

## Spartacist League/Britain Statement

# Imperialist Hands Off Iran! U.S./British Occupiers Out of Iraq Now!

*The following statement was issued by the Spartacist League/Britain, section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist), on April 7.*

Iran's seizure of 15 British army and naval personnel on 23 March brought forth a barrage of patriotic chauvinism

against Iran, a country which has recently been subject to repeated provocations by the imperialists. With consummate hypocrisy, spokesmen for the Blair government shrieked that Iran was lying when it said the marines and sailors were apprehended inside Iranian terri-

torial waters and howled about "coercion" and "humiliation" of the prisoners, some of whom were shown on Iranian television making statements supporting the Iranian government's claim. Almost two weeks after they were captured by Iranian forces, the British sailors and

marines were released by the Tehran regime.

We do not know what the British forces were up to at the time of their capture, but we do know that the imperialists are the aggressors and this semi-colonial

*continued on page 9*

# Republicans, Democrats: Shredding Your Rights "War on Terror": Torture, Spying, Imperialist Butchery



Franco/NY Times

U.S. torture center at Guantánamo Bay, Cuba.

The powers the government has arrogated to itself in the name of the "war on terror" represent a massive increase in the repressive powers of the capitalist rulers, with the imprimatur of a pliant judiciary. In February, a Washington, D.C., federal appeals court upheld by a two-to-one decision a provision in the 2006 Military Commissions Act eliminating *habeas corpus* rights for detainees at the U.S. concentration camp at Guantánamo Bay, Cuba, even if they were to be held there the rest of their lives. A *Nation* (19 March) article by David Cole captured the intent of such measures by recounting what military intelligence officers reportedly told one Guantánamo detainee: "You are in a place where there

## Free Jose Padilla! Free the Detainees!

is no law—we are the law."

Then there is the case of Khalid Shaikh Mohammed, allegedly Number Three in command of Al Qaeda. Mohammed was the first of hundreds of Guantánamo detainees—charged with absolutely nothing—to be brought before a military "Combatant Status Review" tribunal, before which he confessed last month to being the mastermind of the September 11 attacks. Such prisoners have no right to challenge the charges or purported evidence against them.

Mohammed confessed to 31 terror attacks and plots—from September 11

to plans to assassinate former U.S. presidents Jimmy Carter and Bill Clinton as well as the Pope. About the only crime he didn't confess to was the murder of JonBenet Ramsey. Mohammed also said that he and other prisoners had been tortured into making false statements. But all evidence of torture was blacked out of transcripts of Mohammed's testimony, although his interrogators reportedly admired his capacity to have his head submerged in water for over two minutes when most cannot tolerate more than 15 seconds of this simulated death by drowning.

Mohammed's confession to the September 11 attacks was met with widespread derision—and not just by late-night TV comics. This fact speaks volumes about the tattered credibility of the American government and its "war on terror." In the aftermath of the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, the ruling capitalist parties—Democratic and Republican—eagerly seized on the opportunity to whip up a climate of fear of brown-skinned "foreigners," particularly those of Near Eastern descent, and clamor for war. Their purpose was to further the vicious exploitation and oppression which is the lifeblood of the capitalist profit system by convincing the working class that it had a stake in preserving "our American way of life."

Thousands of Muslim immigrants were detained; a war was launched against hideously backward and impoverished Afghanistan which remains occupied in the cynical name of "Operation Enduring

*continued on page 4*



# Why China Is Not Capitalist: An Exchange

18 February 2007

Dear Workers Vanguard

In your article “Anti-China Protectionism: Poison for Workers” (WV no. 885) you claim that the imperialist powers are “aiming to restore capitalist rule in order to turn the Chinese mainland into a gigantic sweatshop”.

The reality is that China is already “a gigantic sweatshop”. Hundreds of millions of Chinese workers are ruthlessly exploited by local and foreign capital. Extremely long hours, physical punishment, fines and non-payment of wages are amongst the abuses suffered by many Chinese workers. (See the book “China’s Workers Under Assault: the Exploitation of Labor in a Globalizing Economy”, by Anita Chan.)

China has become the world’s biggest recipient of foreign investment. The transnational corporations (and the South Korean and Taiwanese contractors who do much of their dirty work) are attracted by the huge reserve army of labor created by the displacement of peasants from the land, and of workers from state-owned factories that have cut their workforce or closed down altogether. They are also

People’s Liberation Army enters Beijing, January 1949.



attracted by the total absence of unions in many enterprises, and the tameness of the All-China Federation of Trade Unions where it exists.

Privatisation has proceeded very rapidly in recent years. The state sector’s share of industrial production has declined from 100 percent in 1978 to 31.6 percent in

2004. The private sector has risen from zero to 62.1 percent in the same period.

If you accept that Russia is now capitalist, despite the continued existence of some state-owned enterprises, why do you not recognise that China is now capitalist too?

Is it because the ruling party still calls itself “communist”? If so, you are judging on the basis of words, not social reality. You are also showing illusions in the party of the Stalinist bureaucracy as a defender of the workers state.

Trotsky had no such illusions in the Soviet bureaucracy. He said that if the bureaucracy was not overthrown by the working class it would eventually restore capitalism and convert itself into “a new possessing class” (he meant a newly-created capitalist class, not some hitherto-

unknown type of possessing class).

Trotsky has been proven correct, not only by the experience of Russia, but also by that of China.

Chris Slee  
Melbourne, Australia

### WV replies:

Taken together, Chris Slee’s arguments amount to this: workers are mistreated in China, there has been significant privatization of formerly state-owned enterprises, international capital has penetrated the economy and, *voilà*, China is capitalist. Politically bankrupt from a Marxist standpoint, this is a convenient “theory” for those who seek to join their “own” bourgeoisies, the protectionist, anti-Communist labor lieutenants of capital in the trade-union bureaucracy and the leaders of mass reformist parties, such as the Australian Labor Party, in targeting China for internal counterrevolutionary machinations and external military threats.

Slee’s letter provides an opportunity to again underline our unconditional military defense of the Chinese deformed workers state in opposition to prevailing petty-bourgeois and pseudo-left public opinion. Few are better suited to bashing China while embellishing “democratic” imperialism than the Australian Democratic Socialist Perspective (DSP—formerly Democratic Socialist Party), of which Slee is a longtime member, a fact he omits in his letter.

Slee fails to even mention the 1949 Chinese Revolution, which overthrew capitalist/landlord rule and ripped China

*continued on page 11*



TROTSKY

### The Deception of Bourgeois Democracy

In his classic work, *The State and Revolution*, written on the eve of the 1917 October Revolution, Bolshevik leader V.I. Lenin explained that capitalist democracy is nothing but a fig leaf for the class dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. Pointing to the lessons drawn by Karl Marx from the experience of the 1871 Paris Commune, when the proletariat briefly held power, Lenin argued that only under the dictatorship of the proletariat would the state serve the inter-

ests of the working masses on the road to a classless world communist society.

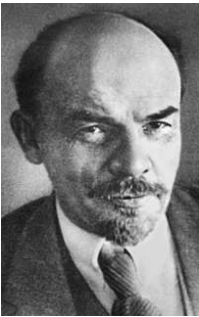
In capitalist society, providing it develops under the most favourable conditions, we have a more or less complete democracy in the democratic republic. But this democracy is always hemmed in by the narrow limits set by capitalist exploitation, and consequently always remains, in effect, a democracy for the minority, only for the propertied classes, only for the rich. Freedom in capitalist society always remains about the same as it was in the ancient Greek republics: freedom for the slave-owners. Owing to the conditions of capitalist exploitation, the modern wage slaves are so crushed by want and poverty that “they cannot be bothered with democracy,” “cannot be bothered with politics”; in the ordinary, peaceful course of events, the majority of the population is debarred from participation in public and political life....

Democracy for an insignificant minority, democracy for the rich—that is the democracy of capitalist society....

Marx grasped this *essence* of capitalist democracy splendidly when, in analysing the experience of the Commune, he said that the oppressed are allowed once every few years to decide which particular representative of the oppressing class shall represent and repress them in parliament!

But from this capitalist democracy—that is inevitably narrow and stealthily pushes aside the poor, and is therefore hypocritical and false through and through—forward development does not proceed simply, directly and smoothly, towards “greater and greater democracy,” as the liberal professors and petty-bourgeois opportunists would have us believe. No, forward development, i.e., development towards communism, proceeds through the dictatorship of the proletariat, and cannot do otherwise, for the *resistance* of the capitalist exploiters cannot be *broken* by anyone else or in any other way.

—V. I. Lenin, *The State and Revolution* (1917)



LENIN

## Communiqué from Wikiality

23 March 2007

Dear Editor

It is wrong and incongruous for a radical publication like *Workers Vanguard* to line up with the media and academic establishment against Wikipedia (‘Wikipedia: A Million Monkeys Typing’, 16 March 2007). Clearly Wikipedia has no place in scholarship or the courtroom—but neither does any other encyclopedia! (And, no, Jimmy Wales Voltaire!) Wikipedia is, however, a valid source for informal information seeking and sharing. While it has serious quality control problems, it is less biased and more informative than mainstream alternatives. While you scream blue murder over minor Wiki hoaxes, you quote with approval the *New York Times*, which was caught redhanded in the WMD mass deception. You also endorse defamation law, which has always been used to stifle dissent and to protect the rich and fatuous. You don’t have to buy the guff about ‘digital democracy’ to see the Internet’s potential for voluntary, non-commercial, co-operative activity. And contrary to your argument about scientific accuracy and authority, reputable scientists do use open websites to bypass the monopoly of academic publishers. The Left should be making use of this opening, not backing big business and intellectual insiders. So much for your socialist and democratic credentials—but then that was summoned up in the headline about a ‘million monkeys’!

Niall C.

### WV replies:

We knew that our article on Wikipedia, which is available on our Web site, would ruffle some feathers. If Niall C. and others want to use Wikipedia for “informal information” (i.e., information you can’t trust), so be it. Unfortunately, Wikipedia does not describe itself with such modesty. We will add that it is absurd to claim that because we quoted the *New York*

*Times*, we’re somehow alibiing their role in the government’s “weapons of mass destruction” lies. Deceit, manipulation and cynical “spin” are part of the normal workings of the bourgeois system and its media mouthpieces. Nonetheless, what the *Times* wrote about Wikipedia—that there are “dozens of accounts of people editing entries to suit their own business or personal interests, or their biases”—is undeniably true. And the *Times*, unlike Wikipedia, can be held accountable for its reporting, since it has an editorial board made up of actual people with real names.

As for the claim that we endorse defamation law, we note, as Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels taught long ago, that bourgeois law sanctifies and protects the dictatorship of the capitalist class. And defamation law is no different. On principle, we oppose bringing the bourgeois courts into the disputes of the workers movement. In 1981, we defended the British *Socialist Organiser*, then the newspaper of Labourite leftist Sean Matgamna’s Workers Action grouping, against a lawsuit by the political bandit Gerry Healy and his Workers Revolutionary Party outfit, which often resorted to Britain’s notorious libel laws to silence political opponents (see “Healyite Libel Suit: An Attack on Workers Movement,” *Spartacist* [English-language edition] No. 31-32, Summer 1981). At the same time, we have used and will use such laws as possible to defend our party and the workers movement more broadly against the forces of the class enemy. See, for example, “Moonies Forced to Retract Deadly Libel,” in WV No. 345, 6 January 1984. We successfully forced a retraction out of the sinister Moonie cult and its *Washington Times*, which charged us with “provoking violence” after a labor/black united-front mobilization we initiated brought out more than 5,000 people to stop the Klan from marching in Washington, D.C., on 27 November 1982. ■

## WORKERS VANGUARD

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

DIRECTOR OF PARTY PUBLICATIONS: Jon Brule

EDITOR: Ray Bishop

EDITOR, YOUNG SPARTACUS PAGES: Elizabeth Johnson

CIRCULATION MANAGER: Barry James

EDITORIAL BOARD: Alan Wilde (managing editor), François Donau (production manager), Bruce André, Bonnie Brodie, Helen Cantor, Ed Clarkson, Paul Cone, Michael Davisson, George Foster, Linda Jarreau, Walter Jennings, James Robertson, Joseph Seymour

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

*Workers Vanguard* (ISSN 0276-0746) published biweekly, except skipping three alternate issues in June, July and August (beginning with omitting the second issue in June) and skipping the last issue in December, by the Spartacist Publishing Co., 299 Broadway, Suite 318, New York, NY 10007. Telephone: (212) 732-7862 (Editorial), (212) 732-7861 (Business). Address all correspondence to: Box 1377 GPO, New York, NY 10116. E-mail address: [vanguard@tiac.net](mailto:vanguard@tiac.net). Domestic subscriptions: \$10.00/21 issues. Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *Workers Vanguard*, Box 1377 GPO, New York, NY 10116.

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

The closing date for news in this issue is April 10.

No. 890

13 April 2007

## In Honor of Three Women Leaders of the ICL

The Prometheus Research Library is proud to announce the publication of *Prometheus Research Series* No. 6, “Selected Speeches and Writings in Honor of Three Women Leaders of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist): Martha Phillips, Susan Adams, Elizabeth King Robertson.” This bulletin in memory of three outstanding comrades is testimony to the highest human endeavor and political purpose: the struggle to forge a revolutionary, internationalist, proletarian vanguard to fight for new October Revolutions, the necessary first step toward liberating humanity through the creation of classless communist society.

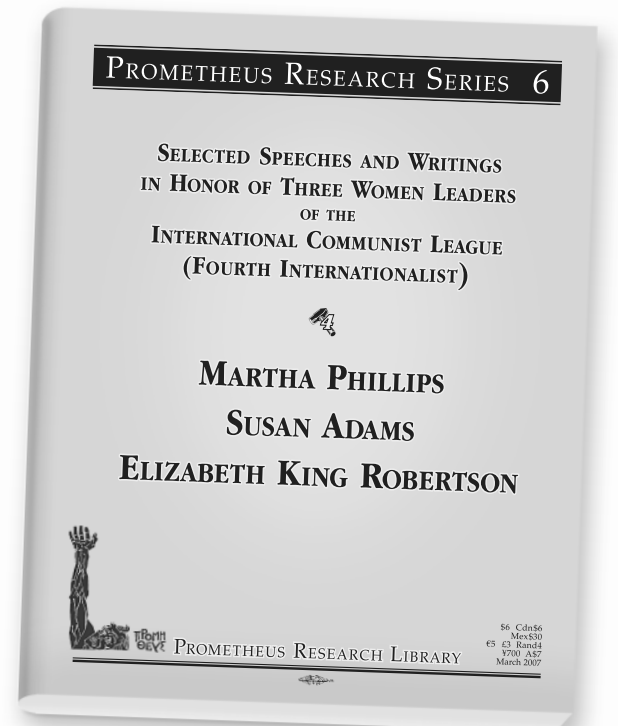
The Prometheus Research Library is the central reference archive of the Spartacist League/U.S. Somewhat different in scope from previous publications in the *Prometheus Research Series*, which have focused on key historical documents and writings, this new publication adds dimension to the PRL’s purpose to collect, preserve and make available the historical record of the international workers movement. In this purpose, there is an unbroken revolutionary continuity reaching back to Lenin and Trotsky’s Bolsheviks. The PRL staff and comrades who designed the bulletin were guided by a biographical tribute produced by the Russian Communist Party (Bolshevik) Central Committee Department for the Study of the History of the October Revolution and the RKP(b), *In Memoriam to the Fighters of the Proletarian Revolution*,

rade Karl Marx ably describes what animated Martha Phillips, Susan Adams, and Elizabeth Robertson:

“For Marx was above all else a revolutionist. His real mission in life was to contribute, in one way or another, to the overthrow of capitalist society and of the state institutions which it had brought into being, to contribute to the liberation of the modern proletariat, which *he* was the first to make conscious of its own positions and its needs, conscious of the conditions of its emancipation. *Fighting was his element.*”

The chronicle presented here of the lives of these women, as told through tributes by their closest comrades, is also a powerful and anecdotal narrative of the political history of the Spartacist League/ICL at crucial turning points in world history. All three women gave their utmost to build the Leninist-Trotskyist party necessary to lead the proletariat to victory. Our party’s founding of a youth organization, establishment of trade-union fractions, our international extension, codifying Leninist organizational norms, training new cadre, selecting and testing a leadership were in no small measure the work of these three women.

The interrelation of the individual with objective forces in history is highlighted in the role these women played in the ICL’s fight to defend and extend the October Revolution. Martha Phillips was a leader in the ICL’s fight to reimplant the authentic history and program of Lenin and Trotsky’s Bolshevik Party in the



Adams’ work is an affirmation that communism lives in the proletarian struggle against racist, capitalist exploitation around the world.

Our own party was not immune to the reactionary pressures of the political period. Elizabeth Robertson played a leading role in our struggle to reconstruct a badly damaged party, including through extraordinary, unsparing examination of her own role—a capacity rarely seen in any walk of life. In pushing herself, when she was already very ill, Lizzy set an example for political accountability of every party cadre. Her careful, thoughtful, well-researched work, codified in the ICL’s international organizational rules and guidelines, is vital in the continual struggle to build a democratic-centralist international that Lenin and Trotsky would recognize as their own.

An examination of the lives and work of Martha Phillips, Susan Adams, and Elizabeth Robertson is rich in political lessons for all our comrades, and especially the youth, who carry a special responsibility in the party-wide struggle for revolutionary continuity. Trotsky addressed his remarks to the youth when assessing the meaning of the loss of his comrade Kote Tsintsadze:

“The Communist parties in the West have not yet brought up fighters of Tsintsadze’s type. This is their besetting weakness, determined by historical reasons but nonetheless a weakness. The Left Opposition in the Western countries is not an exception in this respect and it must well take note of it.

“Especially for the Opposition youth, the example of Tsintsadze can and should serve as a lesson. Tsintsadze was the living negation of any kind of political careerism, that is, the inclination to sacrifice principles, ideas, and tasks of the cause for personal ends. This does not in the least rule out justified revolutionary ambition. No, political ambition plays a very important part in the struggle. But the revolutionary begins where personal ambition is fully and wholly subordinated to the service of a great idea, voluntarily submitting to and merging with it. Flirtation with ideas or dilettante dabbling with them for personal advantage is what Tsintsadze pitilessly condemned both through his life and his death. His was the ambition of unshakable revolutionary loyalty. It should serve as a lesson to the proletarian youth.”

—“At the Fresh Grave of Kote Tsintsadze,”  
7 January 1931

We believe Trotsky would have recognized these three women as comrades of the caliber of Kote Tsintsadze. ■



*Who Died in 1917-1921* (Moscow-Leningrad: Gosizdat, 1925). A graphical motif from the volume was recovered and reproduced on the dedication page of *Prometheus Research Series* No. 6.

Our 96-page bulletin, including 15 pages of photographs, may be ordered for \$7.00 from Spartacist Publishing Company (see ad below).

We reprint below the Introduction to *PRS* No. 6, by the Prometheus Research Library Staff.

\* \* \*

Martha Phillips, Susan Adams, and Elizabeth King Robertson were cherished comrades whose lives were tragically cut short when they were in their prime as revolutionary communist leaders. We remember them in this *Prometheus Research Series* bulletin because there is a great deal to be learned from their purposeful lives. Here, memory is a political act. Too often, eulogies tilt toward hagiographies, smoothing out foibles to elevate mortals to mythological stature. Saints don’t lead proletarian socialist revolutions. Exceptional people dedicated to a political purpose do: people like Martha Phillips, Susan Adams, and Elizabeth King Robertson.

This bulletin includes only a selection from the international outpouring of speeches and letters about Martha Phillips, Susan Adams, and Elizabeth Robertson. A guide to further reading about them, and to articles written by them, is included as an appendix.

These three women were top cadre of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist), i.e., the ICL. That they awakened to political consciousness through struggles against the American imperialist war in Vietnam, the struggle for black freedom, and for women’s rights is not in itself so unusual for women of their generation. What is remarkable and atypical of their generation, however, is that they remained steadfast in their commitment to proletarian revolution, long after most radicals of that era made peace with the capitalist order and wrote off revolutionary politics as indiscretions of youth in heady times.

What Friedrich Engels said at the funeral of his com-

Soviet Union. Martha was murdered at her post in Moscow in February 1992. The ICL waged an international campaign to press for an investigation into this heinous crime, but it remains unsolved.

Susan Adams, who played a leading role in the ICL’s American section and then the French section, picked up the banner and continued the fight to build the nucleus of a Trotskyist party in Russia, after the capitalist counter-revolution had rolled back the gains of the October 1917 Russian Revolution. Trotsky described the Soviet Union under Stalinist rule as a degenerated workers state—despite the usurpation of political power by a bureaucracy, the economic benefits of collectivization of industry remained. The destruction of the Soviet Union was a huge blow to the international working class. Political consciousness was hurled back, while triumphant capitalist rulers push the lie that “communism is dead.” Susan

### PROMETHEUS RESEARCH SERIES

#### No. 1: Guidelines on the Organizational Structure of Communist Parties, on the Methods and Content of Their Work

Complete and accurate English translation of 1921 Comintern Resolution from final German text. (August 1988)  
94 pages \$6

#### No. 2: Documents on the “Proletarian Military Policy”

Includes materials from the Trotskyist movement in the U.S. and Europe during World War II. (February 1989)  
102 pages \$9

#### No. 3: In Memoriam, Richard S. Fraser: An Appreciation and Selection of His Work

A selection of the writings of comrade Richard S. Fraser (1913-1988), who pioneered the Trotskyist understanding of black oppression in the United States. (August 1990)  
108 pages \$7

**Order from/pay to:** Spartacist Publishing Company, Box 1377 GPO, New York, NY 10116

To order multiple copies and for international prices, write to the above address or send e-mail to [pri.ny@verizon.net](mailto:pri.ny@verizon.net)

#### No. 4: Yugoslavia, East Europe and the Fourth International: The Evolution of Pabloist Liquidationism

By Jan Norden. Covers the internal discussion within the Fourth International over its flawed response to the Yugoslav Revolution and the 1948 Tito-Stalin split. (March 1993)  
70 pages \$7

#### No. 5: Marxist Politics or Unprincipled Combinationism? Internal Problems of the Workers Party

Max Shachtman’s document from the 1936 internal bulletin of the Workers Party of the U.S. Includes introduction and glossary by PRL and appendices. (September 2000)  
88 pages \$7

*Prometheus Research Series* prices include shipping and handling.



# Torture...

(continued from page 1)

Freedom”; preparations were made for the one-sided slaughter of Iraq. Today, U.S. forces are bogged down in the murderous Iraq occupation, while the CIA’s “rendition” of “terror suspects” to torture chambers around the world and domestic spying operations in the U.S. are widely known. All this combines to further damage the facade of American “democracy,” at home and abroad. It is to repair that damage and reinforce the powers of the capitalist state that the Democratic Party, and even some Republicans, are chastising the Bush gang. Thus a *New York Times* (25 March) editorial complained that Guantánamo “has profoundly damaged this nation’s credibility as a champion of justice and human rights.”

Frame-ups, spying, infiltration, terror and legally sanctioned murder (otherwise known as the death penalty) have long been part of the everyday workings of government in the U.S., whether under Democratic or Republican administrations. The veneer of “democracy” is meant to cover the reality of the capitalist state—with its cops, courts, prisons and army—as an apparatus of violence designed to protect capitalist profits and rule against the exploited and the oppressed. This murderous apparatus has been greatly bolstered by the “war on terror.” But as sinister as the new measures are, what the government is actually able to get away with will ultimately be determined by the level of social struggle.

U.S. imperialism’s current difficulties should provide an opening to mobilize the proletariat in struggle against the capitalist rulers and their wars at home and abroad. This perspective requires fighting against the political ties, forged by the union tops and reinforced by the reformist left, that bind the working masses to the Democratic Party.

## The Case of Jose Padilla

The Kafkaesque web of the “war on terror” is epitomized by the ordeal of Jose Padilla, a U.S. citizen who was seized at Chicago’s O’Hare airport in May 2002 as an “enemy combatant” and disappeared into a Navy brig in South Carolina. For three years and eight months, Padilla was held in a nine-by-seven-foot cell whose windows were blacked out and denied access to his attorney, much less visits with his family. The extreme sensory deprivation he underwent was punctuated by blasts of harsh light and loud, pounding noise. He could only leave his cell fully shackled and wearing blinkered goggles and headphones.

Charged with no crime, Jose Padilla was trapped in a legal netherworld. Initially, the government invented the tale that he was part of an Al Qaeda plot to set off a “dirty bomb” in the U.S. His lawyers succeeded in challenging his detention in a New York federal court in December

2003. The government’s contention that that court had no jurisdiction over someone being held in South Carolina was upheld by the Supreme Court the following year. Padilla’s attorneys then successfully challenged Padilla’s detention in a South Carolina federal court in February 2005, with the judge ordering that he be charged with a criminal offense or else be released.

The government eventually charged Padilla with vague criminal charges of involvement in a terrorist conspiracy and had him transferred to a Miami jail. The “dirty bomb” plot was dropped like yesterday’s “weapons of mass destruction.” For one thing, the source for the “dirty bomb” tale was none other than Khalid Shaikh Mohammed, whom the government dared not have testify. Mohammed has since stated that he falsely implicated several people as a result of his being tortured.

Most recently Padilla’s attorneys brought psychologists to court to testify that he had been broken under the torture he was subjected to by his interrogators,



**December 2006: Jose Padilla in black-out goggles outside his solitary confinement cell. Despite being tortured by sensory deprivation and other methods, Padilla was ruled fit to stand trial.**

which included being injected with a “truth serum” that his lawyers believe was either LSD or PCP (a well-documented CIA and military interrogation “technique” as an adjunct to sensory deprivation). When his lawyers argued that Padilla was thus incompetent to stand trial, the prosecution countered that the psychologist’s tests were invalid because they had taken place while Padilla had been handcuffed...by his jailers! The incompetence claim was dismissed, and Padilla will stand trial for terrorist conspiracy, a charge so purposely elastic that the government can fill it with whatever content it conjures up.

As the Spartacist League and Partisan Defense Committee argued in an *amici curiae* (friends of the court) brief filed on behalf of Padilla in July 2003:

“The ‘war against terrorism’ is a fiction, a political construct, not a military reality. It is a political crusade conducted in the name of ridding society of a perceived evil. It is no more a ‘war’ in a military sense than ‘war against cancer,’ ‘war against obesity,’ or a ‘war against immorality.’ Like the ‘war against communism’ and the ‘war against drugs,’ this ‘war’ is a pretext to increase the state’s police powers and repressive apparatus, constricting the democratic rights of the population. The Executive’s declaration that its ‘war against terrorism’ forfeits constitutional protections for designated individuals echoes the regimes of shahs and colonels and presidents ‘for life’ from the Near East to Africa to Latin America, to justify the mass imprisonment and unmarked graves of political dissidents. Like them, the Executive is proclaiming the *right to disappear* citizens of its choosing.”

This has been the fate of hundreds, if not thousands, of foreign “terror suspects” around the world who have been kidnapped and disappeared, kept in CIA secret prisons where they are subject to “enhanced” interrogation—the new Orwellian term for old-fashioned torture. The kidnapping and unlawful detention of Jose Padilla exemplify how measures first enacted against non-citizen “terror suspects” can be expanded to encompass citizens as well. As our *amici* brief warned in recalling the infamous 1857 Dred Scott decision in which Supreme Court Justice Taney declared that black people “had no rights which the white man was bound to respect”: “If the imperial President is upheld, Padilla’s detention threatens to become the Dred Scott case of our time, a declaration that: ‘Citizens have no

rights that the government is bound to respect’.” *Free Jose Padilla!*

## Government Terror Network

Last month marked the first time a prisoner at Guantánamo, Australian David Hicks, was brought before a military tribunal, another “innovation” by the Bush administration in an attempt to get around Geneva Convention rules. Hicks has been caged at Guantánamo for more than five years. At the tribunal, no evidence was presented of his involvement in any purported “terror” attacks. Two of Hicks’ lawyers were barred from the proceedings. In the end, Hicks copped a plea of guilty to having provided “material support” to a terrorist organization.

The deal included Hicks having to repudiate his own accounts of being “illegally treated”—i.e., tortured—and additionally that he would not file any lawsuits against having been so treated! In exchange, this purported dangerous terrorist was given a nine-month sentence to be served in Australia. It is not difficult to figure out the political arithmetic behind

this sentence. Hicks’ case had ignited an outpouring of hostility against the Bush regime in Australia, where Prime Minister John Howard, a loyal toady of U.S. imperialism, faces elections in a few months. As Hicks’ father put it: “Nine months, a gag order for one year—all overlap the coming elections. I’m very suspicious” (*New York Times*, 1 April). No sooner had the Hicks sentence come down when, back in Washington, the Supreme Court refused to hear an appeal by the hundreds of other Guantánamo prisoners that they be granted *habeas corpus* rights.

The Hicks tribunal elicited the usual howls from bourgeois media and political spokesmen in Europe against Bush. But capitalist governments the world over have whipped up homemade terror scares to augment their own state power. In Britain, the Labour government led by Bush loyalist Tony Blair has unleashed murderous terror against dark-skinned people while repeatedly surrounding predominantly Muslim neighborhoods with cops (see Spartacist League/Britain statement, page 1). In Italy under the popular-front government of Romano Prodi, successor to the right-wing Berlusconi regime, an “anti-terrorist” witchhunt code-named “Operation Sunset” has swept up leftist and trade-union militants, with an accompanying media campaign aimed at demonizing the left and labor movement as a “breeding ground” for terrorism.

An article in *CounterPunch* (March 17/18) titled “The Strange Fruit of Torture—The Confession Backfired” captured the political purpose behind the maintenance of the U.S. terror camp at Guantánamo: “The US government needs ‘dangerous suspects’ that it can use to keep Americans in a state of supine fearfulness and as a front behind which to undermine constitutional protections and the Bill of Rights.” The September 11 attacks gave the U.S. rulers the pretext to put in place repressive measures that they had long sought. A vast state enterprise has been erected with the aim of nothing less than spying on the whole population of the United States.

The government is amassing a huge pool of personal data with which it can conduct a fishing operation to find terrorist “conspirators.” The National Security Agency (NSA) continues its collusion with some major telecommuni-

cations companies to “data mine” the phone records of tens of millions of people, executing warrantless wiretaps of phone and Internet communications. In the past three years, the FBI has served some 44,000 “national security letters” on libraries, phone companies and other businesses demanding the records of anyone deemed to be “relevant” to an investigation “against international terrorism or clandestine intelligence activities” (*Wired News*, 16 March). Under the 2005 Real ID Act, plans are being finalized to turn driver’s licenses into a national identity card integrated into a central federal database.

The number of files maintained under the government’s “Terrorist Identities Data-mart Environment” (TIDE) has quadrupled to 435,000 since 2003, with the names of those on “watch lists” distributed to airlines, cops, border guards and U.S. consulates. Putatively aimed at foreign “terror suspects,” TIDE has been described as “a vacuum cleaner for proven and unproven information.” Catherine Stevens, the wife of Alaska’s Republican Senator Ted Stevens, was caught in this massive web last year when she was delayed from flying by interrogators who wanted to know if she was “Cat Stevens,” the British singer and Muslim convert now known as Yusuf Islam who is banned from entering the U.S.

One man on such a list was Maher Arar. A Canadian citizen born in Syria, Arar was detained by U.S. authorities while trying to change planes at JFK. Accused of being a “terrorist” on the basis of bogus information provided by Canadian authorities, Arar was deported to Syria, where he was held in solitary confinement in a coffin-size cell and tortured for nearly a year before being released back to Canada. Arar recently secured an apology and a settlement of \$11.5 million from the Canadian government. But he remains on the State Department’s “watch list.”

In 1969, Black Panther Party (BPP) members Fred Hampton and Mark Clark got a full blast of what it means to be called a “terrorist” when Chicago cops machine-gunned them to death. Thirty-eight years later, the state has not ceased its vendetta against the Panthers. In January, eight former BPP supporters were rounded up on charges of killing a San Francisco policeman in 1971. In 1973, a New Orleans jail was yesterday’s Guantánamo or Abu Ghraib. Three Panthers had plastic bags put tightly on their heads while they were beaten with blackjacks, shocked with electric probes on their genitals; an electric cattle prod was shoved up each man’s anus. Two of them “confessed.” Today these men are smeared in the media as “classic domestic terrorists” while languishing in prison on charges that were thrown out of court in 1975. Meanwhile, Mumia Abu-Jamal, a Black Panther in his youth and later a supporter of Philadelphia MOVE, remains on death row, falsely convicted of killing a Philly cop in 1981 and sentenced to death specifically for views he expressed as a Panther. Free the San Francisco Eight! Free Mumia! Abolish the racist death penalty!

## Labor Must Fight “Anti-Terror” Repression

In creating a climate of fear and intimidation, the government has sought to accustom the population to the restriction of democratic rights and to massive surveillance, aiming to quash not only social struggle but even the expression of dissent. New York City cops were sent around the world to spy on groups intending to protest the Republican National Convention in 2004. These protests were hardly the storming of the Bastille, but were expressions of “Anybody but Bush” politics aimed at winning support for Democratic candidate John Kerry. An internal police memo gives a flavor of the kind of “subversives” the state was hunting. Reporting on a performance of “Bands Against Bush,” the memo intoned: “The mixing of music and political rhetoric indicates sophisticated organizing skills

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

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

In The  
**UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS**  
For The Second Circuit  
Docket No. 03-2225  
03-2438

**JOSE PADILLA**, Donna R. Newman,  
as Next Friend of Jose Padilla,  
Petitioner-Appellee-cross-Appellant,  
v.  
**DONALD RUMSFELD**,  
Respondent-Appellant-cross-Appellee.  
On Appeal from the United States District Court  
for the Southern District of New York

SEE PAGE 2

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

**No. 31, Summer 2003**  
**\$.50 (24 pages)**

**Order from/pay to:**  
PDC, P.O. Box 99, Canal St. Station  
New York, NY 10013-0099

with a specific agenda”!

Unable to feed the hungry or provide jobs for the unemployed while vastly increasing their own fabulous wealth; having left hundreds of poor people, overwhelmingly black, to die in New Orleans; ripping immigrant mothers brought here to toil for pennies from their children in *la migra* raids on factories; leaving mountains of corpses in Iraq and Afghanistan in their drive for world domination—America’s capitalist rulers need their witchhunt as a means to keep those consigned to the bottom of this society in “their place.” Above all, they must suppress the social power of the multiracial working class, for in its hands lies the potential to end the barbarism of capitalist exploitation through socialist revolution.

Some of the bosses’ “labor lieutenants” in the trade-union bureaucracy have gone along with “war on terror” patriotism and anti-immigrant racism in the name of “saving American jobs.” Those union officials who have voiced opposition to the crackdown against immigrants have refused to mobilize the power of labor to fight government repression, working instead to replace Bush’s Republicans with the Democrats. Such class collaboration undermines the unions, which have themselves been targeted by government terror scares. When the West Coast International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) was locked in a showdown with the shipping bosses in 2002, then-Homeland Security chief Tom Ridge intervened to warn that any strike action would be considered a threat to “national security.”

Now the government is bringing its anti-terror laws directly to the unions. Plans are being finalized for a Transportation Worker Identification Credential (TWIC) program under which 750,000 longshoremen, truckers and other port workers must submit to an immigration status review and extensive criminal background check in order to obtain a biometric ID card necessary to maintain their jobs. In a country where millions of minorities have been rounded up and thrown behind bars in the “war on drugs,” this is a particular threat to further devastate the black population. TWIC is also a prescription for an anti-immigrant dragnet, which will be particularly felt on the docks by the overwhelmingly immigrant, non-unionized port truckers.

In January 2002, the Partisan Defense Committee and Bay Area Labor Black League put out the call for a united-front mobilization against the anti-terror laws and in defense of immigrants. On February 9 of that year, some 300 unionists, immigrants, socialists and youth marched in downtown Oakland behind a banner reading: “Anti-Terrorist Laws Target Immigrants, Blacks, Labor—No to the USA-Patriot Act and the Maritime Security Act! Down With the Anti-Immigrant Witchhunt!” At the core of the demonstration was a contingent of 30 mainly black ILWU longshore workers. Although modest, this mobilization was an example of the kind of class-struggle fight that is needed to turn the tide in the government’s anti-terror assault.

**Democrats: The Other Party of U.S. Imperialism**

A growing section of the ruling class is alarmed by the demented character of the “faith-based” denizens of the White House. Among those bourgeois ideologues clamoring for a more rational imperialist policy is Zbigniew Brzezinski, the anti-Communist Dr. Strangelove who served as National Security Advisor to Democratic president Jimmy Carter. In a *Washington Post* (25 March) opinion piece titled “Terrorized by ‘War on Terror’—How a Three-Word Mantra Has Undermined America,” Brzezinski bemoans the “pernicious impact” this “war” has had “on American democracy, on America’s psyche and on U.S. standing in the world.” He continued: “The damage these three words have done—a classic self-inflicted wound—is infinitely greater than any wild dreams entertained by the fanatical



WV Photo



Macor/SF Chronicle

**Above: February 2002 labor-centered Oakland demonstration against “anti-terror” laws and in defense of immigrants, initiated by Partisan Defense Committee and Labor Black League. Left: Port trucker harassed by customs cops at Port of Oakland, October 2001.**

perpetrators of the 9/11 attacks when they were plotting against us in distant Afghan caves.”

Brzezinski should know. He was the godfather of those very fanatics when they were killing Red Army troops in Afghanistan. The Soviets intervened in 1979 at the request of a modernizing nationalist government whose efforts to bring such progress as literacy and a lowering of the bride price met with an uprising of mullahs, tribal chiefs and warlords. The Soviet troops were fighting an eminently just war against the U.S.-armed *mujahedin* in which the freedom of Afghan women from conditions of pre-feudal slavery was directly posed, as was the defense of the Soviet degenerated workers state’s southern border. We said at the time: “Hail Red Army in Afghanistan! Extend social gains of the October Revolution to Afghan peoples!”

When former Soviet president Mikhail Gorbachev sold out to the West and ordered the withdrawal of Soviet troops in 1988-89, the U.S. stopped funneling billions to their Islamic “freedom fighters”—whose number included Osama bin Laden. These reactionary cutthroats would shortly turn on their “infidel” former patrons, enraged in no small part by the maintenance of U.S. military bases in Saudi Arabia.

The real concern of Brzezinski and the Democrats is that the Bush regime is damaging the strategic interests of U.S. imperialism in the Near East and Central Asia. In pushing the Democrats’ plan to get out of Iraq sometime in the sweet by-and-by, Nancy Pelosi declared: “Our bill calls for the redeployment of U.S. troops out of Iraq so that we can focus more fully on the real war on terror, which is in Afghanistan.” This is the line of all the Democratic presidential candidates, from Hillary Clinton to Barack Obama. We say: U.S. out of Iraq and Afghanistan now! Hands off Iran! U.S. hands off the world!

The Democrats have also expressed some dismay over the NSA’s warrant-less wiretapping and the FBI’s national security letters, with all the credibility of the corrupt cop in *Casablanca* who announces that he is “shocked” that there is gambling going on in Rick’s café. Government spying is standard fare, carried out under Democrats and Republicans alike. As Gore Vidal noted in the London *Guardian* (27 April 2002): “Though Bush’s predecessors have generally had rather higher IQs than his, they, too, assiduously serve the 1% that owns the country while

allowing everyone else to drift. Particularly culpable was Bill Clinton.” Vidal noted that it was Clinton who “set in place the trigger for a police state which his successor is now happily squeezing.” For example, Clinton’s 1996 Antiterrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act gutted *habeas corpus* rights for death row prisoners, setting the stage for further erosion of this fundamental democratic right.

The difference between the Democrats and Republicans is not what they do but how they do it. The Republicans make no bones about being the party of “big business” and grinding the working people, blacks, immigrants and the poor into the ground. The Democrats lie and do the same thing. But these lies are an important facade for the rule of U.S. imperialism. Indeed, with their posture as friends of labor and minorities, the Democrats have generally been the bourgeoisie’s preferred party of war, better equipped than the Republicans to sell imperialist military adventures as exercises in “human rights” and “democracy.”

The Democrats are currently in high dudgeon over the firings of eight U.S. attorneys by Attorney General Alberto Gonzales for not being, in the words of one Justice Department official, “loyal Bushies.” The Senate has overturned the president’s power under the USA-Patriot Act to appoint “interim” federal prosecutors to indefinite terms without Senate approval. This is the *only* part of that draconian “anti-terror” law that the Democrats have reversed. This is for a reason: the Democrats want the powers of the imperial presidency in *their* hands.

If one is to believe the grossly misnamed Revolutionary Communist Party (RCP), the Bush government is a “fascist” regime, today’s incarnation of Hitler’s Nazis. The fact is that the administration’s assault on democratic rights and its “war without end” against “terrorism” have been carried out within the framework of bourgeois democracy. Fascism is a mobilization—not in the offices of government but on the streets—of the crazed petty-bourgeoisie and lumpenproletariat whipped into a frenzy to physically destroy the mass organizations of the working class. To defeat the fascist gangs requires the independent mobilization of labor at the head of all the fascists’ intended victims. Invoking fascism to describe Bush is the RCP’s ticket to selling an alliance with the so-called “progressive” bourgeoisie—i.e., the Democrats. That the RCP itself doesn’t believe its own panicked bleatings is demonstrated by the means it puts forward to fight this “fascist” regime: calling for Bush to be impeached!

At protests organized to this end by the RCP’s “World Can’t Wait” front group, a central chant has been the insipid call, “Bush step down.” The RCP’s call to “drive out Bush”—echoed in one form or another by the entire reformist left—coincides with the electoral interests of the Democratic Party. Last year, the RCP was promoting none other than Clinton’s former vice president Al Gore. In an article titled “Al Gore’s Warning” (*Revolution*, 29 January 2006), the RCP proclaimed that a speech by Gore issued some “very sobering warnings about where this country is headed.” Although allowing that Gore was “speaking from within the US imperialist ruling class,” the article ends by declaring that his speech “should serve as a wake up call to all about just how extreme things have gotten.” To paraphrase the old New Left saying, you don’t need a weatherman to know which way the wind of this “fight the right” message blows.

Our brief on behalf of Jose Padilla was rooted in the Marxist understanding that the capitalist state cannot be reformed to serve the interests of the working class and the oppressed. At the same time, as the brief noted, we are tenacious defenders of “our own legality and of those democratic rights won through bourgeois revolutions and revolutionary wars—the parliamentary partisans in the English Civil War, the U.S. Revolutionary War, the French Revolution and the American Civil War.” Those rights, and others gained through social and class struggle, are eminently reversible under capitalist rule.

While we use every legal means at hand to defend such rights, we put all of our faith in the class struggle of the proletariat mobilized in its own class interests and in opposition to the partner parties of capital. We fight for the revolutionary transformation of this country, a proletarian socialist revolution that will end the savage exploitation and brutal racial oppression of capitalist class rule and the barbarism through which it is enforced. Our purpose is to build the workers party necessary to lead the proletariat in that struggle. ■

# WORKERS VANGUARD

**Marxist Working-Class Biweekly of the Spartacist League**

☐ \$10/21 issues of *Workers Vanguard* (includes English-language *Spartacist* and *Black History and the Class Struggle*)  
international rates: \$25/21 issues—Airmail \$10/21 issues—Seamail

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

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

☐ I would like to contribute \$ \_\_\_\_\_ to the production of *Workers Vanguard*.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Apt. # \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

890

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

# France...

(continued from page 12)

component of such an alliance is to support the bourgeoisie and obscure the class line. If the PCF or the SP, which are reformist workers parties, were running independently of all bourgeois parties—which is difficult to imagine today, given how class collaboration is second nature to them—they would be more exposed to pressure from their ranks. PCF members still tell us today that, ten years ago, PCF ministers in Jospin’s government, including Buffet, did everything they could but were constrained by Chevènement or by the other parties. Thus, the popular-front alliance provides a means for the reformist workers parties to conceal their own betrayals.

Lutte Ouvrière (LO) and the LCR avoid saying outright who they will vote for on the second round of the election. But the LCR declares that it is necessary to “get rid of the right in 2007” (*Rouge*, 16 November 2006). As for LO, at their last conference they adopted a document, with 97 percent of the votes, which states in particular: “The masses must not be able to blame our campaign for making the left lose.” Speaking of the “left candidate,” they explicitly consider, among other possibilities, “that we will call for voting for him (or her)” (*Lutte de Classe*, December 2006).

They can deny it all they want, but LO and the LCR serve in this way to channel votes for Royal. Yet the popular front in this country is the chief instrument of class collaboration, chaining the workers to the maintenance of capitalist exploitation. And LO and the LCR disappear the fact that Royal is running on the claim that her racist law-and-order politics are more effective than those of Sarkozy. Already in 2002 Jospin played that game, thus opening the road for [fascist Jean-Marie] Le Pen to reach the second round in the presidential election.

The appetite of reformist workers parties, like the SP and PCF, to form alliances with the bourgeois parties flows from their perspective of managing capitalism. But it is impossible to administer capitalism on behalf of the working class—the workers have already gone through the bitter experience of this with Mitterrand and Jospin. In order to satisfy the essential needs of the working class, workers revolution is necessary to smash the capitalist state and put workers in power through the “dictatorship of the proletariat” against the bourgeoisie’s resistance. The key for victory is forging a Bolshevik party, like the party of Lenin which led the Russian workers to the sei-



AFP photos

Three main French presidential candidates, from left to right: Nicolas Sarkozy, François Bayrou, Ségolène Royal.

zure of power in 1917—a party independent of all wings of the bourgeoisie and dedicated to overthrowing capitalism, not administering it. This is the task we commit ourselves to.

## Marxists and Elections

In his writings on the 1871 Paris Commune, Marx described capitalist parliamentary elections in the following terms: “deciding once in three or six years which member of the ruling class was to misrepresent the people in Parliament” (*The Civil War in France*). Lenin wrote in his fundamental 1918 work *The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky*:

“Take the bourgeois parliament. Can it be that the learned Kautsky has never heard that the *more highly* democracy is developed, the *more* the bourgeois parliaments are subjected by the stock exchange and the bankers? This does not mean that we must not make use of bourgeois parliament (the Bolsheviks made better use of it than probably any other party in the world, for in 1912-14 we won the entire workers’ curia in the Fourth Duma). But it does mean that only a liberal can forget the *historical limitations and conventional nature* of the bourgeois parliamentary system as Kautsky does. Even in the most democratic bourgeois state the oppressed people at every step encounter the crying contradiction between the *formal* equality proclaimed by the ‘democracy’ of the capitalists and the thousands of *real* limitations and subterfuges which turn the proletarians into *wage-slaves*. It is precisely this contradiction that is opening the eyes of the people to the rottenness, mendacity and hypocrisy of capitalism. It is this contradiction that the agitators and propagandists of socialism are constantly exposing to the people, *in order to prepare* them for revolution!”

Further on, Lenin continues to hammer this point home:

“The working people are *barred* from participation in bourgeois parliaments (they *never decide* important questions under bourgeois democracy, which are decided by the stock exchange and the banks) by thousands of obstacles.”

Democratic forms of government are a particularly efficient way to conceal the nature of the state as a dictatorship of the bourgeoisie over the exploited and oppressed masses. This holds particularly true in the most advanced, the most “democratic” capitalist countries like France, where parliamentary traditions exist mainly to give a democratic veneer to decisions made, as underlined by Lenin, in the stock exchanges, clubs and dinner parties of the big bourgeoisie.

Nevertheless, we have, in the past, presented a candidate in a parliamentary election. In 1988, we ran a worker from Renault-Cléon [auto plant] against [the SP’s] Laurent Fabius. Communists seek to have deputies in parliament in order to use this as a platform for revolutionary opposition to capitalism, its state, its government, its parties and its social-democratic lackeys.

However, this is different from a presidential election, in which one is running to become the chief of French imperialism. The president is the head of the army and has enormous powers, in particular in France. He can declare martial law, dissolve parliament, etc. The positions of president, and of mayor on the local level, are not parliamentary offices that can be used as platforms to oppose the system. They are executive offices of the bourgeois state—the mayor and the president execute the decisions taken by the bourgeoisie.

## The Bourgeois State: Special Bodies of Armed Men to Maintain Capitalism

At bottom, the bourgeois state consists of special bodies of armed men like the police, prison guards and the army itself, which have a monopoly on legal violence. They exist to maintain capitalist domination over the working class and the oppressed. This means suppressing strikes, as when the riot police break up a picket line, or “restoring order” against spontaneous rebellions such as the *ban-*

*lieue* youth revolt in October-November 2005, or suppressing uprisings in Central Africa or Chad, which threaten French imperialism’s local client dictators. We fight for the *withdrawal of all French troops from Africa, as well as from Lebanon, Afghanistan and the Balkans*.

The police, prison guards and officer corps are volunteer forces. They sign up to administer repression and are thus deeply dedicated to defending their bourgeois order. They cannot be co-opted to serve the working class in the course of a socialist revolution. We are against cops in the trade unions because the unions are workers organizations, in spite of their pro-capitalist leadership. The Bolshevik Revolution smashed the armed bodies of the bourgeoisie, and workers power rested on new armed bodies of men, the workers militias in the factories. These were subordinate to the soviets [workers councils] and to the Red Army built by Trotsky in 1918.

Under capitalism, executive power, such as the office of president, means assuming responsibility for commanding these armed bodies on behalf of the bourgeoisie. It is the same with the mayor at the municipal level. He has police powers under the control of the prefect. Lenin, in reaffirming the lessons drawn by Marx and Engels from the 1848 revolutions and, above all, from the Paris Commune, explained how the bourgeois state cannot be used by the working class; it must be destroyed and replaced by proletarian power, by workers councils based upon the armed proletariat. In other words, one cannot become mayor or president and use this office to serve the oppressed. One either becomes hostage to the office and does the bourgeoisie’s dirty work or is promptly fired by the bourgeoisie.

Since we refuse to administer the bourgeois state, we have always rejected assuming executive office, whether that of president or mayor. Consequently, we do not run for election to such posts. We formally adopted the latter position at our recent international conference.

This is new inasmuch as Trotskyists did not object to running in such elections—including at the time of Trotsky and [James P.] Cannon, Trotsky’s collaborator in the U.S., who led the American Trotskyist party until the 1950s. This was also the position we previously stated in 2004 in our journal *Spartacist*, while underlining then that it is principled “as long as our candidates explain beforehand that they have no intention of assuming such offices if elected and make clear why it is necessary to forge a workers government to expropriate the capitalists and sweep away their machinery of class oppression.”

# JOIN THE CAMPAIGN TO FREE MUMIA!

The case of death row political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal is at a critical juncture: the Third Circuit Court of Appeals has set a hearing date for May 17 in Philadelphia. We must mobilize now to win his freedom!

## 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!* 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

e-mail: [partisandefense@earthlink.net](mailto:partisandefense@earthlink.net) • Web site: [www.partisandefense.org](http://www.partisandefense.org)  
P.O. Box 99, Canal Street Station, New York, NY 10013 • (212) 406-4252  
P.O. Box 802867, Chicago, IL 60680 • (312) 563-0442  
P.O. Box 29574, Los Feliz Station, Los Angeles, CA 90029 • (213) 380-8897  
P.O. Box 77462, San Francisco, CA 94107 • (510) 839-0852

## Now in English, German and French! Order Bundles Now!

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.

**\$1** (48 pages)  
Bundles: 15 copies for \$10

**Order from/pay to:**  
Partisan Defense Committee  
P.O. Box 99  
Canal Street Station  
New York, NY 10013





However, after further examining this question we have reconsidered our position. As our recent conference document states: “The problem with running for executive offices is that it lends legitimacy to prevailing and reformist conceptions of the state.” Our entire purpose is to bring to workers the understanding that in any socialist revolution the bourgeois state must be destroyed and replaced by the dictatorship of the proletariat. Lenin taught this, and all history has proven it. To run in elections for executive office thus represents an obstacle to our strategic goal.

Our reformist opponents, like their forebears in the Second International a century ago, seek only to reform capitalism, not to lead a socialist revolution. Thus, they have no qualms about their organizations being financed by the capitalist state. LO and the LCR feast at the trough provided by the government. As recently as January 25, the *Journal Officiel de la République Française* [the official publication of French state documents] declared that state contributions to LO for 2005 totaled nearly half a million euros—more than one-fifth of LO’s total income. LO was thus able to afford a recent poster publicity campaign at a cost of around one million euros, which is more than their members’ entire annual dues payments. LO boasted that not only was the expense covered by bourgeois

January 2004). Turn on your TV these days and you are bound to see [LO candidate Arlette] Laguiller or Besancenot answering questions about what they will do if elected president—ban layoffs, build schools and housing, reduce capitalist profits—their “radical reforms,” as the LCR manifesto terms them. Their campaign simply feeds the illusion that capitalism can be administered in the interests of the oppressed, provided that the right person is elected to executive office.

We refuse to run in presidential elections, but this does not mean that we are indifferent to such elections and the democratic rights associated with them. Militants from the Third World, where the right to vote is often trampled upon, exhort us at times to use this right out of fear of losing it. In Mexico, where the right-wing government wanted to prevent the bourgeois populist López Obrador from running by removing his immunity to make him ineligible, we opposed this measure and defended the right of the Mexican people to vote for López Obrador, while at the same time arguing against voting for this “left” bourgeois.

Likewise, we do not reject in principle the idea of giving critical support to another workers organization in particular circumstances, including in a presidential election when it draws a crude class line—that is, for working-class independ-



AFF

August 2006: French imperialist forces in UN patrol in Lebanon.

breeds racist discrimination, “clean up” operations against Roma [Gypsy] camps, racist allocation of public housing in the name of “social diversity,” etc.

At the time of the *banlieue* revolt in the fall of 2005, the PCF called for re-establishing order. They criticized Sarkozy for being unable to maintain social order and for having instead stoked the unrest with his incendiary speeches. Yet during this period, the LCR spent most of its time in the PCF’s tow, trying to consolidate an “anti-liberal” popular-front bloc for the 2007 elections.

Besancenot’s solidarity with *banlieue* youth has its limits. In front of millions of TV viewers on February 8 on the program “*A Vous de Juger*,” Besancenot was asked if he was for “neighborhood police.” He answered, “Why not?” He only objected to them having Tasers, American electric-shock stun guns that have caused hundreds of deaths in the U.S. Besancenot has just signed the “Social and Citizens Contract,” which is based on the list of grievances established by the ACLEFEU group in Clichy-sous-Bois. This list says that “the police must be exemplary,” and it demands neighborhood police as well as police who are more representative of “French diversity,” etc., etc.

In the 32-page LCR manifesto (adopted “almost unanimously”), the *banlieues* are mentioned on only one occasion, and this is what they have to say about them:

“In response to increased violence in some neglected neighborhoods, which hits the poorest hardest, and in response to social insecurity, increased repression is the proposed solution. This has never solved problems or even led to improving the situation.”

This is formulated in such a way as to leave open just who is responsible for the “increased violence.” Sarkozy says those responsible are youth who attack impoverished French people. We say the main source of the violence is racist capitalism, with its attendant poverty, unemployment and discrimination, as well as the bourgeois state with its daily harassment and roundups of youth.

Lutte Ouvrière does not have much to say on this question right now. They attack Royal on how high the minimum wage should be or warn that she will not carry out her promises. We, on the contrary, think that if Royal is elected, she *will* implement her law-and-order proposals. Fundamentally, LO shares the same vision as Royal and ACLEFEU on how to deal with the “problem” of *banlieue* youth: repression with one hand and prevention with the other, neighborhood police on the one hand and increased spending on education with the other.

This is the way LO collaborates with its own bourgeoisie, even if, unlike the LCR, Lutte Ouvrière generally abstains from seeking electoral blocs with petty-bourgeois partners. This is also why, during the *banlieue* revolt, LO signed a declaration distributed by the League of the Rights of Man that called for re-establishing order. LO then issued a wishy-washy retraction, saying that their signature had been “a blunder of course, but a minor one.” This betrayal went hand in hand with LO’s leading role in the expulsions of young veiled women from schools, which culminated in the racist

Chirac-Ferry law against the Islamic headscarf.

## The “Welfare State” and the Soviet Union

Besancenot says that “it is simply necessary to do exactly what the bosses have done for the past 30 years—but in reverse” (*Rouge*, 15 February). Except that one cannot simply turn back the clock 30 years. At that time, the Soviet Union existed, and many advanced workers saw in it proof that it is possible to set up a society where the capitalist class is expropriated. It was, in large part, fear of the Soviet Union—which had its tanks 500 kilometers from Strasbourg and a strong Communist Party in the French *banlieues* and factories—that explained the concessions made by the bourgeoisie in the face of workers’ struggles. The bourgeoisie was prepared to accept a lower rate of profit out of fear of losing everything. That was the basis for the “welfare state.”

The reformists are nostalgic for the welfare state. Restoring the welfare state constitutes their entire political perspective. However, they rejoiced 15 years ago when the Soviet Union, on which this welfare state was indirectly based, was destroyed. The LCR itself directly supported capitalist counterrevolutionary forces in Poland and in the Soviet Union. Today they want to go back 30 years, but that would mean jumping over their own role in the 1980s Cold War against the Soviet Union. Their anti-communism appears throughout their manifesto:

“After the disillusionment of the 20th century, after the collapse of the caricatures of socialism which the Stalinist dictatorships represented, we must continue working toward the future. From the negative experiences of yesterday, we have lessons to draw. But, having learned what must not be done, we have also won the right to create the future that we want and to begin to build it.”

They simply disappear the Russian Revolution by making an implicit amalgam between October 1917 and its Stalinist degeneration. While a bureaucratic caste represented by Stalin usurped political power in the Soviet Union starting in 1924, this was not the result of an inherent flaw in Bolshevism. On the contrary, the parasitic bureaucracy was consolidated as a result of the failure of the 1923 German Revolution and the fact that the working class in power was isolated in a country where the backward peasantry was numerically dominant and which was encircled by hostile capitalist powers. With “socialism in one country” and “peaceful coexistence” with imperialism, Stalin provided the bureaucracy with a program. It resulted in the betrayal of revolutions elsewhere and ultimately brought about the restoration of capitalist rule in Russia by Yeltsin in 1991-92.

Unlike LO and the LCR, our program for socialist revolution in the capitalist countries goes hand in hand with our defense of the workers states, which are based on the liquidation of the capitalist profit system, whatever the deformations of these states and whatever the politics of the treacherous Stalinist bureaucracy. We defended the Soviet Union up to the very end. In East Germany in 1989,

*continued on page 8*



March 10: Protest in Brittany against French government’s deportation of immigrant workers from Mali.

state funds but that, in addition, it was not that expensive for the “taxpayers” (*Lutte Ouvrière*, 15 December 2006). The same applies to the LCR, which got a little more than half a million euros in 2005. As the saying goes, he who pays the piper calls the tune.

And the LCR and their comrades internationally do not even have a problem volunteering to directly administer the bourgeois state. Already in November 1990, Hanspeter Uster, a leader of the LCR’s sister section in Switzerland, was elected minister of justice and the police in the canton of Zug. Five years ago, Miguel Rossetto, a Brazilian comrade of the LCR, entered Lula’s capitalist government.

Today [LCR candidate Olivier] Besancenot is quite willing to participate in a government provided that it is “anti-capitalist.” The LCR states in its special election manifesto: “The LCR will assume its responsibilities in such a government.” But since they think that proletarian revolution is today utopian and *passé*—just good for “far leftists” like us—and since in 2003 they even officially renounced the dictatorship of the proletariat, their government can only be “anti-capitalist” in name. Besancenot fights for a “democratic revolution” and a “social and democratic break.” In other words, he wants to give social democracy a new coat of paint. Before 1981, Mitterrand used similar verbiage about “breaking with capitalism”—before getting elected to run French imperialism and reinforce capitalist austerity and in that capacity sending 25,000 French soldiers to participate in the war against Iraq in 1991.

Like the LCR, Lutte Ouvrière officially renounced the dictatorship of the proletariat in 2003. At their congress that year, they unanimously adopted the formula of the “democratic dictatorship of the proletariat” (*Lutte de Classe*, December 2003-

ence from the bourgeoisie. However, in the particular case of this year’s election, there is no one to whom we can offer critical support.

The LCR itself is totally popular-frontist—it is mired in all kinds of political blocs with bourgeois elements, like the social forums financed by Chirac, the Brazilian capitalist government and NGOs such as the Ford Foundation, which is linked to the CIA. The LCR’s electoral manifesto glorifies these social forums: “Resistance to liberal counter-reforms and anti-globalization movements have laid the basis for a new internationalism.” This has certainly nothing to do with proletarian internationalism.

Neither the LCR nor LO is running as a class alternative to the popular front, but rather as a vote to pressure the popular front a bit to the left. Thus, Laguiller stated (*Lutte Ouvrière*, 9 February):

“So, on the first round of the presidential election next April, workers must reject this right wing which is carrying out policies openly in the interest of the wealthiest. But at the same time they must assert that they do not trust Ségolène Royal to carry out different policies and that [my emphasis] *she must take into account the discontent which has for years been growing among the working masses.*”

## The Left and the Banlieues

In this electoral campaign, the PCF has a few words to offer concerning racism against *banlieue* youth. Indeed, they still retain a base in many working-class neighborhoods, which they run or aspire to run at the municipal level. The PCF hopes to win the votes of some minority workers and of some of those minority youth who, fearing a Sarkozy victory, registered to vote last year. However, the very nature of municipalism is that it must manage capitalist scarcity which, including in the PCF municipalities, inevitably

(continued from page 7)

To get back to France, Besancenot wants to go back 30 years in time and, as he never fails to say, such a demand does not equal revolution. Thirty years ago, Chirac was elected mayor of Paris, the first one since the 1871 Commune, and Prime Minister Raymond Barre was officially decreeing austerity. One has to be profoundly demoralized and imbued with the spirit of “death of communism” to want to go back to that. As for Laguiller, she says almost word for word the same thing as Besancenot:

## The Reformism of the LCR and LO

Of course, workers are not ready to immediately accomplish their historic task of overthrowing capitalism. The capitalist counterrevolution in the Soviet Union certainly did not open up new perspectives, as our reformist opponents pro-

Non à la loi raciste contre les jeunes  
qui portent le foulard!

Plains droits & citoyenneté pour tous les immigrés!

pour la libération des femmes par la révolution socialiste!

Ligue trotskyste de France/LCI

## Le Bolchévik

claimed it would on the grounds that Stalinism had finally been defeated. On the contrary, it led to a deep political demoralization among the most advanced workers. The bourgeoisie launched a relentless triumphalist campaign over the “death of communism.” The reason the bourgeoisie is so insistent is that it fully understands that communism remains on the agenda and that it must continually convince the workers that there is no alternative to capitalism. Trotsky wrote in the Transitional Program in 1938:

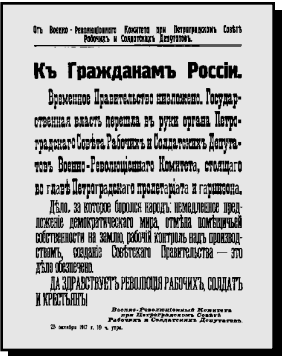
ests. For Trotsky, however: "If the abolition of business secrets is a necessary condition to workers' control, then control is the first step along the road to the socialist guidance of the economy." When Trotsky speaks of expropriating the large capitalist combines, he specifies that "we call on the masses to rely only upon their own revolutionary strength; we link up the question of expropriation with that of seizure of power by the workers and farmers."

Besancenot, like Laguiller, promises to ban layoffs. Like the economic crises that cause them, layoffs are inherent to the capitalist profit system. It is a reformist lie to claim that one can “ban layoffs” under capitalism. But *Rouge* (15 February) says the opposite: “These proposals



## Combi

**Left: Barricade during 1871 Paris Commune. Right: Petrograd Soviet, September 1917. October 25 proclamation (inset) by Military Revolutionary Committee announces offer of democratic peace, abolition of landed proprietorship, workers' control and "establishment of Soviet power."**



VAAP

In this framework, Trotsky put forward a whole series of demands, a “transitional program,” to systematically mobilize the masses for proletarian revolution. The reformists of LO and LCR totally distort the Transitional Program by taking up one isolated demand and making it their current perspective, one which is supposedly realizable under capitalism.

Laguiller, for example, speaks endlessly about opening the capitalists' account books. However, in LO's public meetings, she explains that all she is demanding is an extension of the powers already held under capitalism by the *comités d'entreprise* [management-union plant committees]. With its program for "requisitioning" corporations that are making profits and are laying off workers, LO sees the bourgeois state as the source of progress, provided there are mobilizations in the streets or in the workplace to pressure the state into taking decisions that are in the workers' inter-

are radical, but not unrealizable! They simply require going up against the logic of profit, the power of the bosses and shareholders, and redistributing the wealth." To eradicate unemployment, it is necessary to overthrow capitalism through workers revolution. But that is the last thing Besancenot wants. His campaign consists of spreading the lie that capitalism can be radically reformed to serve the interests of the workers.

Take for instance the question of housing. The number of homeless people is steadily mounting. There is a profound social crisis in the *banlieues* and particularly in the decaying neighborhoods that are class and, in part, racial ghettos. Against this, Besancenot simply proposes to apply the existing law. And *Lutte Ouvrière* (16 February) headlined: "The State Has the Means to Build Sufficient Housing." In this way they breed illusions in the French bourgeois state. To confront the housing crisis, a program of massive urban reconstruction is needed in the *banlieues* and in the means of transportation, with mass permanent hiring, under workers control. As Trotsky declared:

"But public works can have a continuous and progressive significance for society, as for the unemployed themselves, only when they are made part of a general plan, worked out to cover a considerable number of years. Within the framework of this plan, the workers would demand resumption, as public utilities, of work in

private businesses closed as a result of the crisis. Workers' control in such cases would be replaced by direct workers' management."

Laguiller's central electoral slogan is to immediately increase the monthly minimum wage by 300 euros. The difference between Royal and Besancenot/Laguiller is that Royal promises a 1,500 euro gross minimum wage soon, while LO proposes 1,500 euros net right away. To sum it up, the difference between Royal and Besancenot/Laguiller is the difference between gross and net wages—around 300 euros—while the difference between all these people and us is the difference between reform and revolution. Adding 300 euros to the minimum wage is cruelly insufficient in view of the poverty facing the working class. Today millions of people do not even earn the monthly minimum wage, either because they are unemployed, undocumented (and thus paid below the minimum wage) or part-time workers, the great majority of whom are women. To put an end to this, it is necessary to share the work among all with no loss in pay—in other words, a 30-hour workweek for 40 hours' pay. For women to be truly able to work full-time, there must be 24-hour free childcare.

Is the money available for all this? The reformists of the Socialist Party generally say, "No." In their opinion, demands should thus be reduced to below these necessary minimum demands. The left reformists say, "Yes, all you have to do is take it from the capitalists." However, capitalism is unable to satisfy the essential needs of the working class and oppressed, and it will struggle to the



**Publication of  
the Ligue Trotskyste de France**

Subscribe! **\$5 for 4 issues**  
Includes *Spartacist* (French edition)

**Order from/make checks payable to:**  
Spartacist Publishing Co.  
Box 1377 GPO, New York, NY 10116



# Iran...

(continued from page 1)

country is in their crosshairs. The monstrous hue and cry over the captured British crew members can only serve to heighten the danger of an imperialist attack on Iran. Moreover, Britain's defence of its marines and sailors—that they were not in Iranian but Iraqi waters—was premised on their role as overlords in Iraq, which has been subjugated by the murderous imperialist occupation. Irrespective of where the British forces were when they were apprehended, we say: **British, U.S. and all imperialist troops out of Iraq and Afghanistan! Down with imperialist war provocations against Iran!**

Even while screaming about Iranian “lies,” the British capitalist press could barely bring itself to report that there is no agreed boundary between Iraq and Iran for most of the Shatt al-Arab waterway. The fact that an imperialist search party patrols the area at all times—sometimes led by the British and sometimes by the U.S.—is a consequence of the occupation of Iraq. The stretch of Iraqi coast that lies at the mouth of the Shatt al-Arab waterway runs close to two strategic Iraqi oil terminals—Basra and Chaur al-Amaja—which are regarded by the Iraqi capitalist rulers as the country's “crown jewels.” The boundary that is proclaimed today by the British was arbitrarily drawn—like the border of Iraq—by the British imperialists themselves!

Imperialist lies about “weapons of mass destruction” served as a pretext for the invasion of Iraq in 2003 which has led to the deaths of countless thousands of Iraqis, including through hideous imperialist massacres such as at Fallujah and Haditha, in addition to unleashing communalist slaughter on a mass scale. Today it is an open secret that the U.S. and British imperialists have staged numerous provocations in the hope that Iranian retaliation would serve as a pretext for an attack on Iran. They have been steadily beefing up military forces in and around the Persian Gulf: two U.S. aircraft carriers have been positioned near the Iranian coast and *BBC News* online (20 February) reported that the U.S. has readied plans for attacks on Iran, to be triggered either by “confirmation that Iran was developing a nuclear weapon” or “a high-casualty attack on US forces in neighbouring Iraq...if it were traced directly back to Tehran.” And it's not just the Americans. Liberal journalist Robert Fisk reported that: “The Iranian security services are convinced that the British security services are trying to

**March 28:  
Aircraft carrier  
USS Stennis  
in Persian Gulf  
during massive  
military exercise,  
part of imperialist  
provocations  
against Iran.**



provoke the Arabs of Iran's Khuzestan province to rise up against the Islamic Republic” (*Independent*, 2 April).

On 11 January, American troops seized five Iranians who even Iraqi officials maintained were diplomats. According to Patrick Cockburn in the *Independent* (3 April), this raid was in fact a botched attempt to abduct two senior Iranian officials—the deputy head of the Iranian National Security Council, Mohammed Jafari, and General Minojahar Frouzanda, the intelligence chief of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard—during an official visit to Iraqi Kurdistan. Cockburn says the operation was “somewhat as if Iran had tried to kidnap the heads of the CIA and MI6 while they were on an official visit,” and that Britain should have expected Iran to retaliate. A *New Yorker* online article (25 February) by Seymour Hersh quoted a former senior intelligence official saying that “the word went out last August for the military to snatch as many Iranians in Iraq as they can,” and a former National Security Council official told Hersh: “This is all part of the campaign of provocative steps to increase the pressure on Iran. The idea is that at some point the Iranians will respond and then the Administration will have an open door to strike at them.”

## Iran Needs Nuclear Weapons to Defend Itself

As revolutionary opponents of British imperialism, we unequivocally condemn all imperialist war provocations against Iran. The biggest threat to the working

people and oppressed of the entire world is U.S. imperialism and its slavish toady, blood-soaked British imperialism. War moves against Iran to date include the UN Security Council's demand in December, at the behest of Washington, that Tehran halt its uranium enrichment programme and the imposition of a first round of sanctions on Iran. This came after almost three years of inspections in which the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) found no evidence of a nuclear weapons programme. We vehemently oppose the imperialist sanctions against Iran, which are the opening shots in a war, as the case of Iraq demonstrates. One and a half million people were killed and the country devastated by the United Nations sanctions against Iraq which preceded the U.S./British invasion and occupation. Since its inception at the end of WWI—when it was called the League of Nations—the purpose of the UN has always been to serve as a fig leaf for naked imperialist aggression against semi-colonial countries.

We insist that in the context of threats by the nuclear-armed imperialists, Iran desperately needs nuclear weapons and adequate delivery systems to defend itself. In today's world, possession of nuclear arms has become the only real measure of national sovereignty. In the event of military attack against Iran by U.S./British imperialism, or by Israel—the only nuclear-armed country in the Near East—or by any other force operating as proxy for the imperialists, our stand as Marxists is one of revolutionary defensism: for the military defence of Iran against impe-

rialist attack without giving an iota of political support to the reactionary Tehran regime.

With breathtaking hypocrisy, British government spokesmen shrieked in high dudgeon about Iran's “coercion” of the 15 prisoners (often described as “hostages”), who for their part admitted being in Iranian waters and apologised. The images shown on Iranian TV, including of Leading Seaman Faye Turney wearing an Islamic headscarf, while smoking a cigarette, bore no comparison to the pictures of brutal torture and abject humiliation suffered by prisoners of the British and U.S. imperialist forces in Iraq, who have sacks over their heads, duck tape over their mouths and are routinely beaten, forced into “stress positions,” and the rest. British complaints about treatment of prisoners are particularly obscene in view of the case of Iraqi hotel worker Baha Mousa, who was arrested in 2003 and died at the hands of his British captors. Mousa was “attacked over a 36-hour period while handcuffed and hooded and suffered 93 separate injuries” (*Guardian*, 15 February), while the soldiers involved were exonerated of his murder.

Indeed the Iranian treatment of the British military captives, as seen on TV, looked positively humane in comparison with the treatment of those in Britain who find themselves on the receiving end of the racist “war on terror.” None of the British naval personnel suffered the fate of Brazilian electrician Jean Charles de Menezes, who was not even taken prisoner but gunned down in cold blood on the London Underground in July 2005; nor of Abdul Kahar who was shot and injured during a police “anti-terrorism” raid on his home in East London in June 2006. One Muslim of Algerian origin who was detained under anti-terrorism legislation in December 2001, languished in jail for years without any charges and is now subject to a form of house arrest known as a “control order,” recently told the *Guardian* (28 March) that in Blair's Britain, “I have fewer rights than an animal.”

While liberals and reformists plead with Blair not to attack Iran and call for troops out of Iraq, their bottom line is to support “our boys.” Thus the Stop the War Coalition (StWC), dominated by the reformist Socialist Workers Party (SWP), posted a web statement (undated) headlined “Don't attack Iran” which opened with: “We urge the speedy release and return to this country of the detained sailors and marines.” While it is appropriate to call for the release of the Iranian diplomats seized by U.S. forces in Iraq, it is quite another

continued on page 10

the operation in 2004, but in fact the deal had been concocted under Jospin, when Royal and Buffet were in the government. It was under Jospin, at the Barcelona summit meeting, that it was decided at the European level to open up the electricity market, thus ending the monopoly and raising the perspective of privatization.

The CGT union bureaucracy at the EDF did not commit this betrayal simply because its leader, Denis Cohen, was a sellout. Lenin explained in his 1916 work *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism* that, especially in the imperialist countries, there is a strong objective basis for buying off a small layer of the working class thanks to the super-profits coming from the imperialists' exploitation of the world.

The union bureaucracy is based on this “labor aristocracy,” which in France is generally white and male. Because of its limited advantages, this layer of workers identifies with the interests of its own capitalists against their rivals. They thus consider that the need to “modernize” the corporations—that is, to dismantle workers' gains—is inevitable. What the bureaucracy did yesterday at the EDF they may well do tomorrow with regard to railway workers, whether we have a Sarkozy or a Royal government. Royal will simply be more able than Sarkozy to count on support from the union bureaucracy.

The fight against chauvinism in the working class is integrally linked to the struggle against racist divisions among workers. We fight for **full citizenship rights for all immigrants**. We oppose all forms of discrimination, in hiring and elsewhere, against immigrant workers, including work bans against workers from [East European] countries that have recently joined the European Union. The strike last fall at the Modeluxe industrial laundry for the legalization and rehiring of their undocumented colleagues, which was finally victorious, shows that it is possible to mobilize the proletariat in defense of immigrant workers.

However, France today is the European country with the lowest level of immigration. Racist discrimination targets mainly the children and grandchildren of workers who immigrated to France a long time ago, most often from the former colonial empire. These youth are French citizens, but without the rights of citizenship. They are subjected to daily cop harassment, racist discrimination in hiring and housing, heightened job insecurity, etc. These youth today are a strategic component of the proletariat, whether it is in the auto industry (look at the strike in recent days at Magnetto, a Citroën subcontractor at Aulnay) or at the Roissy airport. The government is going after the railway workers in order to be able to take on the whole working

class. In the same way, it uses racist poison against *banlieue* youth to try to divide the working class and attack the gains of all. That is why mobilizing in defense of this most oppressed layer of workers is crucial for proletarian unity, including in the historically proletarian strongholds like the railroads.

It is not possible to clearly draw a class line against the Royal-Buffet-Chevènement popular front by voting in this election. LO and the LCR are running as pressure groups on Ségolène Royal. There is no party or candidate representing workers' interests that we can call to vote for. With capitalist counter-revolution in the Soviet Union, the inter-

national working class has suffered serious defeats in the past period. Capitalist exploitation and oppression have intensified. Today the capitalists are on the offensive. But it would be totally impressionistic to think that it will always be this way. The class struggle remains the motor force of history. We struggle for the proletariat to become conscious of its historic mission as gravedigger of the capitalist system. The working class will sooner or later regain the initiative. And the key then will be the existence of a Bolshevik party to lead the proletariat to victory. We are preparing for that victory today by struggling to build such a Bolshevik vanguard workers party. ■

## Trotskyist League/Spartacus Youth Club Forum

### “Market Reforms” Exacerbate Contradictions in China

# Defend, Extend the Gains of the 1949 Chinese Revolution!

**Saturday, April 21, 7 p.m.**  
University of Toronto, Bahen Centre  
40 St. George Street, Room 2175  
(north of College St.—nearest subway St. George)

**TORONTO**

For more information: (416) 593-4138  
or e-mail: spartacan@on.aibn.com



# China...

(continued from page 2)

from the clutches of the imperialist powers that had long held that country in servitude. That revolution laid the basis for collectivizing the economy, resulting in enormous social progress for the workers and peasants. However, the workers state that emerged was deformed from its inception by the rule of a nationalist bureaucracy fundamentally similar to that which came to power in the Soviet Union through a political counterrevolution led by Stalin & Co. beginning in 1924. The Stalinist dogma of “building socialism in one country” meant accommodation to world imperialism, selling out revolutionary opportunities throughout the capitalist world.

Trotsky and his followers unflinchingly defended the Soviet Union against the forces of the class enemy while calling for proletarian political revolution to sweep away Stalin’s bureaucratic regime and return the Soviet Union to the revolutionary, internationalist principles that animated the October Revolution. Likewise, we in the International Communist League fought tooth and nail against capitalist counterrevolution in the former East Germany and USSR and for workers political revolution. Today we raise the same program in regard to China, the largest and most powerful of the remaining deformed workers states. The DSP stands on the *other side* of the barricades.

Among other political atrocities, in the 1980s the DSP (then called the Socialist Workers Party) embraced counterrevolutionary Polish Solidarność, the only “union” beloved by the CIA, Vatican and Western bankers. In 1991, DSP leader Renfrey Clarke literally manned Yeltsin’s barricades during the imperialist-backed counter coup in Moscow, which signaled the ascendancy of capitalist counterrevolution in the Soviet Union. At home, the DSP played a leading role in mobilizing support for Australian imperialist troops to be sent to East Timor in 1999 and to this day refuses to call for their withdrawal (see “What Is the Democratic Socialist Party?” *Australasian Spartacist* No. 167, Autumn 1999).

Slee treats the key question of the state in classic social-democratic fashion. Behind his account of the extent of privatizations in China lies the hoary Laborite notion that “socialism” can be achieved by reaching a certain level of nationalization of the economy, presumably under such a “democratic” government as that of Clement Attlee’s Labour Party, which managed the affairs of declining British imperialism following World War II. In regard to China, Slee is running the film of reformism in reverse.

The 1949 Revolution smashed bourgeois rule in China, and that remains the case today. At some point, likely when bourgeois elements in and around the bureaucracy move to eliminate Communist Party (CCP) political power, the explosive social tensions of Chinese society will shatter the political structure of the ruling bureaucracy. And when that happens, the question will be starkly posed: either proletarian political revolution to open the road to socialism or a return to capitalist enslavement and imperialist subjugation.

Slee’s arguments to the contrary notwithstanding, state-owned enterprises remain dominant in strategic industrial sectors such as steel, nonferrous metals, heavy machinery, shipbuilding, telecommunications, electric power, oil extraction and refining. The nationalization of land has prevented the emergence of a class of large-scale agrarian capitalists socially dominating the countryside. The state’s effective control over the financial system has enabled the Beijing regime to insulate China from the volatile movements of speculative money-capital that periodically wreak havoc with neocolonial countries from East Asia to Latin America.

To the extent that the CCP regime has opened up sections of the country to capitalist investment, it acts as labor contractors for the imperialists and offshore Chi-

nese bourgeoisie. But such does not equate to the rule of capital. The world’s bourgeois rulers understand this much, which explains their push for China to “open up” banking and privatize the core state-owned enterprises, as well as the military pressures exerted by the imperialists against China. A U.S.-Japan military pact signed two years ago that embraced capitalist Taiwan as “a mutual security concern”—a brazen provocation against China—has now been followed up by a pact sealed last month by Japan and Australia that aims to “contain” China and targets as well the North Korean deformed workers state.

Slee’s dragging the name of revolutionary leader Leon Trotsky into his arguments demonstrates utter cynicism, not least since his party explicitly repudiated Trotskyism back in 1984. Slee implies that Trotsky saw the Stalinist bureaucracy as simply a counterrevolutionary force. Not so. In *The Revolution Betrayed* (1937) and other works, Trotsky explained that the Stalinist bureaucracy was a parasitic caste that simultaneously is dependent on the collectivized property forms of the workers state and acts as the transmitting mechanism for the pressures of imperialism in undermining the workers state.

Here’s one clue to reality: during the incipient proletarian political revolution in China in 1989, the People’s Liberation Army initially refused to move against the workers of Beijing and the military leadership itself began to split, before new units were brought in to crush the rebellion. Such splits are hardly characteristic of the armed forces of capitalist class rule. But they do reflect the contra-



**Thousands protest near municipal government office in Xi’an, Shaanxi province, 2006. Banner reads: “Government Take Pity on Laid-Off Workers Who Need Food to Eat.”**

dictions inherent in a workers state under bureaucratic rule. Such contradictions are also apparent in the economy. As we wrote in Part Two of “China’s ‘Market Reforms’: A Trotskyist Analysis” (WV No. 875, 1 September 2006):

“The People’s Republic of China today exhibits both the tremendous advantages that are a consequence of the overthrow of the capitalist system—centrally, a level of economic growth far outstripping that of capitalist neocolonies like India—as well as the profoundly negative fruits of Stalinist bureaucratic rule. The latter include sharply increased inequality, the growth of new bourgeois forces intertwined with the parasitic bureaucracy, and the looming threat of a capitalist counterrevolution that would destroy the gains made by China’s worker and peasant masses. A Leninist-Trotskyist party must be forged to lead China’s huge and powerful working class, at the head of the peasants and urban poor, in a proletarian political revolution.”

Slee simply equates the Chinese workers state with the CCP bureaucracy, whose rule undermines the defense of that state and the social gains embodied in it. With its program of “socialism in one country” and its corollary—“peaceful coexistence” with imperialism—the Mao Zedong regime forged an alliance with the U.S. against the former Soviet Union, a betrayal of the world working class. Within China, a very backward society, Mao pursued



**State-owned Dalian Shipbuilding Industry plant, one of world’s largest.**

policies of economic autarky and supposed egalitarianism (exempting, of course, the bureaucrats). Following Mao’s death in 1976, the regime of Deng Xiaoping moved to decollectivize agriculture and opened China to direct capital investment from the offshore bourgeoisie in Taiwan and Hong Kong and from Western and Japanese corporations. Sworn enemies of workers democracy, which is necessary for the healthy operation of a planned economy, Stalinist regimes turn to “market reforms” as a whip to increase productivity, attempting to correct the imbalances of the command-planned economy.

As for the investment by “transnational

power and opposed the perspective of international proletarian revolution. Conditions are indeed brutal in capitalist plants in the “Special Economic Zones” and elsewhere. There is indeed rising social inequality. On the other hand, economic expansion has had the effect of proletarianizing millions of former peasants, and the country has seen massive struggles by both peasants and workers in defense of their livelihoods. Last month, 20,000 peasants in Hunan province confronted the police in protest against a sharp rise in bus fares. The government eventually reinstated the original fares and suspended the bus company while arresting protest leaders—actions characteristic not of a possessing class but of a brittle and parasitic caste that deeply fears social protest. The thousands of struggles by workers and peasants that occur yearly in China indicate the raw material for proletarian political revolution, which requires the leadership of a Leninist-Trotskyist vanguard party.

Slee claims a direct identity between now-capitalist Russia and today’s China. This is utterly false. When capitalist counterrevolution destroyed the former Soviet Union, all the “new class theories” propounded by social-democratic fake Trotskyists could not explain the devastation that resulted. Life expectancy in Russia has plummeted, women have been thrown back, murderous nationalism runs rampant. U.S. imperialism, unfettered by what had been the industrial-military powerhouse of the non-capitalist world, feels free to launch military adventures abroad, while capitalist governments the world over accelerate their attacks on workers and the oppressed at home.

Should China succumb to counterrevolution, the results would be catastrophic: the return of imperialist subjugation, the dismantling of the gains of the 1949 Revolution, the deepening of “death of communism” ideology internationally. This is an outcome we seek to combat. And in such a showdown, the DSP will stand on the side of counterrevolution, as it has done and is doing. Thus, even before its formal January 1999 declaration that China was a capitalist state, the DSP embraced such counterrevolutionary causes as independence for capitalist Taiwan and “Free Tibet!” while promoting pro-imperialist “trade-union activist” Han Dongfang, editor of the *China Labour Bulletin*, Christian convert and darling of anti-Communist circles in Washington.

The DSP last year attempted to draw a blood line against our communist political criticisms, which we exposed throughout the left and labor movement (see “Condemn DSP Thug Attack on Spartacist Woman at Union Rally,” WV No. 876, 15 September 2006). Does the timing of Slee’s letter, only some months later, have anything to do with this? We don’t know. What we do know is that Chris Slee, and the DSP, are “little Aussie” nationalist social democrats, bashing China in lockstep with their jackal imperialist rulers, the chauvinists at the helm of the Australian Labor Party and the petty-bourgeois swamp in which they swim. ■



# WORKERS VANGUARD

## Racist Consensus Against Immigrants, Minority Youth



Cops arrest youth in Paris suburb during crackdown against ghetto rebellion that swept France, October 2005. Riot police at Gare du Nord transport hub in Paris, March 2007.

# French Election: No Choice for Workers

We print below a presentation on the French presidential election, the first round of which takes place on April 22, given by Alexis Henri at a March 1 meeting in Paris of the Ligue Trotskyste, French section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist). It is translated from the LTF newspaper Le Bolchévik No. 179 (March 2007).

## LE BOLCHEVIK

The 2007 election campaign offers the “choice” between Nicolas Sarkozy, the minister of cops who introduced seven racist security laws and carried out tens of thousands of deportations of *sans-papiers* [undocumented immigrants]; François Bayrou, author of the first racist decree against young veiled women in high schools in 1994, when he was minister in the right-wing government of Balladur-Sarkozy; and [Socialist Party candidate] Ségolène Royal, former Minister of the Family, who wants to militarize the turbulent youth in the *banlieues* [suburban ghettos]. Whether it is Sarkozy’s “party of order” or Royal’s party of “a just order,” it remains the order of the bourgeois republic—that is, capitalist and racist order.

In such a con game, people in general prefer the original to the copy. Indeed, a significant layer of backward workers is seriously considering voting for Sarkozy, the main candidate of the bourgeoisie, on the basis that he has proven himself to be determined in repressing youth, while Royal has only made promises.

Sarkozy, who has been a government minister almost continually for the past five years, is running as the candidate who represents a “sharp break.” In a certain sense, this is true. The French political system in the post-World War II period was based on two main pillars. First was the class collaboration practiced by a powerful pro-Soviet Communist Party (PCF), which saved the bourgeois order in 1944. The PCF at the time participated in a capitalist government with the Gaullists and disarmed the workers when the French bourgeoisie was totally discredited by its collaboration with the

Nazis. The PCF did it again in May 1968 by selling out the general strike for a mere 6 percent wage increase and new elections. The second pillar was the possibility for French imperialism, which could still look to its former colonial empire for support, of adopting an independent posture. This was tolerated by American imperialism on the basis that it was preferable to have certain countries making speeches and deals with De Gaulle or [former Socialist president François] Mitterrand rather than ending up as satellites of Moscow.

With the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union in 1991-92, this period is definitively over. Today the PCF is merely a shadow of what it used to be. Interimperialist rivalries have considerably sharpened, forcing each national bourgeoisie to step up its attacks on the working class in order to increase profits and survive in a climate of intensified competition between corporations. On the one hand, Sarkozy aims to reduce the foreign policy ambitions of French imperialism, bringing them more into line with its status as a third-rate imperialist power. On the other hand, he will need to break the back of the organized working class. He has promised, once he is elected, to take on the strongest bastion of the working class, the railway workers, who

derailed Jacques Chirac & Co. in 1986 and again in December 1995. [The Gaullist Chirac was prime minister in 1986 and became president in 1995.] Sarkozy intends to ban railway workers’ right to strike, to go forward with privatization of the SNCF [railway company] and destroy the special pension systems, which are highly advantageous for the workers. Behind this attack, the whole working class is being targeted.

### How to Make a New Popular Front from the Old

There is no choice for workers in this election. It is necessary to expose the illusions in Royal being peddled by the “left” and the “left of the left,” who present her as a “lesser evil” compared to Sarkozy. Royal does not represent the workers’ interests. The bloc behind Royal and [PCF leader Marie-George] Buffet constitutes a “popular front,” that is, a political bloc based on a program of managing capitalism in alliance with bourgeois parties such as that of [the Left Radical Party’s] Christiane Taubira, or the formation led by [ultra-chauvinist] Jean-Pierre Chevènement. According to sources as diverse as the right-wing *Le Figaro*, the PCF’s *l’Humanité* (10 January) and *Rouge* [newspaper of the Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire, LCR], the PCF made an

agreement with the Socialist Party (SP) to try to save its parliamentary group—and the government subsidies that go with it, without which the PCF apparatus would collapse. The agreement is not official so as to delude PCF members into thinking that Buffet does not wish to repeat the experience of 1997 [when she became a government minister under Socialist prime minister Lionel Jospin] and to allow her to attract voters on the left—on behalf of Royal.

Royal and Buffet, like their bourgeois allies Chevènement and [Green Party candidate Dominique] Voynet, were all ministers in the Jospin government, which intensified Vigipirate [a campaign of racist cop terror], privatized Air France and a large number of other companies (more so than any previous right-wing government) and strengthened cop surveillance of organizations aiding the *sans-papiers*. It participated in the NATO bombing of Serbia in 1999 and, after September 11, 2001, introduced the “law on daily security,” which served as a model for Sarkozy. In the course of her major TV appearance on February 19, Royal promised not only to strengthen neighborhood police in order, day in and day out, to better harass *banlieue* youth and to militarize control over youth. She also pledged to open 24-hour police stations in the *banlieues* and to create “boarding schools,” which would actually be neighborhood prisons where youth would be locked up after being yanked from the care of their supposedly “failed” parents.

To give the slightest support to Ségolène Royal and vote for her program on the first or second round is in contradiction with the interests of the proletariat as a class opposed to the bourgeoisie. The proletariat produces the surplus value in the factories that is the basis on which the capitalist system functions. Because of this, only the proletariat has the social power and historic interest to overthrow this system.

We have always refused to give the slightest—even highly critical—support to a workers party participating in a popular front, because, in this case, it is part of a *bourgeois* alliance. To support a

*continued on page 6*



March 6: Striking auto workers from Peugeot-Citroën plant in Aulnay, near Paris, demonstrate at company plant in Saint-Ouen.