review of the Chang/Halliday book titled “Mao—The Story Is Known,” Peter Taaffe, leader of the Committee for a Workers’ International (CWI), noted that U.S. president Kennedy “contemplated a pre-emptive nuclear strike” on China’s nuclear weapons sites (*The Socialist*, 14 July 2005). The article nevertheless lashes out at “Mao’s attempt to establish superpower status through the acquisition of nuclear weapons” for supposedly compounding the disaster wrought by the Great Leap Forward of the late 1950s. The article goes on to declare that Mao’s successor, Deng Xiaoping, “initiated the first steps which have resulted in the re-emergence of Chinese capitalism, the dominant trend in China today.”

We have repeatedly refuted the anti-

Marxist view that capitalism has returned, or is inevitably returning, to China (see, for example, “China’s ‘Market Reforms’: A Trotskyist Analysis,” WV Nos. 874 and 875, 4 August and 1 September 2006). But whatever the CWI’s theoretical gloss, its position in the fight against capitalist counterrevolution is on *the other side of the barricades*. Along with the Cliffites and the USec, the Taaffeites, when they were part of the tendency led by the late Ted Grant, avidly supported Vatican-backed, CIA-funded Solidarność. And when Boris Yeltsin staged his August 1991 counter-coup with the support of

even conducted a speaking tour to refute its lies. But the RCP condemns the book’s demonizing of Mao only to refurbish the credentials of his nationalist, anti-proletarian regime and to falsely label China today as capitalist.

The RCP points out in *Revolution* (6 November 2005):

“You would not learn from this book that pre-revolutionary China was a society where arranged marriages and footbinding were widespread social practices. Or that four million people died each year of infectious and parasitic diseases. Or that in a city like Shanghai, young women workers were locked in textile factories at night, and one out of

warplanes rained death and destruction on Vietnam. The RCP was only too happy to salute the Great Helmsman and to rail against “Soviet social-imperialism” as “the main enemy.” China’s toadying to the U.S. led to the rupturing of the Maoist movement, with the RCP undergoing a deep split in January 1978.

Before and after Mao’s death in 1976, Beijing provided material support for CIA-backed forces in Angola against their Soviet-backed rivals. In February 1979, China invaded Vietnam on behalf of the U.S., which a few years before had suffered a stinging military defeat at the hands of the North Vietnamese Army and the South Vietnamese National Liberation Front. The Spartacist League staged protests against the attack, demanding: “China: Don’t Be a Cat’s Paw of U.S. Imperialism!” In the 1980s, Beijing supported the CIA-funded Afghan *mujahedin* cutthroats against Soviet troops in Afghanistan. We said: Hail Red Army in Afghanistan! Extend the gains of the October Revolution to Afghan peoples!

Mao and his successors made a major contribution to the destruction of the Soviet Union—a world-historic defeat for the world proletariat that has made the remaining workers states only more vulnerable to the forces of counterrevolution. This amply sums up the anti-revolutionary content of “socialism in one country,” which has always meant opposition to the perspective of workers revolution internationally. As we pointed out in “The Origins of Chinese Trotskyism”: “The Maoist ideology of the Chinese bureaucratically deformed workers state reflected the provincial, anti-internationalist consciousness characteristic of the mass of the peasantry, which was perfectly consonant with the conservative outlook of the Stalin bureaucracy in the Kremlin. The only difference was that the Chinese Stalinists defended ‘socialism’ in a different ‘one country.’”

Mao’s alliance with U.S. imperialism emerged in the midst of the grossly misnamed “Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution.” *Mao: The Unknown Story* spills much ink in depicting this period as one

*continued on page 9*



Xinhua

**Chinese war heroes hailed by North Koreans celebrating 1953 cease-fire ending Korean War.**

George Bush Sr.’s White House, an event that began the final undoing of the Soviet workers state, the CWI’s Russian affiliate crowed in *Rabochaya Demokratiya* (October 1991) about sabotaging workers’ efforts to mobilize against Yeltsin’s “democrats.”

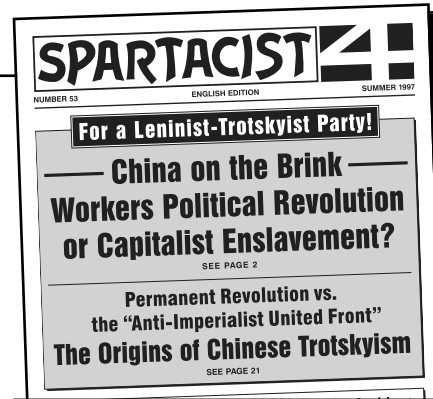
The CWI would like nothing better than to help the emergence of a similar “democratic” force for counterrevolution in China. In this they are at one with the USec, which has helped foster such movements through, to give one example, support to pro-capitalist Chinese “dissidents.” The USec’s deceased leader Ernest Mandel sang a different tune in the early 1950s, when he alibied Mao’s persecution of the Chinese Trotskyists. He was then serving as a lieutenant to Michel Pablo at the head of a revisionist current that destroyed the Fourth International from within, ordering the Trotskyist organizations to bury their program on the grounds that the mass Stalinist Communist parties were, in Pablo’s words, capable “in certain circumstances of roughly outlining a revolutionary orientation.” Mandel would three decades later chase a different political fad, leading the USec into embracing “anti-Stalinist” capitalist restorationists. The one consistency in Mandel and the USec’s policies was their abandonment of the Trotskyist program.

### **The Maoists United Will Never Be Repeated**

The Maoists of the Revolutionary Communist Party (RCP) have had angry things to say about the Chang/Halliday book, many of them correct. The RCP

five persons was an opium addict. You wouldn’t know that the revolution in power rapidly transformed these social conditions.”

That’s all true. But you would not know from this article that Mao’s Stalinist regime struck a criminal alliance with the U.S. imperialists against the Soviet Union. Here was one of the genuine crimes committed by Mao, sealed by his 1972 meeting with U.S. war criminal Richard Nixon in Beijing while American



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# Iraq...

(continued from page 1)

black people in New Orleans were left to die. Hurricane Katrina survivors continue to be abused. As for the Democrats, an article by Mike Davis in *New Left Review* (January-February 2007) notes that “pressure from conservative white Democrats” led the party’s strategists “to deliberately delete any mention of New Orleans from 2006 campaign advertising.”

In sharp opposition to the reformist left, which seeks to install a “lesser evil” at the head of the murderous capitalist state, the Spartacist League seeks to build a workers party that fights for the overthrow of the capitalist-imperialist order through socialist revolution. Our watchword is the historic Marxist slogan: Not one man, not one penny for the imperialist military!

As a speaker for the Spartacus Youth Club said at a February 15 antiwar teach-in at Columbia University: “Opponents of imperialist slaughter must understand that the struggle against imperialist war must be a struggle against the capitalist system that breeds such wars.” Noting that “the fundamental difference between the Democrats and the Republicans is how best to wage the ‘war on terror,’” he continued, “The power of labor must be mobilized against the capitalist rulers at home and students must mobilize behind that power.”

## Reform or Revolution

Military setbacks and outright defeats for the imperialists also weaken the class enemy of the U.S. proletariat on the home front, providing an opening to advance the class struggle. Polemicizing against the opportunist “leftists” of his day, V. I. Lenin described their stance in his *Socialism and War* (1915) as “class collaboration instead of the class struggle, renunciation of revolutionary methods of struggle, helping one’s ‘own’ government in its embarrassed situation, instead of taking advantage of these embarrassments so as to advance revolution.” It was Lenin’s Bolshevik Party that, through principled opposition to the Russian bourgeoisie during the interimperialist First World War, combatted chauvinist prejudices in the proletariat and led the workers to power in the socialist October Revolution of 1917.

As we wrote in “Opponents of the Revolutionary Internationalist Workers Movement” (an appendix to the SL’s Programmatic Statement, titled “For Socialist Revolution in the Bastion of World Imperialism!”): “All of our party’s activity is directed to organizing, training and steeling the proletarian vanguard party necessary for the seizure of state power. In

**Vietnamese militia with captured U.S. Navy pilot, February 1965. U.S. was defeated by North Vietnamese Army/South Vietnamese NLF. Below: October 1967 “March on the Pentagon,” part of liberal-pacifist antiwar movement that played to bourgeois defeatism.**



Van Bao

Brian Shannon



contrast, the politics of the reformists and centrists consist of oppositional activity completely defined by the framework of bourgeois society.”

Such has certainly been the case with all the various antiwar coalitions—United For Peace and Justice (UFPJ); ANSWER, now led by the Party for Socialism and Liberation (PSL); the Troops Out Now Coalition (TONC) of the Workers World Party (WWP); World Can’t Wait, etc. None of these “antiwar” groups called for the military defense of Afghanistan or Iraq during the wars in 2001 and 2003, limiting their slogans to pacifist “No to War” appeals to the imperialist rulers. Inevitably, these liberal coalitions promoted the “Anybody but Bush” politics that helped the Democrats retake Congress in November. Now these same organizations blatantly appeal to the Democratic Congress to “stop Bush’s war” by using the “power of the purse.”

In our last issue we reported that supporters of the International Socialist Organization (ISO) were among those at a February 11 University of Illinois-Chicago rally for Barack Obama who

unfurled a banner demanding: “Obama: Stand Up! Cut the Funding!” The ISO ceaselessly complains that the Democrats are “weak in the knees” and “need a backbone”—to be provided, if one believes *Socialist Worker* (2 March), by “a grass-roots antiwar movement that can pressure politicians from outside the established party system.” The ISO does not call for breaking with lesser-evil bourgeois politics; it just promotes different vehicles toward that end. That includes promoting Ralph Nader and running ISOers as candidates of the Green Party, a smalltime capitalist party that acts to pressure the Democrats to take a more “progressive” course.

The “World Can’t Wait/Drive Out the Bush Regime” project of the Revolutionary Communist Party (RCP) plans school walkouts on March 20 under the call: “Every generation has a mission—Ours is to drive out the Bush regime!” This, of course, also happens to be the “mission” of the Democrats, particularly focused on 2008 presidential elections.

The Democratic Party, promoted directly or indirectly by the reformist left as a more humane and peaceful alternative to the Republicans, has historically been the bourgeoisie’s *preferred* party of war—from the interimperialist World Wars I and II to the counterrevolutionary Korean and Vietnam wars to the 1999 war against Serbia. Due to their posture as a “friend” of working people, blacks and the oppressed, the Democrats can more effectively sell U.S. imperialism’s wars to the populace in the name of “democracy” and “human rights.” In this they are served by the pro-capitalist union misleaders, who uphold the interests of U.S. imperialism and chain labor politically to the class enemy through their support to the Democratic Party. We say: Break with the Democrats! Build a workers party that fights for socialist revolution!

## Same Program, Different Vehicles

As happens before every set of antiwar demonstrations, the various coalitions are accusing each other of disrupting the “unity” of the “movement.” And, as has been true each time, there is *no* difference in the programs on offer, which all promote the lie that the capitalist profit system can be pressured to be “peaceful” and to meet the needs of the masses. UFPJ may simply be a bit more open about it, for example at its January 27 protest in Washington, D.C., which featured a panoply of Democrats.

The WWP’s *Workers World* (1 March)

editorializes that “Congress Could Stop the War—But Won’t.” Seeking to add a wee bit more pressure in that direction, the WWP’s TONC plans a weeklong encampment in D.C. to demand of Congress: “Cut Off ALL War Funds! Defund the Pentagon—\$\$\$ for AIDS, Jobs, Healthcare, Housing & Education!” etc., etc. The WWP’s former comrades in the PSL, which runs ANSWER, cluck their tongues over TONC’s groveling appeals in an article on the PSL Web site titled “Congress and the Anti-War Movement” (23 February). The PSL intones, “Suggesting that Congress can be trusted to end the war is a dangerous illusion.” Every bit as dangerous is the illusion that Congress just needs a push from “the people.” Such is the message of the PSL/ANSWER March 17 “March on the Pentagon,” which pleads: “From Iraq to New Orleans, Fund People’s Needs NOT THE WAR MACHINE.”

Bowing and scraping to Capitol Hill, the pseudo-socialist PSL embellishes the fraud of bourgeois democracy, which is nothing more than a “democratic” veil over the class dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. Preaching the same gospel, the ISO’s *Socialist Worker* (8 December 2006) opines: “The long dormant antiwar movement must take to the streets to remind this country’s ruling elite that they ultimately must answer to the people they govern.”

ANSWER touts the fact that this year marks the 40th anniversary of the “historic” Vietnam antiwar march on the Pentagon, which supposedly “marked a turning point in the development of a countrywide mass movement” (*Socialism and Liberation*, February 2007). As the Spartacist League wrote in a leaflet titled “From Protest to Power” that was distributed at that march, “It is futile to oppose the intervention in Vietnam while supporting the economic system which generates that intervention and the ideology that legitimizes it.” Referring to an earlier antiwar protest, the leaflet commented that Marxist historian “Isaac Deutscher caught the problem exactly when he said that he’d exchange the whole huge April 15th mobilization for just one dock strike.”

In an online article, the PSL insists that “what will defeat” the U.S. “as in Vietnam, is a powerful and independent people’s movement” (“What Can End the War in Iraq?” 9 March). But it certainly wasn’t the peace crawls and Pentagon “levitations” that drove the U.S. out of Vietnam. Indeed, after 1967 there were six more bloody years of military struggle before the 1973 Paris Peace Accords, and another two years before the final taking of Saigon by the North Vietnamese Army (NVA). It was *the battlefield victory* of the heroic NVA and South Vietnamese National Liberation Front (NLF) that defeated U.S. imperialism. The result was a social revolution in which South Vietnam was united with the North Vietnamese deformed workers state.

“All Indochina Must Go Communist!” was our battle cry, as we called for military victory to the NVA/NLF. Raising the call: “Labor Strikes Against the War,” we sought to galvanize the widespread discontent in the U.S. that was being expressed in part through several major strikes. The antiwar movement that ANSWER harks back to was based on an alliance with capitalist politicians representing the defeatist wing of the bourgeoisie. The “movement” melted away after the U.S. withdrew troops from Vietnam in 1973 and the draft was ended by Republican president Nixon.

## The ISO and Afghanistan

Having refused to call for the defense of Iraq against the U.S. invasion in 2003, a number of reformist groups have fallen over themselves to paint the Iraqi “resistance” as some kind of “anti-imperialist” movement. A typical article in the ISO’s *International Socialist Review* (January-February 2007) croons about the “mothers, fathers, sisters, and brothers” who make up said “resistance.” As we have stressed for the last four years, insofar as the forces on the ground in Afghanistan

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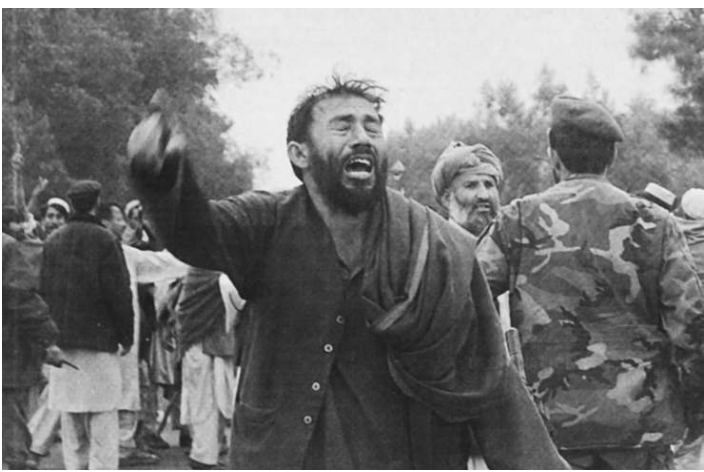
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and Iraq aim their blows against the imperialist occupiers, we call for their military defense against U.S. imperialism. At the same time, we do not paint these forces as “anti-imperialist.” As revolutionary Marxists, we are vehement political opponents of the Taliban and, in Iraq, of the Islamic fundamentalists, remnants of the Ba’ath regime and other forces carrying out sectarian carnage in Iraq.

The Iraq war is vastly unpopular, and any embarrassment the “resistance” causes the Bush gang can be more grist for the Democrats’ mill. Not so, however, when it comes to the brutal U.S./NATO occupation of Afghanistan, which the Democrats have fully embraced as part of the “war on terror.” We noted last issue that an ANSWER statement for the March 17 Washington protest raised no demands against either the Afghanistan occupation or U.S. threats against Iran. While ANSWER has seen fit to squeeze in such demands for its protest in Los Angeles, ANSWER’s national statement on its March 17-18 “Global Days of Action” disappears the Afghanistan occupation entirely.

The same issue of *International Socialist Review* that whitewashes the reactionary forces making up the Iraqi “resistance” contains an article by Phil Gasper stating, “The war in Afghanistan is every bit as much an imperial adventure as the war in Iraq.” “But,” Gasper queries, “does



Man in eastern Afghanistan denounces U.S. troops’ slaughter of civilians, March 4.

this mean that anti-imperialists should now give support to the Taliban, just as we have called for support for the resistance in Iraq?” While “Afghans have the right to resist,” he lectures, “the Taliban may ultimately do more to weaken that resistance than to help it.” The Taliban, he informs us, has “reactionary politics.”

No fooling. Gasper writes that the Taliban “has repeatedly threatened, attacked, and killed women and girls who attend school, work outside the home, or fail to comply with its strict dress code. Most recently its leadership has issued rules calling for teachers to be killed.” Strict dress code?! Most recently?! Atrocities were the stock in trade of the Tal-

iban’s *mujahedin* predecessors when, with money and arms provided by the CIA, they fought the Soviet Army after its 1979 intervention in Afghanistan, at the request of a modernizing nationalist regime. With imperialist-backed forces threatening the southern flank of the Soviet Union—homeland of the 1917 October Revolution—the war posed an acid test for revolutionaries. We said, “Hail Red Army in Afghanistan!” and called to extend the gains of the October Revolution to the Afghan peoples.

Against the forces fighting for women’s liberation and social progress, the ISO, like the bulk of the “left,” lined up with the Democratic Carter and Republican Reagan administrations by denounc-

ing the Red Army intervention. This betrayal came as second nature to the ISO, which from its inception has been defined by virulent hatred of the Soviet Union. In the name of “democracy,” these social democrats hailed every force arrayed against the USSR. When the Kremlin bureaucrats treacherously began withdrawing Soviet forces from Afghanistan, *Socialist Worker* (May 1988) cheered, “We welcome the defeat of the Russians in Afghanistan. It will give heart to all those inside the USSR and in Eastern Europe who want to break the rule of Stalin’s heirs.” The withdrawal from Afghanistan prepared the ground for the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet degenerated workers state in 1991-92, a historic defeat for the international proletariat that was hailed by the ISO anti-Communists.

Counterposed to all the various class-collaborationist “antiwar” coalitions, we seek to mobilize the U.S. proletariat— independent of and in opposition to the capitalist political parties—against all the imperialist depredations carried out by the U.S. ruling class. As Lenin’s Bolsheviks showed, promoting class-struggle opposition to one’s “own” bourgeoisie is crucial to forging a workers party that can lead the proletariat in sweeping away the murderous, decaying capitalist system. ***For new October Revolutions!*** ■

## JetBlue...

(continued from page 3)

By reinforcing craft divisions as well as divisions among workers at different companies, the union tops feed into the endless attempts by the airline bosses to pit workers against each other. What’s needed is a single industrial union of workers—from cleaners to pilots—at all airlines, prepared by united strike action to defend working conditions and extend hard-fought gains. There must be a fight inside the unions to oust the “labor lieutenants of capital,” who are tied to the capitalist Democratic—and sometimes

Republican—parties. Labor needs a new, class-struggle leadership, one that stands for building a workers party committed to the fight for a workers government.

Airline workers have fared no better under Democratic administrations than under the Republicans. Bill Clinton invoked the Railway Labor Act 14 times against potential rail and aviation strikes. Jimmy Carter deregulated the airline industry in 1978, paving the way for more than two decades of union-busting attacks, deteriorating passenger service and an explosion in non-union, cut-rate carriers like JetBlue. The Carter administration also drew up the plans carried out by Ronald Reagan to smash the PATCO air

traffic controllers union when it went on strike in 1981. At the time, the AFL-CIO misleaders conducted an impotent consumer boycott instead of the effective solidarity strike action needed to beat back the union-busting.

Today, the air traffic control system is short of at least 1,000 controllers, with an antiquated, crumbling infrastructure. Last August, a Comair flight crashed in Lexington, Kentucky, killing 49 people, after the FAA assigned only one overworked, sleep-deprived controller to the shift (see “Kentucky Air Disaster: Bitter Fruit of Union Busting,” WV No. 876, 15 September 2006). Only a few days after the crash, the FAA imposed a new contract slashing

salaries for new controllers by more than 30 percent and eliminating mandatory break time and forcing controllers to work even if exhausted.

The JetBlue debacle points to the danger and inefficiency of the airline industry under capitalism. A system that puts profits above all else cannot provide safe, pleasant travel for passengers and decent working conditions for its employees. The chaos in air transport is an example of the anarchy and decay reigning in capitalist production generally. The situation cries out for the expropriation of the airline corporations and the capitalist class as a whole by a workers government and the construction of a centralized, planned economy. ■

## Big Lie...

(continued from page 7)

continual horror. But back in the day, a broad section of radical youth embraced this campaign as revolutionary. We took no side in the Cultural Revolution and denounced it for what it was: essentially an intra-bureaucratic power play by Mao designed to regain his authority after the ruinous Great Leap Forward—an insane adventure in economic autarky that ended in total collapse and widespread starvation. We also warned at the time that “the danger of an imperialist alliance with China against the Russians cannot be dismissed” (“Chinese Menshevism,” *Spartacist* No. 15-16, April-May 1970).

The RCP answers Chang/Halliday by upholding the Cultural Revolution as a “revolution within the revolution”: “It was a broad movement and upheaval aimed at preventing a new privileged class from taking power and turning China into what it has become since Mao died in 1976: a sweatshop paradise riddled with corruption and inequality. China is no longer socialist.” The reality

is that the Cultural Revolution wreaked havoc on the Chinese mainland for the better part of a decade. Its *anti*-proletarian nature was made clear when Mao’s forces smashed a railway workers strike in Shanghai in 1967. Capturing the perverse nature of the “revolutionary” rhetoric of the time, a CCP leader named Lu Dingyi, who would soon be purged as head of the Propaganda Department, quipped, “So you say that it was Mao Zedong Thought that taught you to win at table tennis! How are you going to explain losing?” (Roderick MacFarquhar and Michael Schoenhals, *Mao’s Last Revolution* [2006]).

With their time-warp double-talk, the RCP obscures the fact that Mao’s anti-Soviet alliance with U.S. imperialism provided the groundwork for the market-oriented reforms carried out by his successors. These measures, which the RCP falsely portrays as a restoration of capitalism, were an attempt to address within the framework of Stalinist bonapartism the inefficiencies of the bureaucratic commandism that defined the management of the planned economy under Mao.

Exposing the reactionary ravings of

Magnum

Beijing, 1972: Chairman Mao shakes hands with imperialist chief Richard Nixon as U.S. bombs rain on Vietnam.



Chang/Halliday is not difficult. But in the RCP’s hands, this becomes a means to trumpet the Mao regime as a supposedly egalitarian alternative to today’s China. “Market reforms” have sharpened contradictions in China. On the one hand, the country is marked by increasing social inequality, economic penetration by offshore Chinese and imperialist interests and the emergence of a class of bourgeois bloodsuckers on the mainland. On the other hand, with the huge expansion of China’s industrial capacity, half of the population is now employed in manufacturing, construction, transport and the service sector, and 40 percent is urbanized—a historically *progressive* development from a Marxist standpoint.

The Mao years were simply a different variant of bureaucratic rule, predicated on the notion of building socialism—a society of material abundance—in backward China while the world is dominated by capitalist imperialism. This reactionary-utopian perspective has always been accompanied by a profoundly class-collaborationist program for the imperialist countries. This is exemplified by the

RCP, which lauded Al Gore in the pages of *Revolution* (29 January 2006) and, through its “World Can’t Wait” project, campaigned last fall for the Bush regime to “step down,” thus doing their bit to boost the electoral fortunes of the Democratic Party of U.S. imperialism.

We say that defense of China, North Korea, Vietnam and Cuba requires class struggle at home, in the belly of the imperialist beast! As we wrote in “China’s ‘Market Reforms’: A Trotskyist Analysis”:

“A proletarian political revolution in China raising the banner of socialist internationalism would truly shake the world. It would shatter the ‘death of communism’ ideological climate propagated by the imperialist ruling classes since the destruction of the Soviet Union.... Only through the overthrow of capitalist class rule internationally, particularly in the imperialist centers of North America, West Europe and Japan, can the all-round modernization of China be achieved as part of a socialist Asia. It is to provide the necessary leadership for the proletariat in these struggles that the International Communist League seeks to reforge Trotsky’s Fourth International—the world party of socialist revolution.” ■



Flags of capitalist Guomindang carried in July 2004 Hong Kong march for “democracy,” rallying cry for capitalist counterrevolution.

Quebec...

(continued from page 5)

“It will show up in desertions from the public service, in lost investment caused by the uncertain political climate, in an international reputation for instability.”

Instability of bourgeois rule, even if only at the level of parliament, can be a good thing for the working class—if it learns to mobilize independently of the bosses for its own interests and not, as the grovelling social-democratic NDP has done, by waving the Maple Leaf flag and supporting one capitalist party against another. A fight for a class-struggle leadership of the unions is inseparable from a fight to defend Quebec’s national rights. Such a fight will pose pointblank the question of a new, revolutionary party of the working class opposed to the pro-capitalist NDP and to the bourgeois nationalists in Quebec.

This is certainly not the perspective of the rest of the Canadian “left,” who push support to the NDP in English Canada, or to the Quebec nationalists, or, impossibly squaring the circle, to both at once. The most blatant Canadian chauvinists are the misnamed Communist Party of Canada (CPC). Their program, “Canada’s Future Is Socialism!” (2002), calls to “struggle against U.S. domination and for genuine Canadian independence,” while railing vis-à-vis Quebec that “The separatist solution would bring severe additional economic hardship to the working people of both nations and would weaken their political unity against the common enemy.” In the acid test of the 1995 referendum, the CPC lined up with the Canadian bourgeoisie in calling on the Québécois to vote No to independence.

The same stance was taken by the “Bolshevik Tendency” (BT), a dubious group founded by ex-members of our organization who spend much of their energy slandering us. So blatant was the BT’s capitulation to the Canadian powers-that-be that they were officially welcomed to join a massive “Canadian unity” rally in Montreal organized by top business leaders on the eve of the referendum. When the BT’s only Quebec member quit, he protested their “de facto bloc with the Canadian bourgeoisie” (see “Kneeling Before the Body of General Wolfe on the Plains of Abraham,” SC No. 141, Summer 2004 [see also WV No. 827, 28 May 2004]).

While noting the cynicism behind Harper’s motion, the International Socialists (I.S.) saluted the “nation” vote in parliament as “a significant victory for the Québécois in their decades old struggle for recognition” (*Socialist Worker*, 16 December 2006). From the Meech Lake Accord of the late 1980s to the Charlottetown referendum and more, the I.S. has



Canadian troops assault Mohawks seeking to defend their historic burial ground at Oka, Quebec, 1990.

consistently backed the Canadian rulers’ attempts to shore up their rule via token, overwhelmingly meaningless “concessions” to Quebec. Far from advocating Quebec independence, their aim throughout has been to act as a pressure group on the NDP, who they support in every election (including in Quebec, where the Anglo-chauvinist New Democrats have zero roots in the labour movement).

Today the I.S. begs the New Democrats to “finally get things right on Quebec” by backing the right to self-determination and opposing the Clarity Act. “That,” they claim, “is a road that would allow the NDP to galvanize a class-based, principled pole.” The idea that the NDP could provide a “class-based, principled pole” over Quebec (or any other issue) is the sheerest illusion-mongering. The role of social democrats, even on occasions when they are forced to posture more to the left, is to *defend the capitalists’ state power against the working class*. They do that by seeking to divert class struggle, when it does occur, into channels that do not threaten bourgeois rule or, failing that, by directly helping the capitalists to suppress the workers. A general struggle against the capitalist system requires breaking the working class from the NDP—a process in which defense of Quebec’s national rights against both the Anglo ruling class and the chauvinist NDP tops is likely to play a central role.

Québec Solidaire: A Populist Trap

While pleading in English Canada for the NDP to clean up its act, in Quebec the I.S. enthusiastically backs the new Québec Solidaire (QS) party. When QS was formed last year, the I.S. French-language paper *Résistance* (February 2006) gushed: “It seems that the Quebec left has finally found its path, after 38 years of struggle, outside of the suffocat-

ing shadow of the PQ. It is this feeling of liberation which electrified the crowd when the name Québec Solidaire was adopted.” Forgive us for not sharing this “feeling of liberation”! As we noted at the time, QS “isn’t even a half-step on the road to anti-capitalist struggle: it is a populist roadblock that fosters terrible illusions in a ‘reformed’ bourgeois rule” (SC No. 148, Spring 2006).

QS aims to attract those opposed to the attacks of the right-wing provincial



Delegates at 1920 Congress of the Peoples of the East in Baku, Soviet Azerbaijan. Bolshevik Revolution was beacon to oppressed nationalities worldwide.

Liberal government but disenchanted with the PQ, particularly under Boisclair, a colourless technocrat who has alienated much of the party’s putative left wing. Heavily staffed by housebroken ex-“Marxists,” and backed by just about every present-day reformist left group in Quebec, QS eschews even the rhetoric of socialism and the class struggle in favour of environmental/feminist-tinged petty-bourgeois politics.

This is seen clearly in QS’s platform for the next Quebec election (now called for March 26) adopted at a November convention. While containing detailed proposals for nationalizing wind energy, reorganizing the forestry sector and increasing taxes on dividends, it does not even rhetorically oppose capitalism (a word that appears nowhere in the lengthy document). Even minimal proposals for free drug care for all low-income Québécois and an immediate increase in the minimum wage to \$10 an hour were defeated after party leaders argued they would be too expensive. QS doesn’t even call to unconditionally withdraw Canadian troops from Afghanistan, demanding instead Canadian participation in a military force under United Nations auspices.

The I.S.’s *Résistance* (January 2007) salutes QS’s sub-reformist platform as “a clear rupture with neoliberalism” and calls to enthusiastically back it in the provincial elections. From Europe to Latin America and Quebec, “opposition to neoliberalism” has become a code phrase for unity with those supporters of capitalism who aim to co-opt the workers with chatter about “solidarity.” The Stalinists used to dress this up as the “popular front”

(against monopolies, fascism, etc.). While the jargon has changed, the idea is the same: subordinating the workers’ interests to a wing of the enemy class. We Trotskyists say: QS is not a genuine left alternative to the PQ, but another trap for Quebec’s workers and oppressed. No vote to the petty-bourgeois QS, any more than to the openly capitalist PQ and Liberals! Workers in Quebec and throughout Canada need a party based on proletarian class struggle, not another class-collaborationist obstacle.

In approaching the national question in the Canadian state today, we take inspiration from the Bolshevik-led Russian Revolution of 1917, the only successful workers revolution so far in history. The Tsarist Empire was a cauldron of Great Russian chauvinism and national antagonisms directed against myriad oppressed nations. The Bolsheviks fought as a “tribune of the people,” opposing all manifestations of great-nation chauvinism, while calling on workers and peasants of the oppressed nationalities to join with their Russian class brothers and sisters in a common struggle against capitalism. Only socialist revolution and the inauguration of proletarian power laid a basis to liberate all the oppressed from the tsarist “prison house of peoples.”

Today we advocate Quebec independence as a means of breaking the pro-

letariat in both nations from deadly illusions in their “own” respective exploiters. The oppression of Quebec within “united Canada” has for too long poisoned relations among the workers and undermined prospects for anti-capitalist struggle. We fight for the advanced elements of the working class and radical youth to take up the struggle to construct a Marxist workers party, one that can unite the many victims of this exploitative system—women, immigrants, Native people, the Québécois—behind the social power of the proletariat in the fight for socialist revolution. ■

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# Spitzer...

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have since been released from commitment—in a number of cases because of terminal illness or old age.

To push through this major escalation in the state's repressive powers, capitalist politicians and the major media willfully conflate such horrible crimes as the 2005 rape and murder of a Florida girl with consensual sexual activity. Genarlow Wilson, a 20-year-old black man, languishes in a Georgia prison on a mandatory ten-year sentence with no hope of parole simply for engaging in consensual oral sex three years ago with a younger school-mate, a case exemplifying racist and anti-sex bigotry in the U.S. (see "Free Genarlow Wilson!" WV No. 887, 2 March).

We are uncompromisingly opposed to the criminalization of consensual sex. As we wrote in "The Uses of Abuse" (*Women and Revolution* No. 29, Spring 1985): "The violent abuse and rape of children is a terrible crime. The problem is that once the question of 'child abuse' has become a political football, the state willfully will not tell the difference between Jack the Ripper and Lewis Carroll. A stranger who lurks in school yards, offers candy to a little girl then rapes and maims her and a father who takes showers with his prepubescent daughter are both telescoped into a common juridical scheme."



Boston Globe

The nightmarish sweep of the new measures was illustrated by the 1997 U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Kansas v. Hendricks* that upheld the constitutionality of "civil commitment" of those having a "mental abnormality." This standard threatens anyone the bourgeoisie deems as deviating from the reactionary moral straitjacket of the monogamous family. In February, the U.S. Supreme Court refused to hear an appeal by Morton Berger, an Arizona high school teacher, who was sentenced to **200 years in prison**, with no possibility of parole, for child pornography—ten years for each of 20 images in his possession. Even an Arizona state Supreme Court judge noted that the sentence was "longer than the presumed sentence for rape or aggravated assault" and that "Berger would serve no more time for actually molesting a child" (*Arizona Daily Star*, 10 May 2006).

What is truly perverse is to equate looking at pornography with committing violent crimes. Child pornography, like all porn, is simply words and images designed for pleasure. We call for abolishing all laws against "crimes without victims" such as prostitution, drug use and pornography. We also oppose reactionary "age of consent" laws; our guiding principle is simply that of effective consent. Government out of the bedrooms!

The crazed morality drives whipped up by the bourgeoisie, the churches and the media serve to regiment the population and to distract the working people

from the very real evils of this decaying capitalist system. It is grotesque that the capitalist rulers posture as defenders of the country's youth. In the U.S., 37 percent of all children—58 percent of black children, and 62 percent of Latino children—live at or below the official poverty line. In New York City, fewer than 35 percent of 16- to 24-year-old youth have any kind of job. Last month, the number of homeless families in New York City reached a record high.

"Civil commitment" laws are only one part of an escalating wave of repression against so-called "sex crimes." Fully 22 states now impose restrictions on where "sex offenders" can live after their release from prison. These regulations are so extensive that a number of prisoners have had their release delayed for years simply because there was nowhere they could live. California's Proposition 83, which passed in November, requires, among other measures, that "sex offenders" wear an electronic ankle bracelet for the rest of their lives, providing for Global Positioning System monitoring of their every movement, a measure already the law in Massachusetts. Every state has "sex offender" registries, and about half post them on the Internet. This includes Maine, where William Elliott was gunned down last year after being put on the list because he had had sex with his girlfriend before she turned 16. Now, in a blatant invitation to more such vigilante violence, Ohio plans to issue fluorescent green "sex



Litherland/NY Times

**Left: Massachusetts governor Romney announces electronic tracking of "sex offenders," 2004. After completing sentences, over 500 men are being held in former prison in Arcadia, Florida.**

offender" automobile license plates.

In racist capitalist America, repressive measures come down especially hard on blacks and other minorities, and repression of "sexual predators" is no exception. In a tradition going back to the Jim Crow South and lynch mob "justice," black men today are disproportionately convicted of rape. Pointing to the racist underpinnings of those convictions, black men account for fully 65 percent of those whose convictions have been overturned by DNA and other evidence. In half of those exonerations, the black men were falsely accused of raping white women. Not coincidentally, the only New York state senators who voted against Spitzer's "civil commitment" law were from heavily black and Hispanic New York City. Senator Kevin Parker of Brooklyn made the self-evident point that the racist cops would use the law to target minorities.

The shadow of the lynch mob is also apparent in the barbaric notion that the way to deal with male "sexual predators" is to castrate them. According to the *Washington Post* (5 July 2006), "Eight states allow the use of drugs to castrate sex offenders, including California, Florida and Texas, where surgical castration is also an option." The article noted that in Florida, "judges are required to order castration for certain repeat offenders." This is a throwback to the early 20th century, when the racist eugenics movement, which dominated the U.S. scientific establishment at the

**TWU Local 100 president Roger Toussaint (right) at September 2006 NYC West Indian Day Parade with then Attorney General Spitzer. Spitzer won union's endorsement despite jailing Toussaint, fining union members for 2005 transit strike.**



time, endorsed castration and sterilization of the "feeble-minded" and "habitual criminals." Today, as the *Journal of the American Academy of Psychiatry and the Law* (Vol. 33, No. 1, 2005) remarked, many prisoners "may view surgical castration as their only realistic option for release into the community." Several years ago a Virginia inmate named James Jenkins castrated himself with a razor blade the night before a judge was to consider committing him to a prison for high-risk "sex offenders."

In New York, Eliot Spitzer has used his landslide electoral victory in November to not only push through the draconian "civil commitment" law but to take the ax

Spitzer, then the state attorney general, threw Toussaint in jail as punishment for the December 2005 NYC transit strike, which defied the state's Taylor Law ban on public employee strikes. TWU members and the union as a whole suffered massive fines as part of Spitzer's anti-strike injunctions. Spitzer was also supported by Dennis Rivera, outgoing president of the 1199 SEIU health care workers union, who abjectly declared before the elections that he would not oppose the planned hospital closings.

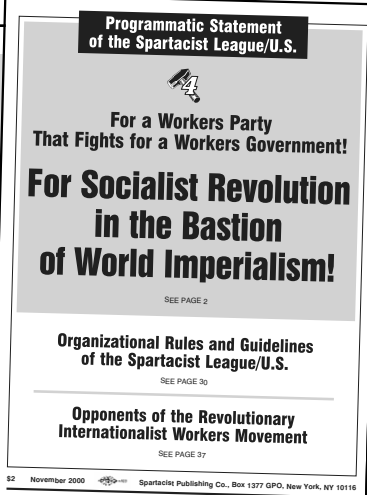
New laws against "sex offenders" are only one component of the growth in the capitalist state's repressive reach. More than one generation of black and Latino youth have been subject to mass incarceration, mainly as a result of the "war on drugs." More recently, repressive laws enacted as part of the reactionary "war on terror" initially singled out Near Eastern and other Muslim immigrants. But as we warned from the outset of this bogus "war," such measures would eventually extend to black people, the working class and the citizenry as a whole. A broad range of public opinion now recognizes that the USA Patriot Act has opened the door to restricting the rights of the entire population. The same point must be hammered home in regard to repression of "pedophiles" and anyone else considered to be deviant or a "threat" by the government. The Bay Area Labor Black League for Social Defense defended a black former convict, Cary Verse—who underwent chemical castration in a state mental hospital after serving his prison sentence—and Father Donald Weeks, who sheltered him, against vigilante harassment in 2004 (see "Labor Black League Protests 'Sex Offender' Witchhunt," WV No. 824, 14 April 2004).

As revolutionary opponents of the capitalist system, the Spartacist League seeks to build a workers party in the tradition of the Bolshevik Party of V. I. Lenin and Leon Trotsky, which led the proletariat to victory in the 1917 Russian Revolution. Such a party, as Lenin pointed out in *What Is To Be Done?* (1902), must act as *"the tribune of the people...able to react to every manifestation of tyranny and oppression, no matter where it appears, no matter what stratum or class of the people it affects."* Only in this way can the most conscious layers of the working class be won to the understanding of the proletariat's historic mission—to sweep away the decaying capitalist order through proletarian revolution. ■

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## Down With Spitzer's Sinister "Sex Offender" Law!

### New York

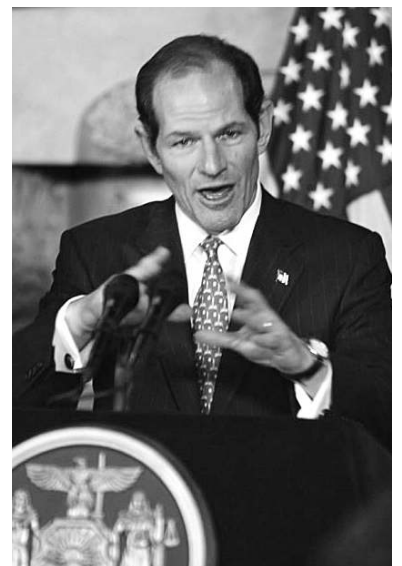
The New York State legislature recently enacted by an overwhelming vote a sweeping law under which "sex offenders" can be locked up for indefinite peri-

ods after they have completed their prison sentences. This reactionary law was pushed by Democratic governor Eliot Spitzer, who was elected in November with the enthusiastic support of the state's labor officialdom. Similar "civil commitment" laws already exist in 19 other states, as capitalist politicians whip up a

frenzy in the population against "sexual predators." President Bush has signed a law offering money to states that commit sex offenders beyond their prison term, and the Justice Department is creating a federal civil commitment program.

Make no mistake: these measures represent an attack on the fundamental rights of the entire population. The New York law in effect means a life sentence that would ensnare many who have done nothing more than engage in consensual sex, which is no crime in the eyes of revolutionary Marxists or by the lights of any rational society. The law throws the fundamental Constitutional protection against double jeopardy out the window, with "offenders" effectively charged twice for the same crime, and allows retroactive prosecution for "crimes" committed before the law was passed. Even if not convicted, a person merely *accused* of a "sex crime" can be indefinitely "committed" if that person pleaded guilty to another offense.

Most ominously, people are being locked up not because they have committed a specific crime but because a court decides that there is a high *probability* that they might commit one in the future. According to the *New York Times* (4 March): "Actuarial formulas—akin to the tables used for life insurance—play a

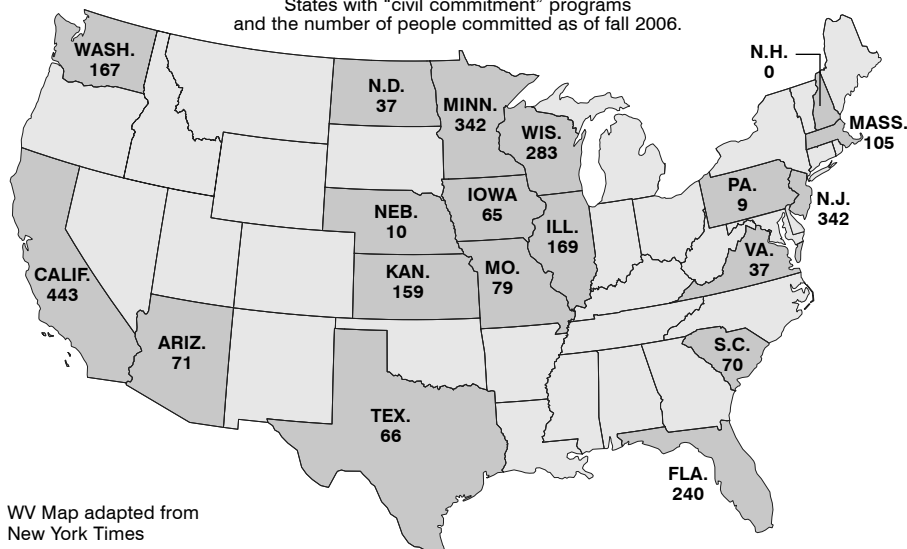


Office of New York State Governor  
**Democratic NY governor Eliot Spitzer**

central role in deciding who is dangerous enough to be committed. They calculate someone's risk of offending again by looking at factors such as the number of prior sex offenses and the sex of the victims.... Politics and emotion also factor heavily into who gets committed." Nearly 3,000 "sex offenders" have been committed nationally since the first such law was passed in 1990. A mere 8 percent  
*continued on page 11*

### Draconian "Civil Commitment" Programs Spread Across the U.S.

States with "civil commitment" programs and the number of people committed as of fall 2006.



WV Map adapted from  
New York Times

## Pascagoula, Mississippi

## Victory to Northrop Grumman Shipyard Strike!

MARCH 12—In a key battle for labor in the open shop South, over 7,000 workers at Northrop Grumman's Ingalls shipyard in Pascagoula, Mississippi, walked off the job on March 8 and set up picket lines. The strikers are taking on the world's largest naval shipbuilder—and the biggest private employer in Mississippi. Production has been shut down at Ingalls, where Navy destroyers and Coast Guard cutters are built. Today, some 1,000 marchers, members of all the unions at the shipyard, demonstrated their determination along the six-mile route from the shipyard to downtown Pascagoula. Fourteen unions are on strike, including eleven grouped in the Pascagoula Metal Trades Council.

Workers are demanding greater wage increases and no increase in health care premiums. They walked out after having *twice* decisively voted down contract proposals from the company. The last offer shortened the term of the contract from four to three years but still would have raised wages only a meager \$2.50 an hour by 2009 and would raise health care premiums by 50 percent when workers don't even have dental or vision coverage.

While the company is rolling in money—it did over \$30 billion in business last year alone—many of the workers are still struggling to recover from the devastation wrought by Hurricane Katrina,



**March 9: Union members man picket line at Ingalls shipyard.**

which exposed the lethal incompetence and racist contempt displayed at all levels of government for the Gulf's residents. As *The Mississippi Press* (11 March) reported, "Many workers said that cost-of-living, spikes in gas prices, rebuilding after Hurricane Katrina and other factors led to the 90 percent opposition from union members who voted on the contract."

Government mediators are pressing the

unions to settle, but workers are saying that they are prepared to hold out on the picket lines. Workers have cheered when tractor-trailers approaching the shipyard with supplies for the plant make a U-turn. Every trade unionist should honor the picket line—*picket lines mean don't cross!*

This strike follows other walkouts against military contractors, including at Boeing in 2005-06 and Sikorsky Aircraft

in 2006, during the U.S. imperialists' murderous wars and occupations in Afghanistan and Iraq. The U.S. capitalist drive for profits and world domination is behind the war and occupation of Iraq and is reflected at home in a war on workers, black people and immigrants. But the labor bureaucracy pushes the lie that there is a partnership between labor and the filthy rich capitalists who run the country, that American workers share a common "national interest" with their exploiters. Ron Ault, head of the AFL-CIO Metal Trades Department, expresses this view when he complains that the U.S. is losing its "status as the last super power."

A victorious strike at this large shipyard would be a boon to union organizing throughout the South. Central to this task is the need to combat racist discrimination on and off the job. About half of the shipyard workers are black. Throughout the South, including Mississippi, whose state flag incorporates the flag of the slave-owning Confederacy, black workers and a growing number of immigrants form a major component of the working class.

The big-business media have reported that workers at other Northrop Grumman shipyards along the Gulf Coast—in Avondale, Gulfport and Tallulah—accepted the same contract that the Ingalls workers rejected. What they don't say is that the workers at the other yards won their first contract in 2001 and only now reached the pay and benefit levels won at Ingalls. A major impetus for organizing these shipyards came from the union stronghold in Pascagoula, exemplified by powerful strikes in 1974 and 1999. Pascagoula Metal Trades Council president Mike Crowley told *Workers Vanguard* that due to a "me too" contract clause, gains at Ingalls would be passed on to workers at the other three yards. **Victory to the Northrop Grumman shipyard workers strike! ■**