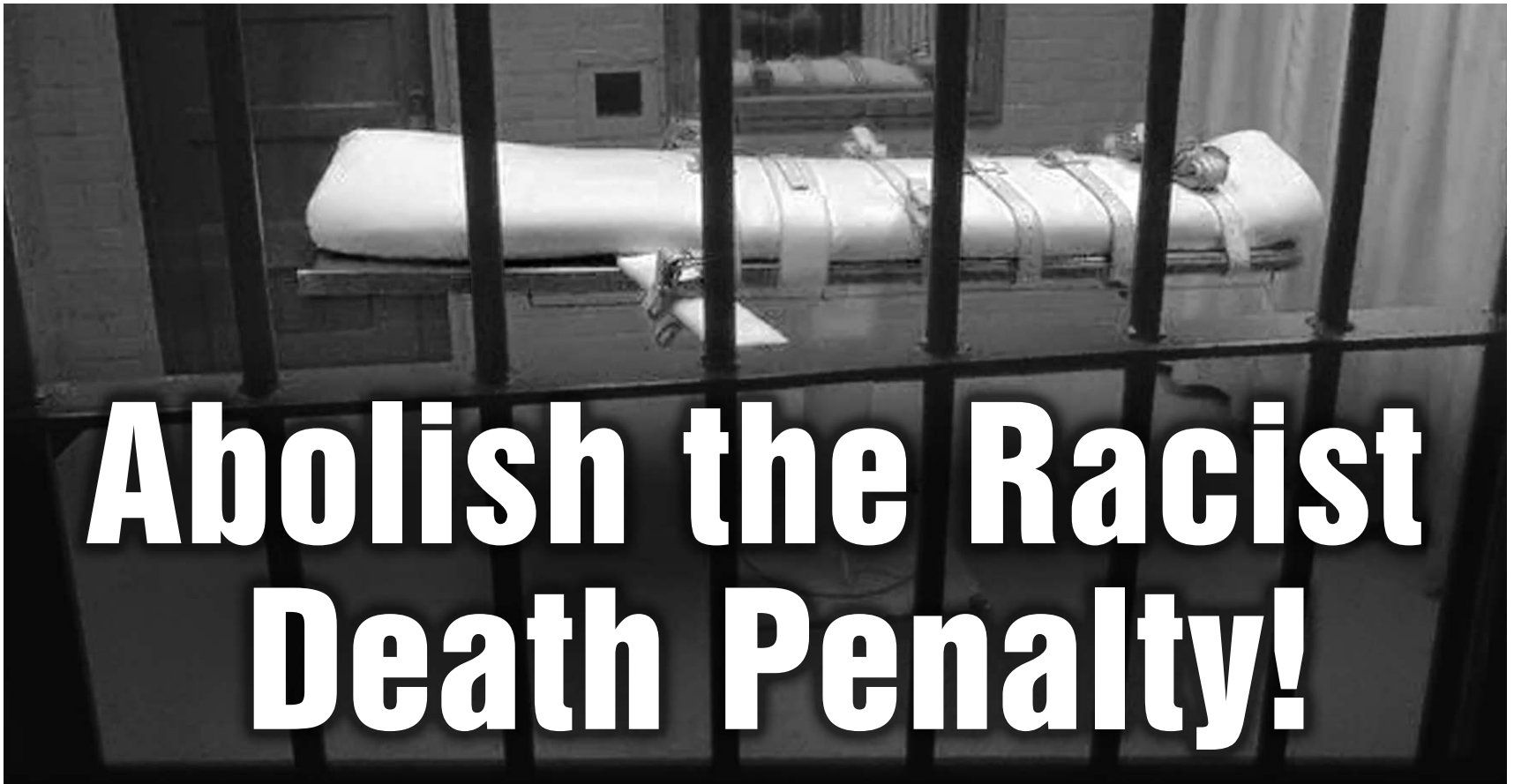


Supreme Court: Retooling the Machinery of Death



Smith/Sygma

On December 17, New Jersey abolished the death penalty, becoming the first state to do so since the Supreme Court reinstated the barbaric practice in 1976. The Jersey repeal followed the recommendation of a state commission that described the death penalty as “inconsistent with evolving standards of decency” (*Washington Post*, 14 December 2007). Legislatures in several other states, including Maryland, Montana, New Mexico and Nebraska, have also debated abolishing the death penalty. Meanwhile, there has been an effective moratorium on executions across the country while the Supreme Court hears the case of *Baze vs. Rees* to decide whether the mixture of chemicals currently used in lethal injection is unconstitutional.

The gruesome spectacle of the Supreme Court pondering the best mixture of chemicals to use to “humanely” kill more than 3,000 death row inmates is of a piece with the ghoulish debate over whether CIA “waterboarding” of prisoners in Iraq, Afghanistan and Guantánamo Bay is torture. Let’s be clear: capital punishment is a barbaric legacy of medieval torture and, in the U.S., of black chattel slavery. Today, black people make up some 42 percent of the death row population—three times their representation in the general population. Capital punishment is a system of legal murder that reinforces the brutalization of society in all respects; it is the lynch rope made legal. *We stand for the abolition of the death penalty on principle and everywhere—for the guilty as well as the innocent.* We do not accord the state the right to determine who lives and who dies.

We Marxists welcome any pause in the machinery of death and certainly outright abolition by states such as New Jersey. At the same time we warn, as we did last year after several states issued full or partial moratoriums on executions:

“The fact that state governments are tinkering with the death penalty does not signal a ‘change of heart’ by the U.S.

capitalist rulers who wreak death and destruction from Baghdad to New Orleans. Rather, state officials seek to clean up their procedures for legal murder when there has been a sharp drop in public support for capital punishment.”

—WV No. 883, 5 January 2007

Such is manifestly the case in the Supreme Court deliberations over lethal injections, which are at bottom not about getting rid of capital punishment but rather about *refurbishing* it. Moreover, despite the “Anybody but Bush” efforts of the reformist left on behalf of the Democrats, the other capitalist party of war and racism, every one of the leading Democratic Party presidential contenders—Hillary Clinton, Barack Obama and John Edwards—openly supports the death penalty. Indeed, it was under the Democratic administration of Bill Clinton that the 1996 Antiterrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act was signed, virtually eliminating the right of *habeas corpus* appeals for those sentenced to death in state courts.

Over the past decade, support for the death penalty has diminished: 62 percent of Americans support the death penalty, compared to 80 percent in the mid 1990s.

Support for the death penalty has been shaken by a series of botched executions: the 20-minute torture of Stanley Tookie Williams in December 2005; the May 2006 execution of Joseph Clark in Toledo, Ohio, which lasted almost 90 minutes; the 34-minute killing of Angel Nieves Diaz in Florida in December 2006. Whether it be electric chairs turning victims into human fireballs, gas chamber asphyxiations or the chemical torture that today dominates America’s death chambers, there is nothing “humane” about capital punishment.

Another reason for waning support for the death penalty is that plenty of those executed were framed-up and innocent. In 2000, after the thirteenth case of a death row inmate in Illinois whose conviction had been patently false became known, Republican Illinois governor George Ryan called a moratorium on executions. Shortly before leaving office in early 2003, Ryan freed four death row inmates who were victims of torture by Chicago police commander Jon Burge and commuted the death sentences of 167 others. Since 1992, the Innocence Project has helped exonerate more than 200 peo-

ple using DNA evidence—including 15 on death row. Close to 130 death row inmates have been set free nationally. In December 2007 alone, three men who had served a combined total of more than 40 years were freed when it was proved they were innocent.

Reforms, including that of death penalty abolition, are products of both class and social struggle and imminently *reversible* under capitalism. When the death penalty was put on hold by the capitalist rulers in 1967, they faced tumultuous civil rights struggles and burgeoning protests against the Vietnam War. U.S. imperialism also sought to present a more liberal image for American “democracy” in the world arena, where it competed for influence with the Soviet Union. In 1972, the Supreme Court ruled that the death penalty was “wanton and freakish” and ordered states to rewrite their laws. By 1976 the racist backlash against the gains of the civil rights movement was already underway. It was in this reactionary climate that the Court restarted the machinery of legal murder. Only the abolition of racist capitalist rule through

continued on page 10

**San Francisco:
Spartacist
contingent at
May 2000 rally
for death row
political prisoner
Mumia Abu-Jamal
called for
mobilizing labor’s
social power to
free Mumia,
abolish racist
death penalty.**



Drop Charges Against Anti-Fascist Protester!

Jena, Louisiana

We print below a January 27 letter from the Partisan Defense Committee to LaSalle Parish District Attorney J. Reed Walters. The PDC is a class-struggle, non-sectarian legal and social defense organization associated with the Spartacist League.

The Partisan Defense Committee demands that the charges be dropped against William Winchester Jr., a supporter of the New Black Panther Party who was arrested in Jena, Louisiana, for demonstrating against a fascist provocation on January 21, Martin Luther King Day. Mr. Winchester was charged with battery of a police officer and resisting arrest.

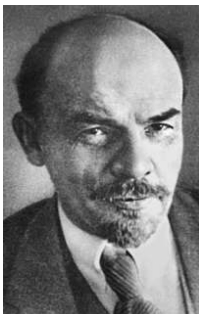
The white supremacists, led by the Mississippi-based Nationalist Movement, came to Jena armed, waving the Confed-

erate flag of black chattel slavery and brandishing lynch-rope nooses. The raceterrorists staged their murderous threats under the protection of several hundred state, local and federal law enforcement officers, including deputies from other parishes, SWAT teams and police snipers stationed on roofs.

The fascist bands spewing their racist filth through the streets of Jena are part of a wave of racist provocations, many involving hanging nooses to terrorize black people, that have swept the U.S. after the September 20 demonstration in Jena. That day, as many as 50,000 overwhelmingly black people protested against Jim Crow “justice” and in defense of the Jena Six, black high school students framed up for defending themselves after months of racist attacks. Mychal Bell of the Jena Six is now in prison. Free Mychal Bell! Drop all charges against the Jena Six! Drop the charges against William Winchester Jr. ■

For the Dictatorship of the Proletariat!

The “socialist” betrayers in the Second International who had lined up behind their respective bourgeoisies in the interimperialist slaughter of World War I denounced the 1917 Russian Revolution in the name of “democracy.” In a document presented to the First Congress of the Communist International, Bolshevik leader V.I. Lenin exposed the lie of a “third way” between bourgeois democracy and the dictatorship of the proletariat.



LENIN

TROTSKY

The main thing that socialists fail to understand and that constitutes their short-sightedness in matters of theory, their subservience to bourgeois prejudices and their political betrayal of the proletariat is that in capitalist society, whenever there is any serious aggravation of the class struggle intrinsic to that society, there can be no alternative but the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie or the dictatorship of the proletariat. Dreams of some third way are reactionary, petty-bourgeois lamentations. That is borne out by more than a century of development of bourgeois democracy and the working-class movement in all the advanced countries, and notably by the experience of the past five years. This is also borne out by the whole science of political economy, by the entire content of Marxism, which reveals the economic inevitability, wherever commodity economy prevails, of the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie that can only be replaced by the class which the very growth of capitalism develops, multiplies, welds together and strengthens, that is, the proletarian class....

Proletarian dictatorship is similar to the dictatorship of other classes in that it arises out of the need, as every other dictatorship does, to forcibly suppress the resistance of the class that is losing its political sway. The fundamental distinction between the dictatorship of the proletariat and the dictatorship of other classes—landlord dictatorship in the Middle Ages and bourgeois dictatorship in all the civilised capitalist countries—consists in the fact that the dictatorship of the landowners and bourgeoisie was the forcible suppression of the resistance offered by the vast majority of the population, namely, the working people. In contrast, proletarian dictatorship is the forcible suppression of the resistance of the exploiters, i.e., an insignificant minority of the population, the landowners and capitalists.

It follows that proletarian dictatorship must inevitably entail not only a change in democratic forms and institutions, generally speaking, but precisely such a change as provides an unparalleled extension of the actual enjoyment of democracy by those oppressed by capitalism—the toiling classes.

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

Letter On Democrats’ Thought-Crime Law

6 January 2008

Dear Editor,

“Torture, Lies and Videotape” (WV No. 905, 4 January 2008) could well have made reference to the new, draconian augmentation of the Patriot Act sailing through Congress: H.R. 1955 or the “Violent Radicalization and Homegrown Terrorism Prevention Act.” It should be pointed out to the “Anybody but Bush” reformists of the Revolutionary Communist Party that this monstrosity is very much the product of the Democratic-controlled House. Authored by California Democrat Jane Harman, who also gave us the Patriot Act, the bill was passed by the House on 23 October 2007 by a vote of 404-6, with “Left Coast” liberals Barbara Lee and Maxine Waters voting for.

Dennis Kucinich, one of the three Democrats voting against, called it a “thought crime bill” that “really sets the stage for further criminalization of protest.” Politicians like Kucinich serve to foster the illusion that the Democrats can be pressured to serve the interests of working people. He wants to give bloody American imperialism a facelift and calls for a “Department of Peace” alongside the Pentagon. To do Washington’s dirty work in Iraq, he calls for UN peacekeepers to replace American troops. These are the same “Blue Helmets” who set up the 1961 murder of the leader of the Congolese independence movement, Patrice

Lumumba, and today rape, terrorize and slaughter the desperately poor of Haiti.

H.R. 1955 is based in part on the NYPD study on “Homegrown Terrorism,” produced earlier in 2007, as well as a 2005 study by the Pentagon think tank RAND Corporation. In the language of COINTELPRO, H.R. 1955 calls for a ten-person National Commission to “examine and report upon the facts and causes of violent radicalization, homegrown terrorism and ideologically based violence in the United States” in order to make policy and legislative recommendations for their “prevention, disruption and mitigation.” “Violent radicalization” is defined as “the process of *adopting or promoting an extremist belief system* for the purpose of facilitating ideologically based violence to advance political, religious, or social change” (my emphasis). “Ideologically based violence” is defined as “the use, planned use, or threatened use of force or violence by a group or individual to promote the group or individual’s political, religious, or social beliefs.” A union strike, an antiwar sit-in, a Marxist newspaper, a mosque’s call to prayer could all be pilloried by this modern-day Inquisition. “Anti-terrorist” laws target immigrants, blacks, labor—No to the “Violent Radicalization and Homegrown Terrorism Prevention Act”!

Comradely,
Reuben Samuels

Spartacus Youth Club Events

CHICAGO

Wednesday, February 13, 4:30 p.m.

Lessons of the Fight to Free Mumia Abu-Jamal: For Black Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!

University of Illinois at Chicago
Prairie Room (3rd Floor)
Student Center East
750 S. Halsted Street

Information and readings: (312) 563-0441
or e-mail: chicagosyc@sbcglobal.net

LOS ANGELES

Wednesday, February 6, 6:30 p.m.

The Struggle for Black Liberation: Key to Socialist Revolution in America

University of California, Los Angeles
Ackerman Union
Meeting Room 3516

Information and readings: (213) 380-8239
or e-mail: slsycla@sbcglobal.net

**Visit the ICL Web Site:
www.icl-fi.org**

NEW YORK CITY

Saturday, February 9, 4:30 p.m.

The Obama Campaign and the “End of Racism” Myth

299 Broadway, Suite 318
(take any train to Chambers Street)
Information and readings: (212) 267-1025
or e-mail: nysl@tiac.net

TORONTO

Monday, February 4, 7:30 p.m.

The Revolution of 1949: Why China Is Not Capitalist

University of Toronto
Sidney Smith Hall, Room 2112
100 St. George Street
Information and readings: (416) 593-4138
or e-mail: spartcan@on.aibn.com

VANCOUVER

Wednesday, February 6, 6 p.m.

The Deception of Bourgeois Democracy

UBC, Student Union Building, Rm. 212
Information and readings: (604) 687-0353
or e-mail: trotskyist_vancouver@shawcable.com

WORKERS VANGUARD

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1 February 2008

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Cliffites in Trouble in Post-Soviet World

Britain: Respect Coalition Divorces SWP



eventful



Nick Horgan

British Respect “unity coalition” split into Respect Renewal led by Member of Parliament George Galloway (left) and SWP-dominated Respect led by John Rees (right). The two groups are politically identical.

The following article is reprinted from Workers Hammer No. 201 (Winter 2007-2008), newspaper of the Spartacist League/Britain, section of the International Communist League.

WORKERS HAMMER

Respect, “the Unity Coalition,” was founded with great fanfare in January 2004. Hoping to cash in on the widespread hatred for Blair’s New Labour government which was up to its armpits in the blood of hundreds of thousands of Iraqis while turning the screw on the working class, poor and minorities at home, the pages of *Socialist Worker* promoted Respect as “a beacon of hope” and a “viable alternative to New Labour” (31 January 2004). For the Socialist Workers Party (SWP), which rejoiced in the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union—a devastating defeat for the world’s working class—Respect was their latest desperate scheme to cash in on the collapse of Stalinism. For the SWP’s coalition partner, maverick ex-Labour MP [Member of Parliament] George Galloway, Respect was a vehicle for hustling votes, particularly in Muslim communities which justly burned with hatred against the Blair government over Iraq and its racist “war on terror” witch hunt against those of Muslim origin in Britain.

In setting up Respect the SWP abandoned the Socialist Alliance, their previous attempt to create an “alternative” to New Labour by reviving a version of the old Labour politics that had historically served to tie the working class to God, Queen and country. Respect, however, made no pretence to be even nominally a working-class formation. On the contrary, from its inception Respect was a cross-class, popular-frontist coalition. As we wrote in our article “SWP Wanted the Post-Soviet World, Now They’ve Got It”: “Respect purports to represent Britain’s Muslims, who are among the poorest sections of the population and are foremost targets of the government’s racist ‘war on terror’ at home. Far from representing the interests of any oppressed minority, Respect is based on a bald-faced acceptance by the SWP of racist British capitalist rule, based on the monarchy, the House of Lords, the established Protestant churches and parliament. Respect certainly does not represent the inter-

ests of the working class, minorities or women. It ought to repel young activists who want to fight to overthrow the racist system of capitalist exploitation and to liberate women from the yoke of oppression and religious reaction—whether it comes from church, temple or mosque.” —*Workers Hammer* No. 194, Spring 2006

We also noted at the time that, “for all the SWP’s opportunist adaptations, Respect does not appear to be the get-rich-quick scheme they imagined.” And this autumn it all went up in smoke, with Galloway and the SWP at each other’s throats. In a letter to the Respect National Council titled, “It was the best of times, it was the worst of times” in August 2007 Galloway launched a broadside against the SWP, blaming it for the “steep decline” in Respect membership and for the fact that Respect is not “punching its weight in British politics.” By late October, the Galloway wing, which consists of virtually all of the Respect coalition outside of the SWP, had changed the locks on the doors to Respect headquarters. The SWP responded with a 3 November statement from its Central Committee denouncing Galloway for launching a witch hunt against the “left wing” in Respect. This was followed by a 5 November letter from Alex Callinicos to other sections of the SWP’s putative international

claiming that “the division in Respect is a political one between left and right.” The SWP’s posture as “principled socialists” being witch-hunted by the right is downright laughable. Since the founding conference of Respect, it was SWP cadre who ensured that motions calling for the abolition of the monarchy and the establishment of a republic, for secularism and even for a “workers MP on a workers wage” were voted down! Now among the only criticisms they can summon up about Galloway is that he earns a whopping £300,000 a year and that he appeared on the *Celebrity Big Brother* show. These rank opportunists do not even offer a hint of self-criticism on the concessions they made which were controversial among the SWP’s membership, such as abandoning any meaningful fight for gay rights or women’s liberation in order to appease the mosques as well as Galloway. Even now, the SWP can’t choke out a word of criticism of Galloway’s reactionary opposition to abortion. The split has produced two warring organisations—“Respect,” consisting mainly of the SWP, and “Respect Renewal,” led by Galloway and made up of pretty much everyone except the SWP. Among Galloway’s supporters are a handful of former SWP cadre who were expelled for siding with Galloway, the leading Muslim

figures, as well as Alan Thornett’s Socialist Resistance group, which has terminated its own newspaper and is publishing a paper for Respect Renewal. Despite intense heat on both sides, there are no differences of political programme, as was seen when the rival Respect organisations held conferences in London on 17 November 2007. Both claim to be the true inheritors of the programme on which Respect was originally founded. The SWP’s bitter complaints about Respect having been taken over by Muslim “community leaders” and “businessmen” are amusing given the extent to which these consummate opportunists bent over backwards to conciliate the mosques. In an effort to capitalise on the mammoth anti-war protests in 2003, which were led by the SWP-brokered Stop the War Coalition and heavily supported by Muslim organisations, the SWP bragged about having organised an anti-war meeting in Birmingham with a segregated seating area for women! But today Muslim leaders like Salma Yaqoob accuse the SWP of using Muslims as “vote fodder” for elections in answer to the SWP’s claim that the Muslim wing of Respect operates on the basis of “communalism.” This refers to the fact that candidates are selected along ethnic and religious lines—people of Bangladeshi origin mainly support Bangladeshis and people of Pakistani origin support their “own” candidates, while neither supports SWP-backed candidates. The SWP would likely have been happy within Respect if only they had been allowed their “fair share” of candidates in elections.

SWP’s Contribution to “Death of Communism”

The politics of Respect shows the extent to which the SWP is mired in the ideological climate conditioned by the prevailing bourgeois ideology that “communism is dead.” The SWP as a tendency originated out of a capitulation to the anti-Communist Cold War hysteria that accompanied the Korean War of 1950-53. Its founder, the late Tony Cliff, reneged on the Trotskyist position of unconditional military defence of the Soviet Union as well as the Chinese and North Korean deformed workers states against imperialist attack. This was a cowardly capitulation to the British bourgeoisie and to the Labour government that sent troops to Korea. See “The Bankruptcy of ‘New Class’ Theories” (*Spartacist* No. 55 [English-language edition], Autumn 1999). The SWP actually *helped create* today’s political climate of post-Soviet reaction. In August 1991 when Boris Yeltsin’s imperialist-backed forces of counterrevolution staged a counter coup in Moscow, every capitalist ruling class was triumphant and proclaimed this as the “death of communism.” The SWP joined in the jubilation, proclaiming on their front page: “Communism has collapsed,” a fact that “should have every socialist rejoicing” and urging, “now fight for real socialism” (*Socialist Worker*, 31 August 1991). The SWP’s “socialism” only ever

continued on page 4

Spartacist



ICL banner at 1991 demonstration in Moscow on anniversary of October Revolution. ICL leaflet mass-distributed in USSR proclaimed: “Soviet Workers: Defeat Yeltsin-Bush Counterrevolution!”

Britain...

(continued from page 3)

amounted to pressuring the pro-imperialist Labour Party and trade union bureaucracy who are wedded to British imperialism and parliament. But in the programme of Respect they willingly ditched even that and relegated the mention of “socialism” to speechifying at SWP branch meetings and to the occasional historical article in *Socialist Worker*. This is a capitulation to the predominant consciousness among today’s political activists which—whether they be in “left” organisations or the “anti-globalisation” milieu—is bourgeois liberal ideology. A document appended to the programmatic statement of our comrades in the Spartacist League/U.S., written in 2000, succinctly characterised the role of our competitors on the left, whom we today describe as “opponents of the revolutionary internationalist workers movement,” noting:

“All of our party’s activity is directed to organizing, training and steeling the proletarian vanguard party necessary for the seizure of state power. In contrast, the politics of the reformists and centrists consist of oppositional activity completely defined by the framework of bourgeois society. The latter was sharply characterized by Trotsky as ‘the actual training of the masses to become imbued with the inviolability of the bourgeois state.’ Such accommodation to capitalist class rule by organizations nominally claiming adherence to Marxism is, if anything, more decisively pronounced today in a world defined by the final undoing of the Russian Revolution and the triumphal assertion by the imperialist rulers that ‘communism is dead.’”

—Spartacist pamphlet, *For Socialist Revolution in the Bastion of World Imperialism!* (November 2000)

The bust-up in Respect is only the latest in a wave of crises that have beset the reformist left in Britain and internationally in the post-Soviet world. In each case, support to counterrevolution in the Soviet Union was followed by lurching even further to the right to obtain the supposed dividends, but to no avail. In the



Peress/Magnum

Bloody Sunday massacre in Derry, Northern Ireland, 30 January 1972. British troops gunned down 14 Catholics, wounded many more. Cliffites refused to call for British troops out.

the “test of Seattle,” that is, for failing to match the British SWP’s level of adulation of the “anti-globalisation” movement. The very notion that this movement is “anti-capitalist” is a myth. Indeed as SWP leader John Rees wrote in a 2003 fanfare for it, this movement would not have been possible without capitalist counterrevolution in the Soviet Union. Rees wrote:

“The broad anti-capitalist movement encompassing the whole left save for the social democratic defenders of neo-liberalism would have been inconceivable in the Cold War. In that era the first question asked of any ‘anti-capitalist’ would have been, ‘So does that mean you are pro-Russian?’ The movement would have divided in response to that challenge. Now it no longer does.”

—*International Socialism*, Autumn 2003

Having worked for and then hailed counterrevolution, the Cliffites have been constantly cheated of the benefits of the “radicalisation” they projected in its wake. The party failed to grow even out of the mammoth anti-war demonstrations in the run-up to the invasion of Iraq. Referring to this at the January 2006

former USSR and Eastern Europe as “fundamentally historically progressive.” This was a defeat of historic proportions for the working masses of the whole world. It followed the tide of counterrevolution that had swept the former deformed workers states in Eastern Europe and led to the capitalist reunification of Germany in 1990, with devastating consequences for the working masses of those countries. Moreover, in the “one superpower” world, U.S. imperialism feels it has free rein to plunder neocolonial countries such as Iraq and Afghanistan, while all the imperialist powers have been emboldened to grind the working class at home, as seen in the Labour government’s attacks on wages, pensions and welfare provision. And as we have noted, counterrevolution in the Soviet Union has led to a profound retrogression in proletarian consciousness. Although this is uneven throughout the world, today even the most politically conscious workers in the capitalist countries by and large do not identify their struggles with the goal of socialism.

We of the ICL fought with all our

world, have suffered an unparalleled disaster whose devastating consequences are now being played out. The ascendancy of Boris Yeltsin, who offers himself as Bush’s man, coming off a botched coup by Mikhail Gorbachev’s former aides, has unleashed a counterrevolutionary tide across the land of the October Revolution.”

—Reprinted in Spartacist pamphlet, *How the Soviet Workers State Was Strangled* (1993)

We fought to the end for unconditional military defence of the Soviet Union and the East European deformed workers states against imperialist attack and internal counterrevolution, while fighting for workers political revolution to oust the parasitic Stalinist bureaucracies and replace them with regimes based on workers democracy and revolutionary internationalism. This is the programme we apply today to the remaining deformed workers states—China, Cuba, North Korea and Vietnam.

We Hailed Red Army in Afghanistan!

The SWP’s capitulation to Islam did not begin with Respect. In 1994 the Cliffites published a major article by Chris Harman titled “The Prophet and the Proletariat” in their *International Socialism* journal. Their previous record includes capitulating to the reactionary mullahs who came to power in Iran led by Ayatollah Khomeini in the late 1970s, running laudatory headlines like “The Form—Religious, The Spirit—Revolution!” and howling along with their own “democratic” bourgeoisie over the Soviet army presence in Afghanistan.

When the Soviet army entered Afghanistan in December 1979 we said, “Hail the Red Army!” and “Extend the social gains of the October Revolution to the Afghan peoples!” The Soviet Stalinist bureaucracy—for its own reasons—had sent in the army at the request of the nationalist government in Kabul which was attempting a series of reforms including lowering the bride price and land reform. This provoked the reactionary Islamic fundamentalists into a “holy war.” At stake was the defence of the Soviet Union, the workers state that emerged from the victorious October 1917 Bolshevik Revolution. Despite the Stalinist bureaucratic degeneration in the Soviet Union that began in 1923-24, it remained a workers state until it was destroyed by counterrevolution in 1991-92.

When the social gains of the Russian Revolution were extended to Central Asia, it became a literate, relatively modern society where women were no longer degraded slaves. The Soviet army presence could have resulted in Afghanistan’s incorporation into Soviet Central Asia, opening up the possibility of a social transformation. But even though they were winning militarily against the brutal *mujahedin*, the Kremlin Stalinists under Mikhail Gorbachev criminally withdrew the troops in 1989. This betrayal paved the way for handing over East Germany and the USSR itself to counterrevolution. The Cliffites in the U.S. hailed this treacherous withdrawal of Soviet troops, undertaken by the Kremlin Stalinists in an effort to appease the imperialists, proclaiming:

“Just as socialists welcomed the defeat of the U.S. in Vietnam, we welcome the defeat of the Russians in Afghanistan. It will give heart to all those inside the USSR and in Eastern Europe who want to break the rule of Stalin’s heirs.”

—*Socialist Worker* [U.S.], May 1988

Socialist Party’s Old Labour Chauvinism

Like the SWP, Peter Taaffe’s Socialist Party supported counterrevolution in the USSR and today adds its own contribution to the “death of communism” climate. The “socialism” of Taaffe’s organisation—previously known as Militant Labour—never amounted to anything more than the Labour Party’s Clause IV, which translated into “nationalising the commanding heights of the economy.” These days the Taaffeites consider New Labour to be an outright bourgeois party

Soviet intervention in Afghanistan opened road to liberation from tyranny of imperialist-backed mujahedin fundamentalist cutthroats. Members of Afghan women’s militia with Soviet rifles at 1989 rally in Kabul.



Reuters

2006 split in Workers Power, one wing argued to continue their frenzied capitulation to the “anti-globalisation” milieu and the imperialist-funded social forums which they portrayed as the main arena out of which to build a “revolutionary international.” The minority, now known as “Permanent Revolution,” saw this as a losing proposition and instead argued to continue with their time-honoured tailing of Labour. Similarly, the Scottish Socialist Party (SSP)—once upheld by reformists in England as the best model for an alternative to Blair’s New Labour—imploded in 2006 following moralistic allegations about its leader Tommy Sheridan’s sex life. Beneath this rift was a disagreement over just how far the SSP should go in its blatant capitulation to the Scottish National Party, a bourgeois party, in the hope of becoming more of a player in the Scottish parliament. The SWP’s international tendency underwent a profound crisis in 2000 and broke with its U.S. section for having failed

party conference, long-time SWP hack John Molyneux pointed out that “somewhere during this period of radicalisation and outward success the party appears to have lost up to 5,000 (50%) of its membership (without ever acknowledging that this was happening).” Molyneux stood on the SWP’s support to counterrevolution, saying: “A key problem, in my opinion, was our estimation of the effects of the collapse of Stalinism. We were right to identify this as fundamentally historically progressive and to argue that internationally it created a space for genuine socialist ideas to get a hearing.” He added: “However, we seriously underestimated the extent to which it was perceived by millions, indeed hundreds of millions, as the defeat of socialism” (“Why I Intend to Stand,” published in *Weekly Worker*, 5 January 2006). Only those blinded by anti-communist loyalty to “democratic” imperialism, as Molyneux and the SWP leadership are, could describe counterrevolution in the

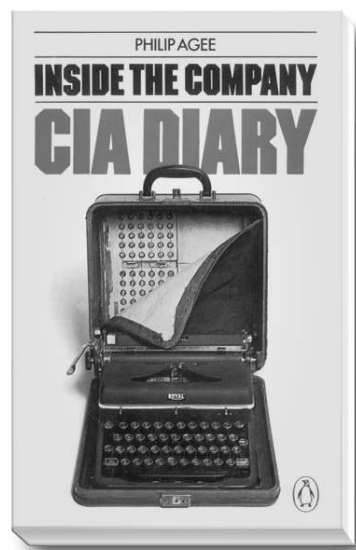
resources against capitalist restoration. During the unfolding political revolution in East Germany in 1989-90, we unconditionally opposed capitalist reunification with imperialist West Germany. We fought for political revolution in the East and socialist revolution in the West. We initiated a 250,000-strong demonstration on 3 January 1990 in East Berlin’s Treptow Park against the fascist desecration of the war memorial to Soviet soldiers who died liberating Germany from the Nazi scourge in 1945. We alone mounted a challenge to the sell-out of the East German deformed workers state by the Moscow and East Berlin Stalinists. Although we were defeated, our programme was proven correct. In 1991 our comrades in Moscow distributed by the thousands a leaflet dated 27 August titled: “Soviet Workers: Defeat Yeltsin-Bush Counterrevolution!” which said: “The working people of the Soviet Union, and indeed the workers of the

In Honor of Philip Agee

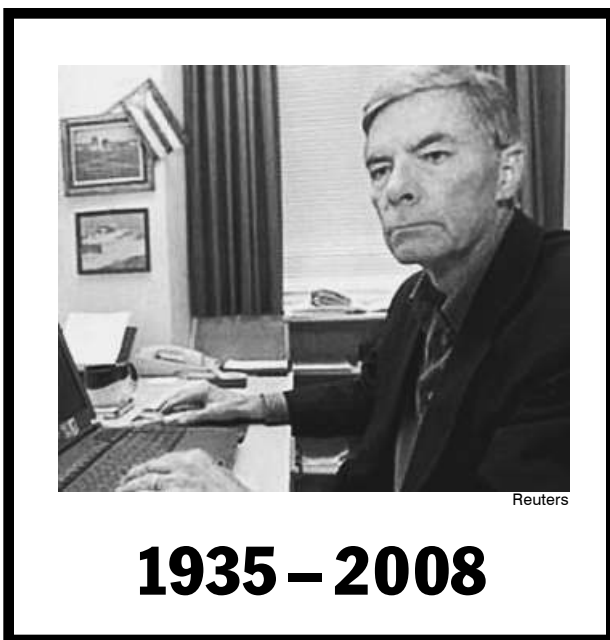
On January 7, Philip Agee died from peritonitis in a Havana hospital after surgical attempts failed to correct his perforated ulcers. Agee, who is perhaps unknown to many of our younger readers, was an ex-CIA agent who resigned from that agency in 1969. He spent the rest of his life meticulously documenting and exposing the spies, non-governmental agencies and State Department operatives that prosecuted U.S. imperialism's myriad efforts to subvert and overturn such foreign governments as displeased the U.S. imperialist rulers, especially in those countries (such as Chile in the early 1970s and Nicaragua in the 1980s) where the threat of revolutionary overturns was posed.

A onetime altar boy and the son of a prosperous Florida businessman, Agee was recruited to the CIA in 1957 after his graduation from Notre Dame, spending his time in the agency in a variety of assignments in Latin America. He was posted to Mexico City in 1968, the year in which the Institutional Revolutionary Party regime of Gustavo Díaz Ordaz slaughtered hundreds of protesting students on the eve of the Olympics, an event that precipitated Agee's resignation in early 1969. Agee, perhaps whimsically, said he left the CIA because "I fell in love with a woman who thought Che Guevara was the most wonderful man in the world."

In 1975 Agee published *Inside the Company: CIA*



Agee's 1975 book named secret agents and exposed inner workings of CIA's bloody operations internationally.



Diary in which he named 250 agency officers, NGOs and foreign agents—an activity he continued in the pages of *Covert Action Information Bulletin* (later *Covert Action Quarterly*) that he helped initiate in 1978 (it ceased publication in 2005). Agee later described his motivation: "It was a time in the 70s when the worst imaginable horrors were going on in Latin America. Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Uruguay, Paraguay, Guatemala, El Salvador—they were military dictatorships with death squads, all with the backing of the CIA and the US government" (London *Guardian*, 10 January 2007).

His activities did not go unnoticed by his ex-employer. In 1982, Congress passed the Intelligence Identities Protection Act, which was specifically aimed at Agee's actions. It criminalized outing covert agents—a non-crime from the standpoint of the proletariat that is, in fact, a service to humanity. After the debut of *Covert Action* Agee became a "man without a country," expelled from Britain in 1977 at the behest of then Secretary of State Henry Kissinger by the obliging Labour Party government of James Callaghan. He was subsequently refused entry by France and the Netherlands. Agee did not obtain secure residency until he achieved a German pass-

port in 1990 after marrying Giselle Roberge, a German ballerina. Until his death, Agee sojourned between his home in Hamburg and an apartment in Havana.

The "death of communism" triumphalism in the aftermath of the 1991-92 capitalist counterrevolution in the Soviet degenerated workers state has transformed many onetime critics of American imperialism into its sniveling and lying sycophants who religiously retail the lie that the "socialist experiment" has failed. Not so Agee, who, until his death, remained a staunch defender of the Cuban Revolution and an opponent of U.S. efforts toward a counterrevolutionary overturn of the Castro regime. While not a few of the obituaries detailing Agee's death describe him as a "turncoat," "renegade" and "traitor," none call him a liar nor do any attempt to refute his revelations.

A man of considerable intellect and principle, Philip Agee saw deeply into the heart of the monster he chose to oppose. Just two weeks after the September 11 attacks, he gave a talk in Stockholm describing Osama bin Laden as "a creature of the CIA" in its efforts to mobilize Islamic reactionaries in opposition to the Soviet Union's intervention in Afghanistan. He went on to assert that the "war on terror" was of service to the U.S. imperialist rulers precisely because it is "an ongoing war, for which there will be no quick resolution" and "no great battles." He pointed out that it would be used to effect restraints on civil liberties and political dissent. In all this he was spot-on.

Agee was not an advocate of proletarian revolution. Although he described himself as a socialist, it seems clear that his contempt was directed rather specifically at the bloody predations of American imperialism. Nor did Agee perceive that the nationalist Castro-led bureaucracy that holds sway in Cuba itself endangers the Cuban deformed workers state, not least through its Stalinist dogma of "socialism in one country," which stands in opposition to the struggle for international socialist revolution, including in the U.S.

Philip Agee was an intransigent opponent of the would-be world-conquering, bloodsoaked American bourgeoisie and, indeed, a traitor to his class. For that we honor him. As *Granma*, the paper of the Cuban Communist Party, said upon his death, Agee was "a loyal friend of Cuba and fervent defender of the peoples' fight for a better world." His contributions to that end will be sorely missed. ■

and campaign for a "new mass workers party." Yet they regard even a nominally "socialist programme" as dispensable in building such a "workers" party, as their article on the Respect split says:

"Nonetheless the Socialist Party would welcome a new mass workers' party, or [a] significant step towards one, even if its membership didn't initially adopt a fully-rounded out socialist programme. Provided a new mass party was rooted in struggle, had a democratic and federal approach, and stood clearly against cuts, privatisation and war, it would represent a step forward."

—*Socialist*, 1 November 2007

The Socialist Party criticises Respect because it "has concentrated in the main on one section of society, the Muslim community, which it is important to win, but Respect has largely failed to reach out to other sections of the working class." The article contrasts the Socialist Party's own approach as "doing everything possible to encourage the unity of the working class." This concern for "class unity" has to be taken with a grain of salt coming from the Socialist Party which gave backhanded support to the government's racist "war on terror" by adopting the slogan "no to terrorism" (coupled with "no to war") at the height of the anti-Muslim frenzy that followed the criminal July 2005 London bombing. The Taaffeites apply the same "working-class unity" rhetoric to Northern Ireland to disguise the fact that they view defence of the oppressed Catholic minority as an affront to unity with the Protestant working class. They refuse to call for British troops out and have hosted Loyalist killer Billy Hutchinson at meetings as a representative of the Protestant working class! Such catering to the most backward level of consciousness among the working class is integral to their programme of chauvinist Labourite parliamentary reformism. Labour governments have pre-

sided over the bloody partition of India, imposed racist "virginity tests" for Asian women immigrating to Britain and sent British troops to Northern Ireland.

For a Leninist "Tribune of the People"

When Labour's Jack Straw launched an attack on Muslim women for wearing the veil in October 2006, vastly intensifying the level of anti-Muslim racism, we wrote: "As Marxists—and therefore atheists and fighters for women's liberation—we oppose the veil as both a symbol and an instrument of women's oppression. Nonetheless we unambiguously oppose any state or government bans and restrictions on the veil, which are racist and discriminatory against Muslims" ("Racism and the Islamic Veil," *Workers Hammer* No. 197, Winter 2006-2007). Labour in government has funded a huge growth in religious—mainly Christian—schools and the British capitalist state has its own established Christian churches that are tied to the monarchy and the House of Lords. Islam, which in Britain is the religion of an oppressed minority, is not uniquely reactionary or anti-woman; such bigotry is just as much an integral part of Christianity and Judaism as of Islam.

With Respect on the rocks and the SWP again in crisis, these opportunists may well return their attention to reconstructing an old Labour-type party based on the trade union bureaucracy. The SWP press is cock-a-hoop that Mark Serwotka, leader of the civil servants union PCS, spoke at *their* Respect conference while refusing to address Galloway's. Not by accident Serwotka also attended the conference of the Labour Representation Committee—the supposed "left" of New Labour. Serwotka's record as a union leader leaves no doubt about what a rot-

ten sell-out party he would build. His leadership of the PCS has thus far involved a crass betrayal of its members, agreeing to a deal requiring new entrants to the civil service to work *five more years* to qualify for a pension. In this he was assisted by Socialist Party members who dominate the union executive.

The multiethnic working class needs a genuinely revolutionary party, which would link the existing struggles of the working class in defence of their conditions, against war, racism, the oppression of women and of gays to the fight for socialist revolution to end capitalism. Our task is to swim against the stream of today's reactionary climate and to forge the nucleus of a revolutionary vanguard party. As Trotsky noted in his article "Stalinism and Bolshevism" (1937):

"Great political defeats inevitably provoke a reconsideration of values, generally occurring in two directions. On the one hand the true vanguard, enriched by the experience of defeat, defends with tooth and nail the heritage of revolution-

ary thought and on this basis attempts to educate new cadres for the mass struggle to come. On the other hand the routinists, centrists, and dilettantes, frightened by defeat, do their best to destroy the authority of revolutionary tradition and go backward in their search of a 'New Word'."

A revolutionary workers party would infuse the multiethnic working class with the consciousness of its social power and its historic task which means destroying all illusions in the "democracy" of this decaying system, educating it in the historic lessons of the class struggle, steeling its revolutionary will and self-confidence for the overthrow of capitalist exploitation. Such a party would be what Lenin described as a "tribune of the people," fighting every manifestation of injustice, racist oppression and state tyranny. Our task remains the reforging of an authentically Trotskyist Fourth International to lead the proletariat in sweeping away the capitalist order through new October Revolutions around the world. ■

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Outrage Over Cop Taser Killing in Vancouver

We reprint below an article that appeared in Spartacist Canada No. 155 (Winter 2007/2008), publication of the Trotskyist League/Ligue Trotskyste, Canadian section of the International Communist League.



VANCOUVER—On October 14, Polish immigrant Robert Dziekanski was killed by the RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police] at Vancouver International Airport. A month later, millions saw the gut-wrenching ten-minute video taken by another traveler, Paul Pritchard, which showed unambiguously that this was a cold-blooded execution. After a grueling 20-hour journey from Poland, Dziekanski, who spoke no English, spent ten hours in the airport waiting for his mother who was, unknown to him, only a few feet away in the public waiting area. The video shows a distressed and obviously harmless man confronted by four RCMP officers who within 25 seconds tasered him with 50,000 volts at close range at least twice. Seconds later Dziekanski is writhing on the ground, screaming in agony as the cops crush him with their knees on his neck. Then he is dead.

Dziekanski's death sparked outrage across the country and internationally, and in B.C. [British Columbia] it has become a focal point for a wave of animosity against the cops. In the days after Pritchard's video first aired, outraged people berated the RCMP at the airport and the four cops were reassigned "for the officers' own safety." Memorials were held in several cities and 1,000 people rallied on November 24 in Vancouver.

In the last four years police have killed at least ten people in B.C. Some were shot, some were tasered, and in several cases the cover-ups unraveled enough to reveal a glimpse of the daily reality of police violence. In 2005 in Houston, B.C., a young mill worker, Ian Bush, was arrested for the “crime” of holding a beer outside a hockey game. Twenty minutes later he was dead, shot in the back of the head. It was the persistence of Bush’s bereaved mother that made this brutal police crime a touchstone for anger and distrust of the cops. For two years the RCMP lied, covered up and protected the killer cop who has, predictably, now been exonerated by the Commission for Public Complaints Against the RCMP—the same body now charged by the federal government with reviewing the use of tasers.

The cops, along with the prisons, courts and military, make up the core of the capitalist state, an instrument of organ-



Paul Pritchard

14 October 2007: Canadian police taser attack killed Polish immigrant Robert Dziekanski (right) in Vancouver airport.



Vancouver Sun

2005 [reprinted in WV No. 864, 17 February 2006]) we wrote:

“The capitalist rulers have a time-honoured strategy for dealing with public outrage. First, they lie through their golden teeth. Second, when anger persists, they stall. Then, if things still don’t settle down, they ‘reluctantly’ hold an ‘independent’ public inquiry, staffed by judges, professors, priests or other loyal representatives of the ruling class, and

ized violence used to maintain the rule of the capitalists against the working class. When the police kill and brutalize immigrants and Natives, repress leftists, attack picket lines or student protesters, this flows directly from the fact that they serve but one master, the capitalist class. Acting as judge, jury and executioner, their job is to protect the profit system that creates unemployment, poverty and oppression.

These political facts are obscured by the fiction that the state is neutral and serves everyone in society equally. This is all the more the case in a country like Canada where the naked rule of capital is masked by the trappings of parliamentary democracy. The cops cannot be made to serve the interests of the oppressed and the state cannot be reformed. It must be overthrown by the working class in a socialist revolution.

The killing of Dziekanski was unusual only in that it was filmed, making crystal clear to all that just about everything the cops said about it was a brazen lie. For a month the cops suppressed the video, holding on to Pritchard's camera until he hired a lawyer and threatened legal action. Underscoring that they are a law unto themselves, the cops responded to the public outcry by tasering and killing two more people. In Halifax on November 22, a mentally ill man, Howard Hyde, was tasered and died in police custody. In Chilliwack, B.C., a day later, Robert Knipstrom died after being tasered, pepper sprayed and beaten.

Lies, More Lies and Public Inquiries

The *Globe and Mail* (16 November) editorialized that Dziekanski's death at the hands of the cops would be seen "as the summary execution of an innocent man for the crime of being disoriented, for not understanding, for being a stranger." The *Globe's* recent exposures of RCMP misdeeds are driven by a crass aim of damage control for a ruling class worried about the growing public mistrust of the police.

That is the sole purpose of the B.C. Liberal government's public inquiry into Dziekanski's death and the [Prime Minister Stephen] Harper Tories' review of taser use: to refurbish the image of the racist, capitalist state. In our article on the Ipperwash inquiry into the racist 1995 Ontario Provincial Police killing of Native activist Dudley George (*SC* No. 146, Fall

operations in history against Native protesters at Gustafsen Lake.

Canadian Press reported that in 2002-2005 there were 230 tasering "events" in B.C., by far the highest incidence of any province. Unsurprisingly, a large number of the victims were Native people. Humiliation and intimidation by the cops is a daily reality for Natives and others in Vancouver's destitute, crumbling Downtown Eastside. Emblematic of this was the death of Frank Paul. Nine years ago police tossed this Native man like so much garbage into a Downtown Eastside alley where he died of hypothermia. Today his death, too, is the subject of what will certainly be a whitewash government inquiry.

On every level, Robert Dziekanski's fate stands as an indictment of the ruinous, violent capitalist system. The Solidarność capitalist counterrevolution in Poland destroyed the bureaucratically deformed workers state in 1989, bringing mass unemployment and poverty. Dziekanski and his mother, Zofia Cisowski, from the devastated mining region of Silesia, were part of a mass exodus of some two million Poles who have emigrated in recent years in search of jobs and better lives. She had been a carpenter, while he had worked in construction. Whether in Canada or in now-capitalist Poland, bourgeois rule means untold misery.

In recent years in B.C. there have been numerous strikes, as workers fight back against the attacks of the bosses and attempt to get a piece of the vast profits that the capitalists are raking in during the present Olympics-fuelled boom. The social power of the multiethnic working class needs to be mobilized in struggle on behalf of all the many victims of capitalist oppression. The NDP social democrats, along with the trade-union misleaders, are obstacles to such struggle, standing in defense of the capitalist system.

Similarly, the NDP-loyal left acts to foster deadly illusions in the capitalist



Reuters

Some 1,000 demonstrators in Vancouver protest against cop killing of Dziekanski, 24 November 2007.

perhaps recommending token punishment for someone involved. The more thorough the investigation appears, the better it serves its ideological purpose: to prove that the system works, that the state is accountable to the 'will of the people,' and that justice has been served."

Grotesquely, while calling for a “temporary moratorium” on taser use, B.C. NDP [New Democratic Party] leader Carole James urges “proper training” so the cops can use tasers “in the protection of themselves and the public” (November 16 statement). It was the B.C. NDP government that introduced tasers in the province in 1999. Then attorney-general Ujjal Dosanjh (now a federal Liberal) called the taser an “effective alternative to lethal force” (*Province*, 18 November). And this was *after* a string of taser-related deaths in the U.S. In power, the NDP has not hesitated to unleash the full force of state repression as they did in 1995 in launching one of the largest RCMP

state. In a November 21 statement, the Communist Party of Canada added its voice to the pleas for inquiries and moratoriums on tasers, declaring that it “supports these demands, as part of a wider range of measures to establish full civilian oversight and control of police forces.” The idea that the police can be “controlled” by “civilian oversight” under capitalism is a reformist lie, as shown by the entire history of working-class struggles. We say: Cops, prison and border guards and private security guards have no place in the unions.

The bourgeoisie wants to dissolve the anger over the cop murder of Robert Dziekanski into the hot air of a public inquiry. What is needed is the formation of a revolutionary vanguard party that lays bare the source of police violence in the capitalist system, and fights to sweep away the entire machinery of bourgeois state repression in a socialist revolution. ■

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Defend Mexican Miners Union!

We print below a translation of a January 20 leaflet issued by the Grupo Esparquista de México, section of the International Communist League.

Striking workers at the copper mine at Cananea, Sonora, were brutally attacked with tear gas and rubber bullets on January 11 by some 800 state and federal police on the orders of the PAN [National Action Party] federal and local governments and the PRI [Institutional Revolutionary Party] state government. Some reports indicate military forces participated as well. Hundreds of workers from Local 65 of the miners and steel workers union (SNTMMSRM), on strike since last July, courageously defended themselves, but were unable to withstand the attack. Forty workers were wounded and five people were reported missing (including a worker's wife). The union responded with an eight-hour nationwide strike on January 16 involving 25,000 workers from 85 metallurgical plants and copper mines. The Grupo Esparquista de México, section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist), protests the brutal police attack and demands: *Company, government, hands off the miners union!*

On the morning of January 11, the Federal Council of Conciliation and Arbitration (JFCA) had declared the Cananea strike "nonexistent" because it supposedly started late! The next day a judge granted a temporary suspension of the ruling, and the union has vowed to maintain the strike. But the company has mobilized scabs and hundreds of federal police remain guarding the area—the future of the struggle is uncertain. In the context of generalized discontent with the ruling PAN because of massive repression, dramatic increases in the prices of basic necessities, threats of privatization of PEMEX [Mexico's state oil company] and opposition to the augmented "free trade" rape of Mexico through NAFTA, this attack is also a threat against those who dare to fight back.

The strike at Cananea, which has cost the mine owners an estimated 500 million dollars, began last July along with strikes at Sombrerete, Zacatecas, and Taxco, Guerrero, demanding wage increases and safer working conditions for the labor force. Particularly during at least the last three years, the miners union has engaged in hard-fought class battles across the country, fighting deadly working conditions, meager wages and continuous attacks by the government and the bosses.

In February 2006 the bosses' thirst for profit led to the death of 65 miners in an explosion at Pasta de Conchos, Coahuila. This industrial murder and the ensuing government attack on the union—including the removal of its national leader, Napoleón Gómez Urrutia, and the pressing of charges against him—set the stage

Cops Attack Cananea Strike



Miriam Villavicencio



AP

January 11: Federal and state police attack striking mine workers in Cananea (top). Next day, union miners protest outside Cananea town hall.

for powerful strikes, including at Cananea and at Lázaro Cárdenas, Michoacán, demanding the reinstatement of the union leader (see "Miners, Steel Workers Strikes Shake Mexico," WV No. 872, 9 June 2006). On 20 April 2006, the three main bourgeois parties—PAN, PRI and PRD [Party of the Democratic Revolution]—joined in a murderous attack to break the strike at Lázaro Cárdenas, but workers were able to beat back the attack at the cost of two workers killed. Indeed, illusions in the PRD are suicidal. Despite its cynical campaigning under the slogan "For the good of all, the poor first," the PRD is a bourgeois-nationalist, populist party that administers the bourgeois state and will not hesitate to unleash murderous repression against workers and poor people when their struggles threaten to go beyond its control.

In going after the Cananea miners now, the bosses and their government surely recall the 2006 strikes and in particular want revenge because the Lázaro Cárdenas strike achieved a dramatic victory with the company agreeing to all

their demands, including recognition of Gómez Urrutia. Although the union has won important legal victories since then, there are still charges against Gómez Urrutia and other union officials. We demand: Defend the miners and metal workers union! Drop all charges against Gómez Urrutia and all persecuted union members! Victory to the miners strikes!

In the spring of 2006, we traveled to Lázaro Cárdenas, participated in demonstrations in Mexico City in defense of the union, protested at UNAM [National Autonomous University of Mexico] and held a forum at the Leon Trotsky museum in defense of the miners union. We fought against the anti-union prejudices of those—like the fake "Trotskyist" Internationalist Group—who claim to stand on the side of the working class yet refuse to defend PRI-affiliated unions such as the SNTMMSRM against state attack. Instilling such elementary class solidarity is part of our struggle to win youth over to the side of the proletariat in the fight for a communist future.

The miners union remains in the cross hairs of the vengeful ruling class. For two years the bosses and the state have tried to destroy the powerful organization of the miners and steel workers. But the union has fought to defend itself. Due to its key role in production, setting in motion the levers of production, the

working class has the power to paralyze the entire economy. In a show of the social power of the industrial proletariat, the Mexican mining bosses have lost close to *2.4 billion dollars* due to the miners' struggles that have taken place over the last *two years*. Owning nothing but its own labor power, the working class has no objective interest in maintaining the rule of private property; its historic interest is to *abolish* it, collectivizing the economy through socialist revolution.

The struggle for internal democracy in the unions and for their independence from the state cannot be separated from the struggle for revolutionary leadership. As Trotsky himself explained: "In the epoch of imperialist decay the trade unions can be really independent only to the extent that they are conscious of being, in action, the organs of proletarian revolution." Forging such leadership means breaking with any illusions in the bosses' parties—the PRI, the PRD and the PAN. Bourgeois nationalism, prominently pushed by the PRD, attempts to mask the fundamental *class* division of society in order to tie the workers to their exploiters, preventing the former from fighting for *their own* interests. The allies of the Mexican workers are not their "own" national exploiters, but the multiracial American and international proletariat! It is necessary to build a revolutionary workers party to smash the murderous capitalist system, which is based on the thirst for profit, and replace it with workers rule through international socialist revolution.

The heroic 1906 Cananea miners strike—organized through joint efforts of Mexican and American trade unionists, and drowned in blood by the combined forces of the Mexican and American capitalists—became a symbol of the struggle against the Porfirio Díaz dictatorship and



WV Photo

New York City, January 12: Spartacists at demonstration initiated by Internationalist Group at Mexican Consulate to protest police attack on miners.

of international working-class solidarity. 102 years later, the capitalists are again bent on smashing their struggle. *This attack must not pass unchallenged! The entire international labor movement must protest this new attack on the miners! Victory to the miners strikes! ■*

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Venezuela...

(continued from page 12)

destruction of social welfare programs, untrammelled imperialist aggrandizement. “The recent history of Venezuela amply demonstrates that neoliberalism and populism are nothing but two faces of the same coin, sometimes carried out by the same bourgeois regime in different periods.”

Indeed, in Venezuela in the mid 1970s Democratic Action (AD) president Carlos Andrés Pérez nationalized oil and mining. Similarly buoyed by booming oil revenues, the Pérez regime also massively subsidized food, transportation, health care and education. When the boom went bust, the Pérez regime itself then instituted brutal austerity measures beginning in the 1980s against the country’s working and poor people.

Today’s high oil prices, again, allow for limited reforms. But the very workings of the capitalist system ensure the continued exploitation and impoverishment of the Venezuelan masses. In fact, Chávez’s referendum was narrowly defeated largely because the masses of urban poor, who poured out in the streets against the 2002 coup and were the base of Chávez’s landslide victory in the 2006 elections with over seven million votes, largely sat this referendum out. As a woman from one of Caracas’ wretched slums put it: “If this government cannot get me milk or asphalt for our roads, how is it going to give my mother a pension” (*New York Times*, 30 November 2007).

As against Chávez’s populist nationalism, it is necessary to mobilize the proletariat, standing at the head of all the downtrodden and oppressed, in the struggle for socialist revolution against all wings of the Venezuelan bourgeoisie, which is tied by a thousand threads to the imperialist order. Only thus can the struggle for national independence and other democratic tasks be realized in such countries of belated capitalist development in the imperialist epoch. As Leon Trotsky, co-leader with V.I. Lenin of the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution, stressed in his “Basic Postulates” in *The Permanent Revolution* (1930):

“The dictatorship of the proletariat which has risen to power as the leader of the democratic revolution is inevitably and very quickly confronted with tasks, the fulfillment of which is bound up with deep inroads into the rights of bourgeois property. The democratic revolution grows over directly into the socialist revolution and thereby becomes a *permanent* revolution.”

There can be no fundamental amelioration of the plight of the urban and rural poor without the smashing of the capitalist state and the overthrow of the capitalist social order, laying the basis through a series of proletarian revolutions internationally for a global classless society



Left: Leaders of failed, U.S.-backed military coup against Chávez in 2002. Right: November 2007 demonstration in Caracas organized by rightist bourgeois forces calls for “no” vote against Chávez referendum.



in which all forms of exploitation and oppression have been eliminated. Crucially, this means linking the struggles of the Latin American masses to the fight for socialist revolution in the U.S.

Reformist Apologists for Chávez Regime

Under the Chávez regime, the Venezuelan bourgeoisie has made out very well (and foreign oil companies haven’t done badly themselves). According to the World Bank, the richest 20 percent of the population continue to pocket 53 percent of all income while the poorest 20 percent are the recipients of a miserly 3 percent. While raking off massive profits, much of the bourgeoisie is taking its money out of the country as well as hoarding its products, resulting in soaring inflation and shortages of food and other basic necessities.

Workers who have occupied factories that have been bankrupted by their owners or shut down, like those at Sanitarios Maracay, have found themselves on the receiving end of the armed forces of the Chávez regime. In April 2007, as they made their way to Caracas to demand the nationalization of the company, workers from this factory were stopped by state police and army forces who fired on them, leaving 14 wounded and 21 arrested. Similarly, representatives of the public employees trade union who had gone to negotiate a contract with the Ministry of Labor in August 2007 were locked inside a room at the ministry and six days later driven out by hired thugs.

None of this has stopped self-proclaimed Marxists from cheering on Chávez’s “Bolivarian Revolution.” Among the most shameless is the International Marxist Tendency (IMT) of Alan Woods who boasts of his credentials as a “Trotskyist” adviser to Chávez. In the lead-up to the referendum vote, the IMT’s Venezuelan section, the Revolutionary Marxist Current (CMR), issued a 30 November 2007 statement calling for “an avalanche

of votes in favor,” declaring that a victory “will be a new step forward for the revolution.” Incredibly, the CMR claimed that the victory of Chávez’s referendum would have marked “the end of the bourgeois state apparatus”!

The CMR claims that to have called for a “no” vote would have played into the hands of “the capitalists, imperialism and the bureaucrats.” This line is echoed by a number of other left groups, including the Revolutionary Leftist Youth (JIR), Venezuelan section of the Trotskyist Fraction-Fourth International, a split from the international tendency led by the late Nahuel Moreno. The JIR proclaimed, “we don’t support this referendum because it upholds the legal basis for capitalism, the continuity of exploitation of the workers in the city and the countryside, securing the class society framework.” Nonetheless, the JIR justified its call for abstention by arguing that “the call by some left-wing sectors for a NO vote, which mixes their banners with the pro-American right, is an attack on a position of class independence” (*En Clave Obrera*, December 2007).

There is no question that the main forces behind the “no” vote were right-wing opponents of the Chávez regime. But to support or abstain on a referendum that would have strengthened the repressive powers of the bourgeois state apparatus is a betrayal of the class interest of the proletariat. The opportunist left promotes the dangerous illusion that the capitalist state can be made to serve the interests of working people and renounces the struggle for socialist revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat. The class independence of the working class from *all* the agencies and representatives of bourgeois rule—including the most “progressive” bourgeois forces—is the fundamental starting point for the working class to struggle for its own class interests. It is essential for the forging of a revolutionary workers party that fights for the over-

throw of capitalism and for liberation from the yoke of imperialist subjugation.

Fake Trotskyists Prettify Bourgeois Nationalism

In its article on the Chávez referendum (*Workers Power*, Winter 2007-08), the British Workers Power group, leading section of the League for the Fifth International, quotes Trotsky from his article “Bourgeois Democracy and the Fight Against Fascism” (13 January 1936) correctly urging, “We must vote against *all measures* that strengthen the capitalist-Bonapartist state, even those measures which may for the moment cause temporary unpleasantness for the fascists.” Workers Power immediately adds: “The presidency—no matter who occupies it—remains an institution of the bourgeois state which be it said revolutionaries are in favour of totally abolishing.” Their conclusion? To call for an abstention on measures, which by their own admission, would strengthen the powers of the bourgeois state!

Similarly, the centrist Internationalist Group (IG) argued that the referendum was “a program for a bonapartist ‘strong state’ regime” and concluded that “for socialists to approve such measures would be to renounce the program of proletarian revolution” (*Internationalist*, December 2007). And so, the IG urged “class-conscious Venezuelan workers”...“to *cast a blank ballot*” or “abstain.” So much for the program of proletarian revolution!

That neither Workers Power nor the IG, for all their orthodox-sounding disclaimers, could choke out a call for a “no” vote is sheer opportunism. Both Workers Power and the IG point to Venezuela as a bourgeois state. But they do not want to be seen as opponents of Chávez’s referendum. The bombastic cries of “class war” and “a fight to the finish against the counterrevolutionaries” by the IG serve to promote the fraud—openly peddled by Chávez’s more unabashed left apologists—that there is an ongoing revolution in Venezuela. Thus the IG’s December 2007 article called to “Impose Workers Control on the Road to Socialist Revolution” and to “Smash Counterrevolution with Workers Mobilization!” All this talk of Venezuela “on the road” to socialism is deliberately crafted to obscure the fact that Chávez is administering a capitalist state.

It is worth noting that a few years ago the IG was whistling a different tune. In the face of a 2000 referendum by Chávez aimed at busting the Confederation of Venezuelan Workers (CTV), an article posted on the IG’s Web site in Spanish headlined, “Against Chávez, the Stock Market and the IMF—Venezuela: Mobilize Workers Power to Defeat the Anti-Union Referendum.” We too opposed this referendum and defended the CTV unions against government attack and control. However, the IG depicted Chávez as simply a stooge of the Caracas stock exchange and the imperialists and played down the real dangers of U.S. intervention, as well as the CTV’s organic ties to the bourgeois AD and its historic connections to the CIA’s “labor” fronts in Latin America.

As we observed in “Opportunism Makes Strange Bedfellows” (WV No. 787, 20 September 2002), “It didn’t take a rocket scientist to figure out that the U.S. imperialists had it in for Chávez. Only idiots or CIA apologists could gloss over that

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fact.” We also found the IG’s denunciations of Chávez something of an unnatural act: “Given its history of lining up behind ‘anti-imperialist’ nationalists from Mexico to Puerto Rico and beyond, one could have expected the IG to cozy up to the nationalist-populist Chávez.” And so it has come to pass.

Following Chávez’s landslide victory in the 2006 elections, much of the left was heralding his calls to deepen the “revolutionary process” through more nationalizations, the creation of “communal councils” and the foundation of the thoroughly bourgeois United Socialist Party of Venezuela (PSUV) as some harbinger of a revolutionary assault on the Venezuelan bourgeoisie. The IG followed suit by defending Chávez when he revoked the broadcasting license of RCTV, one of the main media mouthpieces for the 2002 coup. In “Venezuela: Battle Over the Media” (*Internationalist*, July 2007), the IG argued that “in revolutionary conditions or wars, democratic questions are subordinate to fundamental class issues.”

For Marxists, democratic questions are *always* subordinate to the class line. That said, there is neither a revolution nor a civil war in Venezuela today. For his part,

ernment in Russia *after* the Bolshevik-led workers revolution had smashed the capitalist state and established a *workers state*. The IG writes:

“In a 9 November 1917 decree of the Petrograd Soviet, Lenin ordered that only those papers be shut down which ‘(1) call for open resistance or insubordination to the *Workers’ and Peasants’ Government*; (2) sow sedition through demonstrably slanderous distortion of facts; (3) instigate actions of an obviously criminal, i.e., criminally punishable, nature.’ *RCTV (and other networks) in Venezuela filled all three criteria.*” [emphasis added]

Continuing in the same vein, the IG writes in its December 2007 article on the referendum that Chávez “expresses admiration for the Russian Revolutionary Leon Trotsky, but his actual policies are far more timid.” More timid?! Trotsky was a leader of the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution. According to the IG, being “more timid” is what separates the bourgeois-populist Chávez from a revolutionary leader of the international proletariat!

For all its pronouncements that Venezuela is a bourgeois state, the IG repeatedly draws analogies and makes comparisons with countries where capitalism was overthrown. The IG opines that “while



Venezuelan troops attack demonstrator from a Sanitarios Maracay workers caravan to Caracas demanding nationalization of factory, April 2007.

Chávez made clear at a mass rally in Caracas where he announced the revoking of RCTV’s license: “We have no plan to eliminate the oligarchy, Venezuela’s bourgeoisie. We have demonstrated this sufficiently in our eight years” (quoted in *International Socialist Review*, July-August 2007).

As Trotsky wrote in a 1938 article against a campaign by Vicente Lombardo Toledano, the leader of the CTM union federation in Mexico under the Cárdenas regime, “to ‘curb’ the reactionary press, either by placing it under a democratic censorship or by banning it altogether”:

“Both theory and historical experience testify that any restriction of democracy in bourgeois society is, in the final analysis, invariably directed against the proletariat.... Bourgeois democracy is of use to the proletariat only insofar as it opens up the way for the development of the class struggle. Consequently, any working class ‘leader’ who arms the bourgeois state with special means for controlling public opinion in general and the press in particular is, precisely, a traitor. In the last analysis, the sharpening of the class struggle will impel the bourgeoisie of every stripe to reach an agreement among themselves; they will then pass special laws, all sorts of restrictive measures, and all kinds of ‘democratic’ censorship against the working class. Anyone who has not yet understood this should get out of the ranks of the working class.”

—“Freedom of the Press and the Working Class,” 21 August 1938

In its article on RCTV, the IG shamelessly equates the bourgeois Venezuelan regime of Hugo Chávez to the Soviet gov-

ernment in Russia *after* the Bolshevik-led workers revolution had smashed the capitalist state and established a *workers state*. The IG writes:

“In raising this surreal analogy, the IG’s not-so-subtle implication is that the bourgeois Chávez government is some kind of “transitional regime” that might accept or overthrow capitalism. Thus the IG consolidates its position on the left end of the spectrum of Bolivarian “Trotskyism.”

We have characterized the IG’s politics as “Pabloism of the second mobilization,” referring to the liquidationist current led by Michel Pablo that destroyed the Trotskyist Fourth International in the early 1950s. Faced with the onset of the imperialist Cold War and the creation of Stalinist-ruled deformed workers states in East and Central Europe, the Pabloites looked to non-proletarian forces and argued that the Sta-



Mexican president Lázaro Cárdenas announces nationalization of oil industry in 1938.

linists, social democrats and Third World nationalists could be pressured to outline a “roughly” revolutionary course, denying the need for a Trotskyist vanguard party. By the early 1960s, Pablo himself became an adviser to the bourgeois FLN regime in Algeria after it won independence from French imperialism.

Referring to those who would write off the struggle against Pabloism that was led by American Trotskyist James P. Cannon within the Fourth International because of its partial quality, IG leader Jan Norden noted when he was still a Trotskyist in the International Communist League, “This, in turn, frees the born-yesterday centrists to pursue their eclectic, anti-internationalist lashups with abandon, combining and recombining with other denizens of the pseudo-Trotskyist swamp” (“Yugoslavia, East Europe and the Fourth International: The Evolution of Pabloist Liquidationism,” *Prometheus Research Series* No. 4, March 1993). This aptly describes the IG. Their opportunism reflects adaptation to the retrogression of political consciousness in the post-Soviet world, leading them to an increasingly desperate search for, and accommodation to, social forces other than the proletariat and vehicles other than a Leninist vanguard party to advance the struggle for human emancipation. Enter Hugo Chávez.

The Myth of “Workers Control” in Venezuela

The IG’s call to “Impose Workers Control on the Road to Socialist Revolution” purposely confuses the meaning of workers control, which is dual power at the point of production in a revolutionary crisis. In other words, the workers have the power to veto management actions they oppose. Such a situation can only end in either the workers seizing state power through socialist revolution or in the capitalists reasserting their power through counterrevolution. Trotsky wrote in his 20 August 1931 article “Workers’ Control of Production”: “Control can be imposed only by force upon the bourgeoisie, by a proletariat on the road to the moment of taking power from them, and then also ownership of the means of production.”

The IG points to “workers committees which exist in embryonic or developed form in many plants and workplaces” in Venezuela. These committees, which mainly exist in industries that have been nationalized by the state, are in fact co-management schemes with the capitalist state in which the latter holds the whip hand. This is recognized even by the abject reformists of the British Socialist Workers Party (SWP), who write: “Government representatives run the factory, sometimes in coordination with workers’ representatives. At the moment there are about 60 factories under some form of workers’ occupation pressing for nationalisation. Where that has occurred it has taken the form of co-management, which is a long way from workers’ control” (*International Socialism* No. 116, 28 September 2007).

Indeed, these are class-collaborationist schemes aimed at chaining the workers to the capitalist state. The same goes for the “workers cooperatives,” which no less an apologist for the Chávez regime than CMR leader Jorge Martin points out have in many cases “become an excuse for outsourcing of the *labour* force,” i.e., busting the unions. A significant factor behind Chávez’s formation of the PSUV is to maintain government control over the

trade unions. As Trotsky wrote in the aftermath of the expropriation of the imperialists’ oil holdings in Mexico by the Cárdenas regime:

“The management of railways, oil fields, etc., through labor organizations has nothing in common with workers’ control over industry, for in the essence of the matter the management is effected through the labor bureaucracy which is independent of the workers but, in return, completely dependent on the bourgeois state. This measure on the part of the ruling class pursues the aim of disciplining the working class, making it more industrious in the service of the common interests of the state, which appear on the surface to merge with the interests of the working class itself.”

—“Trade Unions in the Epoch of Imperialist Decay” (1940)

The IG points to the wing of the National Workers Union (UNT) headed by Orlando Chirino, which opposed entering the PSUV and called for an abstention in the December referendum, opining that the UNT “has been bedeviled from the beginning by the riddle of how to oppose Chávez’ attacks on the workers while not breaking from the popularity he enjoys among Venezuela’s impoverished masses.” This likewise bedevils the IG. Left unsaid in the IG article is the fact that the UNT was founded by *chavista* union bureaucrats who set up the federation in 2003 under the umbrella of the government. The UNT was created to break up the Confederation of Venezuelan Workers,



Alan Woods of pseudo-Trotskyist International Marxist Tendency embraces Chávez.

itself a corporatist union tied to the former bourgeois Democratic Action regime and with links to the U.S. imperialists. Chirino’s posture as an advocate of independent unions is belied by his loyalty to the Chávez regime. In an interview with the British SWP’s *International Socialism* (9 May 2007), Chirino boasts of his credentials as a member of “the first political organization to support Hugo Chavez’s presidential candidacy.”

In the same interview, Chirino points to China as part of “international consortia” that are “exploiting our workers more than ever.” He goes on to state that “capitalism was restored in China a number of years ago, and today it is the country where the working class is most exploited. They are modern-day slaves.” In fact, China is a bureaucratically deformed workers state where capitalism was overthrown as a result of the 1949 Revolution, a victory for the international working class. Despite the inroads made

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The Development and Extension of Leon Trotsky's Theory of Permanent Revolution

This month marks the 90th anniversary of the Russian Revolution led by the Bolshevik Party of V.I. Lenin and Leon Trotsky. The Russian Revolution was the defining event of the 20th century. It opened the way for the struggle against World War II, the working class and the oppressed in every country, and paved the way for the development of the socialist revolution.

PART ONE

In doing so, the revolutionary proletarian of Russia not only liberated itself from capitalist exploitation but also laid the grounds for the socialist revolution in all the oppressed and semi-oppressed countries and peoples. The Russian Revolution was the first step towards the final victory of the working class and the oppressed in every country.

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(continued from page 9)

At the same time, numerous leftists and others have falsely compared Chávez to the Castro regime in Cuba. But, like China and *unlike* Venezuela, Cuba is a deformed workers state. When Castro's Rebel Army marched into Havana in January 1959, the bourgeois army and the rest of the capitalist state apparatus that had propped up the U.S.-backed Batista dictatorship shattered. In the face of the hostile encirclement of U.S. imperialism, in 1960-61 the Castro regime nationalized U.S.-owned and domestic capitalist property, marking the expropriation of the Cuban bourgeoisie as a class. This was a social revolution. The existence of the Soviet Union was crucial in providing both an economic lifeline and a military shield that helped

As revolutionary Trotskyists who fought for the unconditional military defense of the Soviet degenerated workers state and the deformed workers states of East and Central Europe against imperialism and capitalist counterrevolution, we apply this same program to the remaining deformed workers states of China, Cuba, Vietnam and North Korea. At the same time, we fight for workers political revolution to oust the Stalinist bureaucrats—whose dogma of “socialism in one country” serves to undermine the defense of the workers states—and to establish regimes based on workers democracy and revolutionary internationalism. Those who do not defend the existing gains of the working class cannot conquer new ones. Our military defense of the deformed workers states is part of our struggle for new October Revolutions. Key to our perspective is the fight to reforge Trotsky’s Fourth International as the world party of socialist revolution.

The difference between idealistic young radicals who look to Chávez and the wizened opportunists is that the latter try to pass off support for Chávez as Marxism. Many radical intellectuals and reformist groups peddle Chávez's invocation of Trotsky's theory of permanent

The conquest of power by the proletariat does not complete the socialist revolution, but only opens it by changing the direction of social development. The proletariat in power would expropriate the bourgeoisie as a class in order to establish a collectivized planned economy where production is based on social need rather than profit. But short of the international extension of the revolution, particularly to the advanced, industrialized imperialist centers, that social development will be arrested and ultimately reversed. The efforts of U.S. imperialism to bring down the Chávez regime underline the need for proletarian revolutionary internationalism, which is at the core of Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution. The struggles of the proletariat in the semicolonial countries are necessarily

"History will reserve a harsh verdict for those 'leftists' who promote one or another left-talking capitalist *caudillo*. The way forward for the downtrodden throughout the Americas does not lie through painting nationalist strongmen as revolutionaries and populist forays as revolutions. It lies instead in constructing national sections of a reformed Fourth International in the spirit of uncompromising revolutionary hostility to any and all kinds of capitalist rule. South of the Rio Bravo, such parties will have to be built in political struggle against widespread illusions in populism and nationalism. In the United States, the belly of the imperialist beast, a revolutionary workers party will be built in the struggle to break the proletariat from the Democratic and Republican parties of capital and to replace the pro-imperialist AFL-CIO tops with a class-struggle leadership." ■

(continued from page 1)

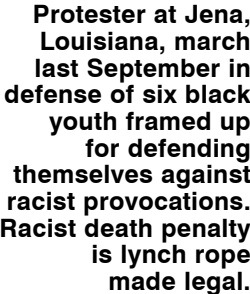
Free Mumia Abu-Jamal Now!

Such is now the rulers' intent in the case of Mumia Abu-Jamal—a Black Panther Party spokesman in his youth, later a MOVE supporter and award-winning journalist—who was framed up and convicted of the 1981 killing of Philadelphia police officer Daniel Faulkner. Mumia sits on death row today, a political prisoner that the forces of racist “law and order” want to see dead because they see in him the spectre of black revolt, a voice of defiant opposition to the oppression of black people. Mumia’s innocence is proven by an abundance of evidence, including the confession of another man, Arnold Beverly, that he, not Mumia, shot and killed Faulkner.

The fight to free Mumia Abu-Jamal is at a critical juncture. The 1 January *Philadelphia Inquirer* article explicitly stated, “Among those now awaiting a pivotal ruling is Philadelphia’s best-known death-row inmate, Mumia Abu-Jamal, whose case has been followed around the world.” More recently, a 27 January *Philadelphia Inquirer* article reported that a decision on Mumia’s case by the Third Circuit Court of Appeals is expected soon. If the court rules to uphold the death sentence or denies Mumia’s appeals for a new trial or a new hearing, the Partisan Defense Committee and Labor Black Leagues have called for protests on the day after the decision. The PDC is also mobilizing a class-struggle contingent for the national demonstration called by the International

The Civil War smashed this system, but the betrayal of Radical Reconstruction by the Northern capitalists resulted in the denial of basic rights for black people in the South. The lynch rope was the tool of

The legal machinery of death is supplemented by killings of ghetto and barrio youth on the street by cops acting as judge, jury and executioner. Prisons in the U.S. teem with some 2.2 million people—a quarter of the world's prison population—some 60 percent of whom are black or Latino. This vast, historically ingrained system of racist repression cannot be fundamentally changed through tinkering here and there. Unlike liberals



Partisan Defense Committee
P.O. Box 99
Canal Street Station
New York, NY 10013

From Death Row, This Is Mumia Abu-Jamal

Guinness Records: Massacre or Suicide?



For millions of people worldwide, the Guinness Book of World Records is the definitive source for matters great and small.

Many a conflict has been resolved by reference to it, for it is seen as the last word. One thinks there are more copies of its books in bars and taverns than in libraries.

But in at least one case, the venerable record keeping agency has been called into serious question. That case is the May 13th, 1985 MOVE Bombing, where 11 men, women and babies were killed by Philadelphia police.

The problem arises when the Guinness agency notes and records the events as a case of mass suicide—not mass murder. MOVE's Ramona Africa, who narrowly escaped being burned to death during the bombing, heard about the reference, looked it up on the Web, and—voilà!—there it was; in the 2008 online edition of the Guinness Book of World

Records, in a section on cult suicides, MOVE (actually "The MOVE") is listed as one case among six.

When she contacted the Guinness editors, she received an answer citing a London based group called the Cult Information Centre (CIC) as the basis for its listing.

As the MOVE Organization itself has noted in an online public message: We are not a cult, we're an organization, and we certainly did not commit suicide on May 13th, 1985. The U.S. government dropped an incendiary bomb made of C4 on our home. The bomb ignited a fire and the fire department refused to do anything to put out the fire. They made a conscious decision to let the fire burn. Our home was a blazing inferno. 11 MOVE men, women, babies and numerous animals were burned alive because of that fire and because cops deliberately shot at us as we tried to escape that blazing inferno. It's documented that fragments from police bullets were found in some of the

bodies of murdered MOVE people. That is not suicide; it's deliberate murder.

In the October 19, 2007 reply letter from Guinness World Records' editor-in-chief, Craig Glenday, the London based company cites CIC as a "credible source" for its report, and includes a section of the CIC description from their web site. They insist their data is both "accurate" and "correct."

Question: Why is the CIC account more "credible" than that of Ramona—who was in the house and almost burned to death? It is a measure of the arrogance of those in positions of power that no one ever tried to contact MOVE before adding it to a suicide list—nor the one adult who survived this mass murder.

MOVE is circulating an online petition at: <http://ipetitions.com/petition/OnaMove> or let's just keep it simple, try: www.onamove.com. It's directed at Guinness and the CIC to retract this notation. Sounds like a plan.

From death row, this is Mumia Abu-Jamal.
16 November 2007

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Send urgently needed contributions for Mumia's legal defense, made payable to "National Lawyers Guild Foundation" and earmarked for "Mumia," to: Committee to Save Mumia Abu-Jamal, P.O. Box 2012, New York, NY 10159.

If you wish to correspond with Mumia, you can write to: Mumia Abu-Jamal, AM8335, SCI Greene, 175 Progress Drive, Waynesburg, PA 15370.

who pose life without parole—i.e., being entombed in prison for life—as an "alternative" to the death penalty, we are opposed to the bourgeoisie's entire machinery of repression.

What is necessary is the forging of a class-struggle workers party with a significant black leadership component. Such a party will be built in opposition to both parties of capital and will be dedicated to mobilizing the social power of labor in defense of the interests of all working people and the oppressed, leading to the expropriation of the capitalist rulers and the establishment of working-class rule.

In those states where capitalism has been overturned, we are likewise opposed to the barbaric institution of capital punishment. While supporting necessary military measures in defense of the workers state against capitalist counter-revolution, we are opposed to the death penalty being part of the permanent penal code of a workers state. In this, we stand in the tradition of the Bolsheviks who carried out the 1917 October Revolution. Against this Bolshevik tradition, Stalin took the temporary emergency measures that the young Soviet workers republic had instituted to defend itself during the Civil War and made them permanent, twisting them into the most grotesque opposite of what the Bolsheviks intended (see "Abolish the Death Penalty!" WV No. 117, 9 July 1976). We fight for the unconditional military defense of the remaining deformed work-

ers states—China, Cuba, North Korea and Vietnam—against imperialist attack and capitalist counterrevolution. At the same time, we fight for proletarian political revolution against the Stalinist bureaucracies in these countries.

Our revolutionary perspective is far from the liberal anti-Communist pabulum pushed by various fake-left organizations, such as the International Socialist Organization (ISO), which has devoted much time and resources to its Campaign to End the Death Penalty (CEDP). An article in the *International Socialist Review* (January-February 2008) by the national director of the CEDP explains that its goal is "to build struggles that put pressure on politicians to answer to us—that's critical to advancing the fight for abolition." *Socialist Worker* (18 January) makes crystal clear what this means, reporting that the CEDP is planning to protest the Democratic Illinois Attorney General on Valentine's Day in order to "urge Lisa Madigan to 'have a heart'" in her dealings with the torture victims of Chicago police officer Jon Burge!

Socialist Worker (26 October 2007) argues that "in the absence of pressure from below strong enough to force them to do otherwise, the Democrats will do what's necessary to please the corporations that fill their coffers." Why stop with Madigan? The ISO et al. might consider going hat in hand to Pennsylvania governor Rendell, who was the District Attorney who prosecuted Mumia and who is also a former chairman of the

Democratic National Committee.

In fact, the entire gamut of reformist leftists have pinned their hopes on this capitalist "lesser evil," not only through "pressure" in the streets (not so visible these days) but also through outright support to Democratic Party candidates. The misnamed Revolutionary Communist Party counseled its supporters in the 2004 presidential elections to vote for Democratic candidate John Kerry "if you feel you really have to" (*Revolutionary Worker*, 29 August 2004). Workers World Party has supported a variety of Democrats and now leaves open the possibility of support to Barack Obama (see "The Obama Campaign and the 'End of

Racism' Myth," WV No. 906, 18 January).

The fight to abolish the racist death penalty, to free Mumia and all class-war prisoners, is an integral part of the struggle to forge a Leninist vanguard party to lead the working class in the fight for socialist revolution. This requires not only a break with the phony "friends of labor" in the Democratic Party and a political struggle against the pro-capitalist trade-union tops who act to chain the proletariat to their class enemy, but also exposure of the craven reformist left. This barbaric system cannot be reformed to serve the interests of workers and the oppressed; it must be destroyed in order to open the road to a socialist future. ■

Prepare Now for Emergency Protests!

On 17 May 2007 the Third Circuit Court of Appeals heard oral arguments in Mumia's case, and there could be a decision at any time.

If the Court rules to uphold the death sentence or denies Mumia's appeals for a new trial or a new hearing, the Partisan Defense Committee and the Labor Black Leagues have called for protests the day after the decision. Others have also called for protests.

For more information see the PDC Web site
www.partisandefense.org

**Mumia Abu-Jamal Is an Innocent Man!
FREE MUMIA NOW!
Abolish the Racist Death Penalty!**

Join the Campaign to Free Mumia!

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.

Donations earmarked "Mumia" as well as collections at PDC or other events for Mumia's legal defense are receipted and transferred in full to the above NLG account as has been designated by Mumia's lawyer for this purpose.

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

Spread the word! Contact the PDC for copies of *The Fight to Free Mumia Abu-Jamal* —*Mumia Is Innocent!* This pamphlet arms activists in the struggle for Mumia's freedom by presenting the political basis of the state vendetta against Mumia and the explosive evidence which completely destroys the more than two-decades-long frame-up of this eloquent fighter for black freedom. It is available for \$1. Get the PDC button: "Free Mumia Abu-Jamal! Abolish the Racist Death Penalty!"—\$1 each. Order the PDC video, *From Death Row,*

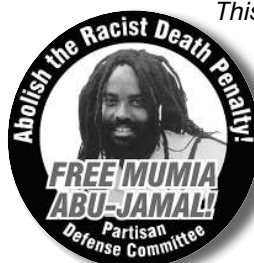
This Is Mumia

Abu-Jamal—\$10 for

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WORKERS VANGUARD

Opportunist Left and the Chávez Referendum Break with Bourgeois Populism! For Workers Revolution!

Venezuela

Across the political spectrum, the December constitutional referendum put forward by Venezuelan president Hugo Chávez was described as an attempt to institute a “socialist state.” The narrow defeat of the referendum is now celebrated by a cabal ranging from the Venezuelan oligarchy to the Catholic church to the Bush White House as a victory for “democracy.” On the other side, it has provoked much hand-wringing among self-proclaimed Marxists and others who have promoted Chávez as some kind of “revolutionary.” As for Chávez himself, he immediately made conciliatory gestures to the right-wing opposition.

Popular illusions notwithstanding, Chávez, a former army colonel, is a bourgeois nationalist administering a capitalist state. Far from undermining capitalism in Venezuela, Chávez’s referendum went out of its way to underline that private ownership of the means of production would be protected under the constitution. His proposed referendum was centrally aimed at strengthening the repressive powers of the Venezuelan capitalist state and concentrating increased authority in the executive office of the president. While cloaked in populist rhetoric of “people’s power” and promising some social reforms, such as a shorter work-week and pensions for the self-employed, the key provisions of Chávez’s referendum sought to increase presidential authority to declare unlimited states of emergency, to decree special military regions, to transform certain parts of the country into federal territories under direct presidential control, and to allow the president to dissolve the National Assembly.

The capitalist state—which at its core



30 November 2007: Demonstration in Caracas calling for “yes” vote on referendum to increase the power of bourgeois-nationalist Venezuelan president Hugo Chávez (right).

consists of the military, police, prisons and courts—is the instrument for the forcible suppression of the working class and oppressed in defense of the capitalist social order. Any augmentation of the Venezuelan capitalist state powers will be used against the working class when it struggles for its *own* class interests. As Marx and

own purposes” (1872 Preface to the German Edition of the *Communist Manifesto* by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels).

As Marxists who fight for proletarian socialist revolution to smash the bourgeois state and put in its place a workers state, we were for a “no” vote on Chávez’s referendum. At the same time, we make



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U.S. Hands Off!

Engels put it following the experience of the Paris Commune, when the Parisian proletariat held power for nearly three months in 1871 before being bloodily crushed, “One thing especially was proved by the Commune, viz. that ‘the working class cannot simply lay hold of the ready-made State machinery, and wield it for its

clear our intransigent opposition to the right-wing forces that mobilized against the referendum. Chávez has provoked the ire of the U.S. imperialist rulers, Democrats as well as Republicans. In the event of a U.S.-sponsored coup, as in 2002, we stand for the military defense of the Chávez regime without giving it one iota of political support, as with Loyalist Spain from 1936-39.

The fact that most ostensible Marxist organizations either openly supported or abstained on Chávez’s referendum is testimony to both their own political bankruptcy and Chávez’s popularity. The very things that have made Chávez a thorn in the side of the arrogant U.S. rulers have made him an idol for the impoverished masses in Venezuela and for large numbers of young leftists around the world. Chávez has bitingly castigated the Bush administration and ostentatiously embraced Washington’s chief nemesis in the Western Hemisphere, Cuban leader Fidel Castro. He has condemned the U.S. occupation of Iraq and the threats against Iran and denounced the “neoliberal” economic policies promoted by the U.S. in Latin America and elsewhere. He embarrassed the Bush administration in 2005 when he offered to provide relief for the dispossessed people of New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina (the offer was rejected). And as the U.S. heads toward a recession, Venezuela, through its CITGO affiliate, is once again supplying

low-cost heating oil this winter to poor families in 23 states in the U.S.

Chávez is a populist who has used profits generated by the skyrocketing cost of oil to implement a series of social reforms. He has also undertaken some minimal nationalization of industry and land distribution. These measures, together with the fact that Chávez boasts of his *zambo* (mixed African and indigenous) heritage, have earned him the contempt of the lily-white Venezuelan oligarchy.

But Chávez is no socialist. And by historical standards, he is not even a particularly radical bourgeois nationalist. Mexico’s Lázaro Cárdenas nationalized that country’s oil industry, which was owned by the U.S. and British imperialists, and made significant land redistributions in the 1930s. While we defend such bourgeois nationalizations against imperialist attack, they are not socialist measures. In the case of Mexico, the subordination of the working class to Cárdenas resulted in more than 60 years of corporatism and the shackling of the proletariat to the Institutional Revolutionary Party, the bourgeois ruling party until 2000.

It is a sign of the times that Chávez today is embraced as the leader of the fight for “21st century socialism.” As we wrote in “Venezuela: Populist Nationalism vs. Proletarian Revolution” (WV No. 860, 9 December 2005):

“The popularity of Chávez and his ‘Bolivarian Revolution’ among idealistic young leftists—and wizened opportunists—must be understood against the backdrop of the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union. Among radical youth, nurtured by more than a decade of ‘death of communism’ propaganda from the ‘left’ and the right, the October Revolution is widely perceived to have been a ‘failed experiment.’ They reject as well the Marxist understanding that the working class is the unique agency for social revolution against the capitalist order. Moreover, capitalism has, by and large, been equated with that particular set of economic policies known as ‘neoliberalism’—widespread privatization of public facilities,

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Slum in Maturín, Venezuela. The very workings of capitalist system ensure continued exploitation and impoverishment of Venezuelan masses.